

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 3 June 2019 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

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

COUNCILLORS: Ansell, Ashraf, Aziz, Beardsworth, Birch, Cali, Davenport, Duffy, G Eales, T Eales, Eldred, Golby, Graystone, Hadland, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, J Hill, Joyce, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, Malpas, B Markham, M Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Roberts, Russell, Sargeant, Kilby-Shaw, Smith, Stone, and Walker

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the Council meetings held on 11 March 2019 and 16 May 2019 were agreed.

3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors Bottwood, Flavell and Marriott.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

There were no Mayoral announcements.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

Lisa Bradshaw addressed Council advising that there was a lot of fly tipping and littering in the Bouverie Estate. She went on to refer to littering from take aways and HIMOs. Ms Bradshaw suggested that there was a need for more communication between Housing Services and Planning; she appreciated however, their heavy workloads. Parking was another concern that Ms Bradshaw brought to Council's attention; she was pleased that NPH had put in some parking restriction measures but had not implemented all of them. She noted that the area of Spring Boroughs had received a number of improvements. Ms Bradshaw concluded her address by conveying her concerns about the Council's complaints process.

Ms Anne Wankiri confirmed that she was appealing to Council to provide a Centre for the African Community. She noted that there is a real need for such a Centre for the African Community to receive advice, help each other and network. Ms Wankiri commented that a Centre would help the African Community to be able to attend Wellbeing Sessions. There is a hub that is currently used but this is not in an ideal location.

Mr Daniel Soan addressed Council commenting that he supported option B of the report (agenda item 9 – Community Governance Review of the Borough – Potential options for consultation and future action.) In his opinion, options had originally been limited and these options were a true choice. Mr Soan referred to Parish Precepts commenting that with a Parish Council it can be ensured that money is spent locally. He went to query how there can be any differences in costs for Borough or Parish elections. Mr Soan closed his address by urging Council to approve option B of the report.

Mr Huffadine-Smith addressed Council. He commented that he was a Parish Councillor for both Upton Parish Council and Duston Parish Council but was making his address as an individual. Mr Huffadine-Smith referred to agenda item 9 - Community Governance Review of the Borough – Potential options for consultation and future action; giving his opinions on community, governance and review. He commented that now is the time to think of West Northamptonshire as a whole. Mr Huffadine-Smith felt that the proposals put forward for Kingsthorpe were excellent; he then concluded his address by commenting that the proposal for widening the boundary for Duston Parish Council could include the northern boundary of Duston.

Mr David Garlick commented that he was addressing Council in respect of Opposition Group Business – “Tackling Climate Change – Playing Our Part 2 and Notice of Motion iii). In his opinion two excellent notices of motion had been submitted in relation to climate change and he urged Council to unanimously carry these Notices of Motion. Everyone needs to work together. Mr Garlick added that global warming is a threat to everyone and there is a need to start reducing gases to protect the planet. Mr Garlick added that there is a need for a Northampton Zero Carbon Group.

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Mayor advised that 14 questions had been received from Councillors and members of the public and that the answers had been tabled in accordance with the Constitution.

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

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 7, Councillor Nunn commented that he needs to be inclusive of all Groups, not just specific ones; he provided examples of various Groups that he had met with.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 13, Councillor Hallam advised that currently there are no charging points in the town centre but there are charging points at various locations in the borough.

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

Councillor Nunn, as Leader of the Council, elaborated on his report and noted that clarity had now been received from Government to proceed with Unitary in 2021. Children's Services would be delivered through the creation of a Children's Trust. Responding to questions Councillor Nunn noted that the Children's Trust would be an item for discussion at the next meeting of the Cross Party Working Group. The West Northants Joint Committee would now have a greater significance for a longer period; it was not expected for there to be additional costs. Councillor Nunn conveyed his thanks to the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development for all the important work that he had done and that interim arrangements for his replacement were being put in place. Councillor Nunn confirmed that sites for an additional park and ride scheme were being investigated.

