

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Wednesday, 20 January 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Nunn (Chair); Councillor Larratt (Deputy Chair); Councillors Eldred, Hadland, Hallam, J Hill and Hibbert

APOLOGIES: Councillor King

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor King.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2020 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. INTENTION TO HOLD PART OF THE MEETING IN PRIVATE IF NECESSARY

The Leader explained that due to the confidential nature of Appendix B relating to agenda item 8, this would be considered in private. However, the remainder of the discussion and the decision relating to this item would be made in public.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were no deputations or public addresses.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Nunn declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7 as a Director of Northampton BID (appointee of NBC).

6. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

6.A RESPONSE TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW - IMPACT OF THE MOVE OF THE UNIVERSITY

Councillor Hadland as the relevant Cabinet Member introduced the report responding to the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The first three recommendations had already been implemented. Recommendations 4 and 5 were to be kept under review.

Councillor Roberts acknowledged the contribution of residents in relation to recommendations 3 and 4. Considerable effort had been expended by them regarding parking permits. Councillor Roberts requested that residents were involved in discussions regarding noise barriers and insulation from the beginning, and considered it important that this was followed through to the unitary council.

Councillor Hadland gave credit to residents, who had worked for positive solutions in difficult circumstances.

RESOLVED:

2.1 Cabinet:

- (a) Accepted Recommendations 1, 2, and 3 in the Overview & Scrutiny Panel's report on the Impact of the move of the University; and

- (b) Accepted Recommendations 4 and 5 but agreed to keep these under review as noted in the report.
- (c) Congratulated the task and finish group on a high quality and comprehensive report and thanked the group for the time and effort given to produce it.

6.B RESPONSE OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW - NORTHAMPTON POST-UNITARY

Councillor Larratt as the relevant Cabinet Member introduced the report and acknowledged the work of Overview and Scrutiny on the future of the mayoralty and civic assets post unitary. A cross-party working group had led to the setting up of the Town Council and transfer of assets, delivering the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 Cabinet agreed the Overview and Scrutiny recommendations detailed below:-
 - 2.1.1 The Mayor of Northampton is retained and if necessary a Charitable Trust is set up for the Mayoralty. The Mayoralty is also retained at the Guildhall to protect Civic traditions and to promote our heritage.
 - 2.1.2 A Civic Quarter is created that includes our Civic assets.
 - 2.1.3 Should a Town Council be established, the Town Council should be located in the Guildhall, along with Mayoralty and its regalia to ensure the secure protection of the historic assets of the Borough Council.
 - 2.1.4 To protect civic pride in a wider Northampton area and consider that the proposed Unitary Council for the West of Northamptonshire should be called the Greater Northampton Council.
 - 2.1.5 It is ensured that the Maces, known as North, South, East and West, are retained in Northampton's Museum, in the borough and that all silver assets are made secure.
 - 2.1.6 Oak Apple day is a Borough Council tradition and it should be recaptured by the Borough. This would be the opportune time to reintroduce some of the civic events that have over time disappeared, for example May Day celebrations and celebrate other cultural celebrations.
 - 2.1.7 Other key roles of the Mayoralty must be protected, including:
 - The Mayor is the Chair of the Housebound Fund
 - The Mayor is the President of Town Twinning
 - The Mayor is the President for St John's Home
 - Honorary Freeman take place just once every civic term
 - Hereditary Freeman take the oath from the Mayor
 - 2.1.8 The re-establishment of the roles of Major's Serjeant and Town Serjeant, as Honorary roles, for example the office of Alderman or former Councillor are investigated and introduced.

2.1.9 Publicity and marketing of the Mayoralty is good; but it should be widened further to include proactive use of leaflets at locations such as the train station and libraries and more use of social media. 2.1.10 Cabinet is informed that it is the aspiration of the Scrutiny Panel that Northampton is a City of Culture by 2025.

nb. Cabinet noted that the Mayoralty and all the attached regalia were transferred by the relevant Statutory Order of the 24th February, 2020 to the new Northampton Town Council to take effect on the 1st April, 2021.

6.C RESPONSE TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW - FOOD POVERTY

The Director of Customers and Communities introduced the report which was a response to the report from Overview and Scrutiny presented at Cabinet in December 2020. There were 17 recommendations, some of which had already started to be implemented. Many relied on partners and would need to be moved to the new unitary council.

