

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 9 March 2020 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

PRESENT: HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR Councillor Choudary (in the Chair).

COUNCILLORS: Malpas, Ansell, Ashraf, Aziz, Beardsworth, Birch, Bottwood, Choudary, Eldred, Flavell, Golby, Graystone, Hadland, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, Joyce, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, B Markham, M Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Russell, Kilby-Shaw, Smith, Stone, Walker and Roberts

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th February 2020 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cali, Caswell, Chunga, Davenport, Duffy, Eldred, Hill, G Eales, T Eales, Graystone and Sargeant.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor highlighted several events and occasions that had recently taken place, including raising the Commonwealth flag and International Women's Day. The Mayor commented that he and Councillor Ansell had spent 4 days in Northampton's twinned town of Marburg, Germany and thanked the town's Mayor, Dr Thomas Spies, for his hospitality during the visit.

Councillor Ansell thanked the Mayor for his invitation, noting that he did not get the chance to go during his Mayoral year. Councillor Ansell commented that he and the Mayor were very well looked after.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

Jean Lineker addressed Council and commented that as a disabled person, she felt let down by Northampton Partnership Homes; she did not feel that the organisation had enough staff to carry out its duties. Mrs Lineker had been advised by Contact Centre staff that she needed to change light bulbs in her property herself but added that she would need to use a ladder to reach them - she did not feel comfortable doing so as a disabled person. She explained that there were many people in the same situation as her and implored the Council to do more for its disabled residents.

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Mayor advised that 9 questions had been received from Councillors and that the answers had been tabled in accordance with the Constitution.

Questions and answers were given as tabled unless where stated, supplementary questions were asked as detailed below.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 1, Councillor Hallam stated that he would be happy to prepare annual reports showing anticipated costs relating to the environmental services contract.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 2, Councillor King advised councillors to look at crime statistics nationally and highlighted the action plan contained in her report, advising that it detailed outline priorities for the year.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 3, Councillor King advised that community groups were struggling to find food for holiday provision; there were issues around targeting certain groups that needed to, and were being worked out.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 7, Councillor Nunn confirmed that the Council did take note of public consultation results and did with regard to the Community Governance Review.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 8, Councillor Hallam advised that approximately 500 properties per day were registering for the paid garden waste collections; the Council were due to meet their target by the end of March.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 9, Councillor Hallam reiterated that the target for tree-planting was 2030.

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

Councillor Nunn submitted his report as Leader of the Council and highlighted the salient points. In response to questions, the Leader confirmed that voluntary organisations across the town were very much involved in the unitary process and regarding the St James Mill Link Road, the Leader explained that several businesses that were previously keen on investing, were no longer. With regard to the COVID-19 outbreak, it was explained that councillors had been updated, weekly working groups were taking place and advice for staff was “stay home if you are sick” and regarding the upcoming elections, the Leader advised that the risk was high, and the Council were awaiting advice from the Government. In response to further questions, the Leader commented that NBC had a strong voice regarding the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and would arrange a briefing to update Members, or build the update into a previously arranged briefing. The Leader confirmed that Committee reports now included a section relating to environmental/climate implications. The Leader further confirmed that briefings would be arranged in respect of the St James Mill Link Road and COVID-19.

Councillor Larratt submitted his report as Deputy Leader and highlighted the salient points. In response to questions, Councillor Larratt agreed to look at alternative ways to hold training sessions to enable more councillors to take part. Regarding the dispute between NBC, Daventry District Council and the Council's previous environmental services contractor, Councillor Larratt stated that the Monitoring Officer was prepared to give a briefing to fully update Members on progress made. Councillor Larratt explained that training around Section 106 Agreements had been delayed, however all new Town and Parish Councillors would be included. He explained that payment of the Council's debts would be funded through grants and re-paid to the Borough.

Councillor Hadland submitted a report on behalf of Councillor Hill, Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning, and highlighted the salient points. In response to a question, Councillor Hadland explained that the delay in introducing Article 4 Direction across the borough was for potential house-buyers in the town to change their plans if needed.

Councillor Hadland submitted his report as Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise and highlighted the salient points. He confirmed that the Market Square remained a priority, noting that the £25m Government grant was the Council's best chance to finance the project. Councillor Hadland explained that the Sixfields stand was at the forefront of the Council's considerations regarding the Football Club; nothing further would be agreed until the stand was completed.

In response to a question relating to the removal of flood alarms near the 4 Waterside development, Councillor Hadland explained that this was the responsibility of the Environment Agency.

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Smith made a statement on "Housing" and noted the increasing number of rough sleepers in the town. She stated that rogue landlords within the private sector were making people homeless. She further stated that landlords were exploiting loopholes in legislation to exploit tenants and questioned who at the Council was monitoring these loopholes. Councillor Smith commented that the demand for social housing had doubled in recent years and yet temporary accommodation was a £1 billion industry. She stated the Council needed a housing policy that benefitted tenants, not landlords.

Councillor Hibbert commented that the Council had an effective strategy for getting rough sleepers off the street and into accommodation and advised that the Council were targeting bad landlords, noting that a Special Operations unit had identified 200 breaches of housing regulations in the town. Councillor Hibbert commented that numerous social housing projects were underway in Northampton and that Northampton Partnership Homes had been rated "outstanding" by the Centre for Housing and Support.

Councillor Smith commented that the Council had a significant temporary accommodation bill and still could not find homes for all in the town who needed one; she stated that it was the Council's duty to house those in need, and stated the need

for an easier way to report rogue landlords.

9. UPDATE ON CARRIED MOTIONS

Councillor Larratt presented the Carried Motions report to Council. The format had been amended to include the responsible officers and Councillor Larratt assured Members that updates would be provided for all motions that did not currently have one.

Councillor Larratt advised that the List of Carried Motions was available online and asked Members to contact Democratic Services for a larger, printed version.

Councillor Nunn seconded the report.

At this point the Mayor called for the report's recommendations to be voted upon. All Members voted in favour. The recommendations in the report were agreed.

RESOLVED:

1. Council noted the update on Carried Motions.
2. That a further update will be brought to full Council at its meeting on 14 September 2020

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

Councillor Stone advised that the Labour Group wished to withdraw the motion.

Council agreed.

11. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE MAYOR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 8:10 pm