Councillor Larratt submitted his Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon noting key Councillor briefing sessions that had been programmed into the schedule. He highlighted an additional session on HIMO licensing – 26 June 2019 at 6pm and identical session at 11 June 2019 at 1:30pm. Councillor Larratt highlighted a letter that he had recently received following the Shine a Light on Tibet event; the letter emphasised the gratitude for presence at the event. The letter was read out to Council. Responding to questions, Councillor Larratt confirmed that a meeting is being convened regarding street lighting. In respect of Section 106 Agreements, Councillor Larratt advised that there is provision for elected Members to be involved in pre-planning and that a Protocol had been drafted. Regarding Travellers, the Police had agreed to use its S61 Powers more frequently, which was welcomed. Should proposals for a Travellers' Site be put forward they would be pursued.

Councillor Hibbert submitted his Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. Responding to supplementary questions, Councillor Hibbert advised that regarding the recent death of a rough sleeper, a case review would be initiated in the usual way. He added that rough sleepers can be identified should they stay in the Night Shelter and the formal process can then be followed regarding housing. Councillor Hibbert advised that the aim of the list for Direct Lets is to reduce it from over 350 to 200. Councillor Hibbert confirmed that he would liaise with Northampton Partnership Homes regarding the wording of their arrears letters that are issued to tenants. He confirmed the Outreach Team work with vulnerable homeless women.

Councillor Eldred presented his Cabinet Member report and highlighted the key points. He conveyed his thanks to the Billing Team and Post Room staff for successfully issuing bills to residents. Responding to supplementary questions, Councillor Eldred advised that the Guildhall Team has promoted and marketed the Guildhall, generating income. He was confident that the accounts would be signed off this year and value for money is being received from the Auditors, and value for money provided to the residents of Northampton.

At this juncture of the meeting, the Mayor advised that the time limit for Cabinet Member reports had been reached and no further Cabinet Member would elaborate on their reports.

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Beardsworth made a statement on “Tackling climate change, playing our part.” She commented that there had been a Climate Change debate over the years and gradually Government had concluded there is a threat to our planet. Good progress had been made in 2018; for example 5% reduction in the UK’s energy usage. Councillor Beardsworth highlighted the need for all to work collaboratively. There is a need for leadership and the Council to commit to reducing the carbon footprint in Northampton. Councillor Beardsworth added that there is a need to make progress now so that the work can be forwarded to the Unitary Authority to continue.

In response, Councillor Hallam agreed with much of Councillor Beardsworth’s statement and he referred to the recent demonstration, outside the Guildhall, that had taken place on climate change. He added that the collection charge for bulky waste had been reduced from £25 to £15, but it would be some time before it could be ascertained whether this reduction had made a difference in fly tipping. Recycling can also make a difference, for example in Far Cotton there has been a reduction in fly tipping of 14%. Councillor Hallam noted that climate change is complex and commented on the seriousness of plastics and the damage to the planet. He added that on 18 June 2019 a cross Party meeting comprising Councillors, Officers and young people had been scheduled.

Councillor Beardsworth reiterated that the Council needs to show leadership, there must be a clear plan on climate change that could be forwarded to the new Unitary Authority but the Plan must be worked on now. Northampton Borough Council needs to work with Northamptonshire County Council and the other districts on this and work on “getting people out of cars.” There is a need to improve insulations too and aim to reach Swedish insulation standards.

9. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF THE BOROUGH - POTENTIAL OPTIONS FOR CONSULTATION AND FURTHER ACTIONS

Councillor Larratt, as Deputy Leader of the Council, presented the report “Community Governance Review of the Borough - Potential options for consultation and further actions”, he drew Council’s attention to the report of Opinion Research Services (ORS) and the options for consultation. He added that consultation would be wide-reaching and it would initially be discussed by the Working Group. Councillor Larratt highlighted that it is important that Northampton and the Communities have a strong voice.

Councillor Nunn seconded the report.

Councillor Stone commented that a Northampton Unitary had been wanted and there was a real need for a strong voice for Northampton. She added that the Labour Group had no objections to Parish Councils but the voice of Northampton must not be diluted. She was pleased that two alternatives were going out to consultation. She enquired how the consultation would take place and emphasised the importance of this decision to the town.

Councillor Malpas commented that he could not support this report, the borough of Northampton is an ancient borough. He added that Councillors wanted to be one big Unitary and there was a need for Councillors to be united. He went on to refer to the

difficulties some Parish Councils can experience, adding that with a Town Council there is uniformity.