Councillor Stone was pleased that work was being done to ameliorate interventions and prevent poverty. However, she noted two unfolding issues. Firstly, nurseries were in crisis because they were unable to operate in a socially distanced way. Closure would prevent many parents from working. Secondly, the threat of withdrawal of the Universal Credit uplift. Food poverty was being addressed by the provision of food parcels, but problems of no oven, microwave or electricity still existed in some households. Councillor Stone suggested all local authorities should develop an anti-poverty strategy.

Councillor Roberts seconded Councillor Stone's comments and was grateful that some recommendations were already being implemented. She considered that it was dangerous to deal with poverty in silos and payment of a living wage should be taken seriously. MPs needed to be lobbied to change policy.

Councillor Hill pointed out that there was no national policy to remove the Universal Credit uplift at present. It would be reviewed in March after 12 months, but looked likely to continue.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet agreed the Overview and Scrutiny recommendations detailed below:

- 2.1.1 That a Working Group, owned by the Community and Engagement Team, is set up and tasked with analysing the gaps in foodbanks within Northampton and the Working Group works with Partners to seek solutions to increasing food provision within these areas.
- 2.1.2 That child poverty needs are included in any Strategy in relation to poverty, note that the process of developing an Anti-Food Poverty Strategy can of itself have wider impacts such as:
 - Raising the profile of food poverty, especially with local decision-makers
 - Developing a shared positive vision
 - Creating a sense of empowerment for experts by experience
 - Empowering diverse groups to raise their voices to call for food justice
 - Ensuring the local council and other partners take ownership of agreed actions
 - Sharing of good practice across local authority boundaries to support specific projects
 - Raising the profile of food poverty, especially with local decision-makers
 - Developing a shared positive vision

- Creating a sense of empowerment for experts by experience
- Empowering diverse groups to raise their voices to call for food justice
- Ensuring the local council and other partners take ownership of agreed actions
- Sharing of good practice across local authority boundaries to support specific projects

2.1.3 That Food Poverty Champions, who can identify the partners, who have the motivation and drive to bring all together lead on the production of an Anti-Food Poverty Strategy, which must include all demographics, ensuring that it is an all-inclusive Policy is investigated.

2.1.4 That with the move to the West Northamptonshire Authority, the way forward in relation to the production of an Anti-Food Poverty Strategy including the following adopted actions for local authorities as recommended by Sustain:

NB: The Scrutiny Panel updated some the actions recommended by Sustain so that they are more Northampton based

- Developing a food action plan to tackle food poverty
- Improving the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers
- Promoting breastfeeding via the Baby Friendly Initiative
- Promoting the need for children's centres
- Ensuring low-income families have adequate access to childcare
- Investing and developing children's access to food 365 days a year
- Becoming an accredited Living Wage employer and promoting the Living Wage
- Ensuring all residents have physical access to good food
- Supporting and enhancing meals reasonably priced and the provision of meals to vulnerable people
- Supporting financial advice services and providing crisis support

2.1.5 That a Working Group, led by the Community and Engagement Team, is set up and tasked with identifying areas where holiday hunger is a concern and to seek solutions to increasing food provision for children 365 days a year. In addition, the outcomes that have come out following the Marcus Ashford Scheme within Northampton are continued and built upon to ensure food provision is developed for all children 365 days a year.

2.1.6 That the Manager, HM Revenues and Customs is formally invited to visit food banks in Northampton, to work with customers and aid regarding budgeting and where further help can be obtained.

2.1.7 That the Universal Credit app is widely promoted.

2.1.8 That Officers are instructed to work with partners in generating more events such as summer festival where assistance in relation to food poverty can be highlighted.

2.1.9 That the Health Start Voucher Scheme is promoted.

2.1.10 That the promotion of food poverty is highlighted to allotment holders and shops regarding giving away excess produce as emergency food aid.

2.1.11 That it is recommended to Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) that it considers

reviewing Tenancy Agreements to ensure that support is provided to older people to ensure that they are in receipt of the correct pension credits.

- 2.1.12 That the Northampton Community Forums are asked that a presentation is given to each Forum, in particular the Older People's Forum, that promotes the provision of pension credits and how this can be applied for.
- 2.1.13 That it is recommended to the West Northamptonshire Authority that a Grants Officer is engaged with the main role of investigating funding for crisis support and the Grants Officer works closely with all organisations in this respect.
- 2.1.14 That it is recommended to the West Northamptonshire Authority that West Northamptonshire becomes a living wage Authority and a sustainable food Authority.
- 2.1.15 That the West Northamptonshire Authority is asked to lobby for national campaigns and challenge national Policy on food poverty.
- 2.1.16 That a copy of this report is provided to the MPs within West Northamptonshire and the MPs are asked to respond to the recommendations, in particular, recommendations 2.1.14 & 2.1.15.
- 2.1.17 Cabinet thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its detailed and robust report.

6.D RESPONSE TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW - HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPERS

Councillor Hibbert as the relevant Cabinet Member introduced the report accepting most of the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel. In respect of recommendation 6, engaging with criticism on social media had been found to exacerbate rather than resolve problems and in respect of recommendation 9, current legislation did not permit the provision of guaranteed job interviews for rough sleepers.

RESOLVED:

2.1 Cabinet:

- (a) Accepted Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10 and 11 in the Overview & Scrutiny Panel's report on Homelessness and Rough Sleepers; and
- (b) Congratulated the task and finish group on a high quality and comprehensive report and thanked the group for the time and effort given to produce it.

6.E RESPONSE TO OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW - GANGS AND KNIFE CRIME

The Director of Customers and Communities outlined the report responding to the recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny regarding guns and knife crime. The Community Safety Manager had already started to progress these recommendations, although some were reliant on working with the unitary council and other agencies.

Councillor Duffy expressed the view that early intervention in schools was key to avoid Northampton youth from resorting to gangs and the temptation to carry a knife as a form of defence.

The Director of Customers and Communities advised that these comments would be taken on board. Best practice initiatives from Merseyside were being implemented and a link to a Free to Talk video had been provided.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet agreed the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as below:

Collaborative working

- 2.1.3 That the current work and programmes undertaken by the Community Safety Team regarding knife crime is continuous and becomes more strategic
- 2.1.4 That the Community Safety Manager is charged with working with all relevant organisations and agencies so that they collaborate and enhance joint bids for funding in respect of dealing with gangs and knife crime.
- 2.1.5 That Northampton Borough Council works with other Agencies and Groups in the town to coordinate the youth provision/offer in the Borough.
- 2.1.6 That Northampton Borough Council leads on Multi Agency Training, regarding issues relating to gangs and knife crime, to bring all Multi Agency work together.
- 2.1.7 That a meeting with the Community Safety Team, NBC, and Community Courtyard is convened regarding involving its work.

Facilities for Young People

- 2.1.8 That all potential funding streams are investigated so that youth clubs, and other facilities for young people are brought back into the town.
- 2.1.9 Funding is the core as all activities cost money and it is ensured that the costs should not be passed onto the young people.
- 2.1.10 That in recognising that the most difficult area appears to be liaising with families, when safe to do so, the Community Safety Team has a stand at a family fun day; or a similar event is organised remotely.

Best Practice

- 2.1.11 That the Community Safety Team liaises with Officers at Merseyside regarding their best practice initiatives in dealing gangs and knife crime and aim to mirror such initiatives in Northampton.
- 2.1.12 That all Councillors are provided with the link to the short film produced by young people, via Free2 Talk - Knives end Lives: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCnUZyfekL4> and encouraged to watch it.

6.F RESPONSE TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW - ADULT SOCIAL CARE FACILITIES

Councillor Hibbert as the relevant Cabinet Member presented the report seeking approval of the recommendations of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The report on Adult Social Care Facilities was extensive. It explored demand, need and current facilities, and had been shared with the other West Northamptonshire Councils and would be taken forward by

the unitary council.

Councillor Hibbert advised that recommendation 4 in the original report relating to the hospital discharge scheme should state that Kettering learnt from Northampton's experience rather than the other way round. Northampton have had a dedicated housing officer working with the hospital since May 2015.

Councillor Stone was pleased to note the recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny but was concerned that there were elderly residents who were not known to social services and were socially isolated. This had been made worse by the loss of day centres. Councillor Hibbert advised that Northampton Partnership Homes have strong connections with elderly tenants. However, there could be scope for volunteers to make doorstep connections to enable the necessary referrals to be made.

The Leader expressed thanks to Overview and Scrutiny for the work carried out, and to officers for their responses. Councillor Larratt echoed these congratulations and asked whether a report would be passed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the new West Northamptonshire Council to ensure the work was continued and progress was not lost. The Borough Secretary advised that he would brief officers to ensure this was done.

Information note: In view of the limited time before unitary, relevant costs from the implementation of the Overview and Scrutiny recommendations will not fall on NBC and will be an issue for the unitary council

RESOLVED:

2.1 Cabinet:

- (a) Noted the recommendations in the Overview & Scrutiny Panel's report on Adult Social Care Facilities and confirmed that a copy of the report had been shared with Northamptonshire County Council, Daventry District Council and South Northants Council; and
- (b) Congratulated the task and finish group on a high quality and comprehensive report and thanked the group for the time and effort given to produce it.