Councillor Beardsworth referred to consultation that took place some years previously regarding parishing the whole town and residents had not wanted this then. She acknowledged that Kingsthorpe had been proposed to be a Parish Council and she had not been consulted on this. She added that the proposals for a Kingsthorpe Parish Council were big and it would be bigger than the Town Council in Towcester. Councillor Beardsworth commented that residents had informed her that they did not agree with a Parish Council for Kingsthorpe. She suggested that locality based Councils should be investigated after the new Unitary Authority had been set up. A Town Council would have a strong voice for Northampton.

Councillor Birch advised that she was an advocate for Community Governance and supported a larger Town Council for Northampton. Councillor Birch felt that residents in her ward would want to be associated with Northampton, Civic and ancient traditions; which would fall in line with a Town Council. She commented that the town is suffering from an identity crisis.

Councillor Nunn commented that the report was asking Council to consider going out to consultation and let the people decide.

Councillor Davenport commented that she was speaking on behalf of the residents of Far Cotton. The residents want accountability. Parish Councillors do not receive an allowance, a Community Council would receive a precept. Residents felt that they had not previously been consulted with.

Councillor Smith advised that she concurred with Councillor Birch's comments. She emphasised that consultation must go out as far and wide as possible; it should not be restricted to Residents' Associations only. She added "Northamptonian" is key.

Councillor Meredith stated that consultation has to go out widely and every household must be issued with a letter providing explanations about the consultation. Other methods of consultation such as street stalls should be considered.

Councillor G Eales commented that there should be a Northampton Town Council and it should be about what the people want. There is a need to get the consultation right.

Councillor B Markham referred to the recommendations contained within the report and queried how this could be built upon. He added that costs of services are currently unknown and what services would be devolved from the Unitary Authority. He felt this was a rushed process and a new review should convene after the Unitary Council had been set up. A Town Council would keep the voices of Northampton and its identity.

Councillor McCutcheon commented that the majority of people feel they are "Northamptonians" and this should be reflected.

Councillor Hill advised that he supported the consultation detailed in the report. Town Councils and Parish Councils have the same level of power. Community Councils

should serve the people in that area and should be accountable to the people. He added that there would be costs but these would be determined by the local people and consultation needs to be inclusive.

Councillor Russell commented that she had concerns regarding finance and was aware that some Parish Councils had debts; one with a particularly large debt. In response, Councillor Golby advised that Duston Parish Council is proud of the services that it provides and it had borrowed money to be able to provide these services.

The Solicitor, Northampton Borough Council, advised Council that the proposed extension to Duston Parish Council was in two areas and he confirmed that there would be detailed consultation in Duston. The results of which could be presented to Council to consider. The Council in considering the first part of the consultation by Opinion Research Services referred to the recommendation that the nature and content of the next stage of the CGR consultation would be decided by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Working Group at its next meeting.

Councillor Hadland commented that divisions for the Unitary Authority would comprise three Northampton Councillors for each present division; he felt that they would fight for the identity of Northampton; joined by other Councillors.

The Deputy Leader advised that there was a need for the next stage consultation to take place; he added that residents of East Hunsbury and Grange Park, for example, are also very much "Northamptonians."

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 That the report of Opinion Research Services on the first stage of the consultation, after being given careful consideration, is noted with its content and conclusions taken into account for the next stage of the consultation process.
- 2.2 That the recommendations made by the Working Group at its meeting on 15 May 2019 are approved, to allow the two following options discussed at the Working to go forward for stage two of the Community Governance Review consultation process:
 - a) Option 'A' with enclosed map (Appendix B of the report)
 - b) Option marked 'B' with enclosed map (Appendix C of the report)
- 2.3 That the recommendations made by the Working Group at its meeting on 15 May 2019 are approved, to allow the two following submission to go forward for further consultation with their individual communities:
 - a) Submission by Duston Parish Council to extend its boundaries as shown in the enclosed plan (Appendix D of the report)
 - b) Submission from the Whitehills & Spring Park Residents' Association to create a new Parish Council title at this stage

Kingsthorpe Parish Council (Appendix E of the report)

- 2.4. That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Working Group, is delegated power to approve the form of the second stage of consultation under the CGR process to be carried out by Opinion Research Services.