7. NORTHAMPTON BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT RENEWAL

Councillor Hadland as the relevant Cabinet Member presented the report proposing the renewal of the Northampton Town Centre Business Improvement District, which was required every 5 years. The work done in the last 12 months had shown the value of a town centre champion.

Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agreed to instruct the Ballot Holder (the Local returning Officer) to conduct a ballot of local businesses in accordance with legislation, in order to determine whether the proposal for the renewal of Northampton Town centre Business Improvement District may proceed.
- 2.2 Agreed to delegate to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Councillor Hadland, the authority to exercise the council's rights to vote in the ballot on behalf of the Borough Council.

8. FUTURE USE OF THE NEWTON BUILDING

Councillor Hadland as the relevant Cabinet Member presented the report updating Cabinet on the plans for the Newton Building, following the decision to purchase Avenue Campus. The Newton Building had previously been a school. Northampton Partnership Homes were currently using accommodation which was not fit for purpose and a move to the Newton Building with a conventional commercial lease would be a positive step.

Councillor Hadland noted that recommendation c) required an amendment of his title to Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise (not Economy and Assets).

Councillor Larratt requested that the interior of the Newton Building be retained and looked after. It was a Grade II listed building which included a panelled library and hall.

Cabinet deferred the decision on this item until after discussion of the exempt Appendix B in private session. After reconvening, the following decision was then made in public.

RESOLVED:

2.1 Cabinet:

- a) Noted the intention of Northampton Partnership Homes, to relocate from the Westbridge Depot site, to the Newton Building to release the depot for appropriate uses, noting that the Newton Building provides more suitable office accommodation for the Council's Housing delivery partner.
- b) Noted that the Acting Director for Economy and Assets has delegated authority within the constitution to agree commercial terms for leases for less than 21 years, the Heads Of Terms will therefore be progressed using the usual constitutional process, with both sides having legal representation in addition to full consultation with West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) S.151 Officer.
- c) Noted that the Acting Director of Economy and Assets will consult the Director of Housing and Wellbeing, the Chief Finance Officer, the Borough Secretary, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing, before exercising the delegation referred to in recommendation b above.
- d) Noted that if the lease cannot be concluded by the 1st April 2021 then this work will need to be concluded by the new West Northamptonshire Council through their governance processes.
- e) Agreed to receive further reports in connection with the use of the Newton Building as part of a regular Capital Project Management updates.

9. PROPOSED MAKING OF A PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER - ALLEYWAY BETWEEN DUNSTER STREET AND ST. MICHAELS ROAD

In the absence of Councillor King, the Leader presented the report. The PSPO provided a flexible power to implement restrictions for a period of three years before being renewed. This had gone out to consultation and there was clear support to renew the PSPO.

Councillor Stone paid tribute to residents, Councillors and officers for working together to achieve this outcome. Residents had undertaken leafleting and social media publicity. They had also reported anti-social behaviour and fly tipping. Councillors had installed planters, which were being maintained by residents.

Councillor Hallam noted that the build-outs were a hot spot for fly tipping and suggested the unitary council should be petitioned for their removal.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1. Cabinet resolved to make a PSPO which restricts public access to the alleyway linking Dunster Street and St Michaels Road (“the PSPO”), as shown on the plan attached to the draft PSPO at **Appendix 1** and which is part of the public highway, for a period of three years, in accordance with section 59 of the Act.
- 2.2. Cabinet authorised the Chief Executive to install and maintain gates at each end of the alleyway linking Dunster Street and St Michaels Road in order to restrict public access to that highway, in accordance with section 64 (7) and (8) of the Act, and to obtain planning permission for that installation.
- 2.3. Cabinet authorised the Chief Executive to authorise persons and Northamptonshire Police Constables to enforce the PSPO and issue Fixed Penalty Notices (“FPNs”) of £100 for any breaches of it, in accordance with section 68 (1) of the Act.
- 2.4. Authorised the Borough Secretary to complete all of the statutory processes required to make the Order as set out in section 72 of the Act and regulation 2 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (Publication of PSPOs) Regulations 2014.

10. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Chair moved that the public and Press be excluded from the next part of the meeting on the grounds that there was likely to be disclosure to them of such categories of exempt information as defined by Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 as listed against such items of business by reference to the appropriate paragraph of Schedule 12A to such Act.

The exempt Appendix B to item 8 was to be considered in private session, but following this, Cabinet would reconvene so that the decision relating to this could be made in public.

The Motion was Carried.

The meeting concluded at 7:05 pm