Council adjourned at 8:55pm and reconvened at 9:10pm

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

The Mayor agreed to alter the order that the Notice of Motions would be considered.

The Mayor advised that Councillor Hibbert wished to withdraw Notice of Motion i), which had been seconded by Councillor King. Council agreed to the withdrawal of Notice of Motion i).

Councillors Aziz, Cali and Haque left the meeting at 9:20pm and rejoined Council at 9:30pm

Ms Rachel McGrath, Chair, Northampton Food Poverty Network, addressed Council on Motion iv) advising that the Network had been in operation for a number of years. She added that no one should have to go hungry and there are over one million children living in poverty. She referred to a Special Commissioners' report that had estimated that there are 14 million people living in poverty. Ms McGrath referred to the upcoming summer holiday period advising that this is when families look forward to breaks but it can create acute financial stress for others, particularly with the loss of free school meals over this period. Holiday hunger can cause stress. She added that there is a need for "Kids' Clubs" over the school summer holidays that provides both meals and activities. She highlighted that child poverty is becoming the norm.

Councillor Roberts proposed and Councillor T Eales seconded:

"Northamptonshire currently has 15,220 children receiving free school meals. For many of these children this is the only hot/substantial meal they receive.

During school holidays there is a loss of free school meals given out during term time, in addition to the extra childcare costs around the holidays, families already struggling with low budgets find it difficult to feed their children. This has the most impact over the longer summer holiday. Those children most at risk of hunger during the holidays may also suffer from social isolation, loneliness, and inactivity. These factors combined can lead to significant weight loss or gain, and negative impacts on physical and mental well-being.

In 2018 there were a number of campaigns run by charities such as Food cycle and End Hunger UK. There was a £2m fund for children's food from government, to help prevent Holiday Hunger.

We call on this council to work with Partners to establish Holiday clubs where children can receive social activities as well as food that will provide financial relief for parents on very low incomes, so that no child should go hungry over

the school holiday.”

The motion was debated.

Upon a requisition for a recorded vote, there voted for the recommendations:

Councillors Aziz, Beardsworth, Birch, Cali, Duffy, G Eales, T Eales, Haque, Joyce, B Markham, McCutcheon, Meredith, Roberts, Smith and Stone

There voted against the recommendations:

Councillors Ansell, Eldred, Golby, Graystone, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, J Hill, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, M Markham, Nunn, Oldham, Patel, Sargeant, Kilby-Shaw and Walker

There abstained the Mayor, Councillor Davenport.

The Motion was not carried.

Martin Sawyer addressed Council on Motion ii) commenting that he had been a Climate Change activist in his youth. He had studied ecology and had left University 36 years ago. However, people are now listening about climate change. There is a need for Northampton to become carbon neutral.

Steve Miller, Green Party, and a resident of Kingsthorpe, addressed Council on Motion ii) commenting on the need to take climate change seriously. He hoped that this Motion would be carried. Mr Miller referred to the draft Local Plan commenting that it makes no reference to energy efficiency in new builds. He noted that Northamptonshire County had agreed road widening at Cliftonville but he felt this was not the solution, there was a need to look for car reduction. Mr Miller added that trees should be planted, not chopped down.

Luke Adams addressed Council and commented that he cared deeply for the planet and was terrified for the future. The planet is beautiful and it is being killed, everyone needs to act soon and set zero carbon by 2025, 2030 is too late.

Ian Bates addressed Council commenting that he is a Community activist. He added that Climate Change is the most important issue that anyone should consider for children's future; their future is in crisis. He referred to a published report that had taken into consideration 6,000 reports. Emissions are rising annually. Mr Bates felt that there was no Political will to deal with this.

Abi Rowe addressed Council and she referred to the future for her four year old son and how she was afraid for his future. She added about the depleting insect chain and that the world is becoming unsuitable for children as the earth's life supporting system is breaking down. Ms Rowe added that emissions must be cut faster than currently planned.

Rob Farmer addressed Council commenting that scientists had first issued warnings

about climate change in 1992. Forests are depleting and animals becoming extinct. He added that it is important to reduce carbon emissions to zero and we need to act now.

Ruth Hemmingway addressed Council referring to two Notices of Motion in relation to climate change, she was concerned for the future of children and referred to starving Polar Bears and other species that have been wiped out.

It was agreed that Standing Order 25 is suspending to allow further business to be transacted. It was further agreed that Notices of Motion vi) and vii) would be deferred to the meeting of Council on 17 June 2019.

Councillor Hallam proposed an amendment to the motion ii):

Councillor Beardsworth accepted an alteration to the original motion. Council agreed to the altered motion and debated below:

“This Council recognises the strength of public opinion recently expressed in London and Northampton to address the issue of climate change and the need to address carbon reduction to protect the health and wellbeing of future generations. The council also notes that the UK parliament has declared a Climate Emergency.

The Council therefore declares “a Climate Emergency” in Northampton and commits to a target of making Northampton carbon neutral by 2030.

The Council requests a report to the Council at the beginning of 2020 setting out the action that has been taken in respect to this motion and detailing how progressing this objective has been communicated to and integrated within the start up plans of the West Northamptonshire Unitary Council.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

Lily Alston addressed Council on Notice of Motion iii). She commented that climate change is the future for everyone. She stated that recycling is high in Northampton but we are supporting other countries that will take the UK's waste, therefore being guilty of disposable waste. She concluded her address by asking that Northampton is the forefront of the world.

Councillor Joyce proposed and Councillor Nunn seconded:

“All parties within this council acknowledge the urgency of dealing with climate change. We need cross party agreement to develop strategies for a greener, more sustainable society in Northampton. A green revolution is required.

Working with partners we will seek to implement the following actions, which we strongly believe will benefit Northampton in leading an eco-friendly Britain:

- A ban on single-use plastics within school environments. Schools across Northampton produce a huge amount of plastic waste each week
- Northampton schools would benefit from educating their students on eco issues through school schemes, where programs could be set up in order to teach students how to stay green in lessons, such as Personal, Social, Health and Economic education or by holding educational assemblies with influential speakers.
- To help further reduce the damaging effects of plastic littering, the council should support and work closely with schemes operated by companies like TerraCycle who turn many unrecyclable plastics (such as crisp packets and wrappers) into outdoor furniture.
- To explore with Local businesses and partners options for an eco-rewards scheme that would allow individuals and groups to gain something back from recycling.
- Northampton Borough Council to commit to reducing carbon emissions, both as an organisation and as the local planning authority and resolve to go further than the UK100 Agreement. To act in line with the scientific consensus that we must reduce emissions to net-zero carbon by 2030, thus use the planning process to encourage developers to consider low carbon developments.

Joining many councils who have already done the same, NBC declares “a Climate Emergency” in Northampton and commits to a target, in line with the above actions, of making Northampton carbon neutral by 2030.

The Council requests a production of a baseline report to be submitted to the council in the beginning of 2020 setting out the action that has been taken in respect to this motion. This Council also resolves to work with other local authorities ahead of Unitary to use the baseline report as the basis on which to develop an action plan which could be adopted by the new Council.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

The Mayor advised that Councillor G Eales wished to withdraw Notice of Motion v), which had been seconded by Councillor Stone. Council agreed to the withdrawal of Notice of Motion v).

The Mayor advised that Motions vi) and vii) would be deferred to the meeting of Council on 17 June 2019. This was agreed by Council.

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

The Mayor confirmed that he had agreed to hear the following item as a matter of urgency. This was agreed by Council.

(A) HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) CAPITAL PROGRAMME BUDGET

Councillor Eldred proposed the report that sought approval of an increase in the HRA budget envelope and sought approval of Cabinet to approve new capital schemes and variations to existing schemes. He highlighted the salient points.

Councillor Hibbert seconded the report.

RESOLVED:

That Council approves:

- a) An increase in the HRA budget envelope by an additional £25M to enable additional HRA capital programme expenditure for 2019/20 funded through borrowing, for the acquisition of blocks of homes as the element of delivering affordable homes on major developments.
- b) An increase in the HRA budget envelope by an additional £6M to enable additional capital programme expenditure for 2019/20 funded through borrowing, for the acquisition or development of specialist homes (form of supported living) in support of Social Care outcomes.
- c) That Cabinet be authorised to approve new capital schemes and variations to existing schemes during 2019/20, subject to a business case, the funding being available and the schemes being in accordance with the objectives and priorities of the Council.

The meeting concluded at 10:22 pm