

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 2 June 2014 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

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

COUNCILLORS: Caswell, Ansell, Aziz, Beardsworth, Begum, Bottwood, Capstick, I. Choudary, Conroy, Davies, Duncan, Eales, Eldred, Flavell, Ford, Glynane, Golby, Gowen, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, King, Larratt, Mackintosh, Malpas, Markham, Mason, Mennell, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Palethorpe, Patel, Sargeant, Stone, Strachan and Yates

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Capstick declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in Item 7 – Cabinet Member Reports as former Member of WNDC and a current Member of the WNDC Audit and Risk Committee.

Councillor Hadland declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in Item 7 – Cabinet Member Reports and as former Member of WNDC and a current Member of the WNDC Audit and Risk Committee.

Councillor Hibbert declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in Motion i) as Secretary to the Northampton Rail Group

2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 28th April 2014 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillor Marriott, Subbarayan, N Choudary, Hill, Lane, Lynch and Parekh.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor announced that all future Council meetings there would be a recess during proceeding where a comfort break would be had.

The Mayor further announced that on the 8th June 2014 a special service at the town's War Memorial in Abington Square would be held, followed by a military parade through the Town Centre. Council were further notified that a memorial service would be held for Councillor Wire DL at the Guildhall on the 19th June 2014.

The Mayor congratulated the Saints on their recent achievements and expressed his enjoyment of the celebrations that were had on June 1st 2014.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

Judith Hodgkinson addressed Council and commented that the sale of the Sekhemka statue could result in the loss of accreditation for the Museum of Northampton and argued that it was both ethically and morally wrong to sell that statue. She asked that all documents relating to the sale be made public to allow them to be effectively scrutinised and requested that the sale be stopped or at the very least postponed.

Ruth Thomas addressed Council and commented that a recent announcement in the Chronicle and Echo showed plans for a £14 million extension to the museum. She questioned where the funding would come from as the museum would only gain half the amount of funding from the sale of the statue and would lose its accreditation, thus losing its future funding.

Leo Boyle addressed Council and commented that by selling the Sekhemka statue the people of Northampton were being deprived of a Museum Artefact which had been donated to them. He stated that £40,000 of Council tax payers money had already been wasted on the sale and urged the administration to reconsider and put Sekhemka back into the museum.

Phil Leach addressed Council and commented that with regards to the depedestrianisation of Abington Street, hundreds of messages had been left during the 'chalk up' and submitted a copy of the online responses he had received from members of the public. He further commented that the recent European Elections had demonstrated people's disillusionment with main stream political parties and urged Councillors to recognise the dangers associated with a rise in far right political thinking and extremism.

Morcea Walker addressed Council and commented that the Northampton Carnival Arts Consortium had worked tirelessly to improve Delapre Park and for the first 6 years of the carnival being held there, there had been no issues. Since relocating, she reported that there had been a loss of 9 traders on last year's number and urged the Council to reconsider and hold the Carnival at Delapre Park again.

sAlexander Pradere-Johnson addressed Council and asked for the Carnival to be located in Delapre Park. He stated that it was an event that embraced and celebrated diversity from all residents of Northampton and asked that the work of the Carnival Committee be recognised and asked that assistance be given to ensure that the carnival be held in Delapre Park to guarantee a sustainable, safe and family friendly venue.

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Mayor advised that 7 questions had been received from members of the public and Councillors and that the answers had been tabled in accordance with the Constitution.

Questions and answers given were as tabled (included in an updated agenda on the website) unless where stated supplementary questions were asked – detailed below.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 1, Councillor Mackintosh commented that all Cabinet meetings were held in public but that there was a need for some legal information to be kept confidential.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 2, Councillor Mackintosh commented that he had read the report written by the University of Northampton with regards to depedestrianisation but noted that it was not relating to Northampton and referred to other locations such as Vienna and Rio de Janerio.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 3, Councillor Mackintosh said that the opening up of Abington Street was a unanimous decision of the Conservative Group.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 4, Councillor Eldred stated that the expected legal costs likely to be incurred from the sale of sekhemka to be in the region of £10,000. He stated that he was not sure where the figure of £40,000 had come from.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 5, Councillor Eldred stated that all procedures and processes had been followed and that he was confident that the funding would be in place there would be no loss of ongoing funding.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 6, Councillor Hadland stated that they had always been virgin media cables in Abington Street and that the costs had been considered in the overall budget.

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

At this point, each of the Cabinet Members made a presentation of their respective portfolios that had been circulated with the agenda.

Councillor Mackintosh submitted his Cabinet Member report and congratulated the Saints on their achievements and noted that 30,000 people had visited the town centre to join in the parade through the Town Centre and was honoured to have the rugby team visiting. It was noted that on the 7th May 2014 a Women's Cycle event had been held and that the Delapre Beer Festival had been a great success and noted that it was encouraging to see the town centre and local parks thriving. It was noted that it had been a pleasure to welcome Kris Hopkins MP to attend a ceremony to mark the beginning of Cosworth Engineering's new £12 million Manufacturing Centre.

In response to the concerns raised by Morcea Walker, Councillor Mackintosh commented that he would very much like the Carnival to be held in Delpare Park but that there were issues with the drainage system and therefore it would be impractical to hold the carnival on the site. In response to a question asked by Councillor Davies, Councillor Mackintosh commented that he had recently visited a park in Briar Hill to see the equipment that had been vandalised and commented that he continued to work hard with FODA. Responding to a question asked, Councillor Mackintosh informed Council that all building work was going well during the phase 2 stage of the Castle Railway Station and that he was extremely happy with the progress.

Councillor Markham submitted her Cabinet Member report and commented that on the 12th May 2014 the new ALMO had been announced – the Northampton Partnership Homes, who would manage 12,000 homes and considered the best at meeting the needs of residents. In response to a question asked, Councillor Markham noted that she did not have the exact figures that amounted to the 99.9% of rent collections being met but would email the information to the relevant Councillor. Responding to a further question, Councillor Markham explained that Phase 3 of the Decent Homes contract was well underway and that a number of problems had been experienced with the new contractors but that the Administration were committed to the Decent Homes Project and that they had introduced a hotline for Councillors and members of the public. It was noted that there were 6 service improvement panels, members of which were working extremely hard.

Councillor Bottwood submitted his Cabinet Member report and stated that there good financial management was ongoing and offered his praise to the Revenue and Benefits team who had transferred to LGSS which was reflected in the Key Performance Indicators. In response to a question asked regarding the New Homes Bonus and a recent planning application refusal, Councillor Bottwood explained that this was a reflection of Localism and that any costs incurred by a lack of New Homes Bonus would be accommodated in the budget. In response to a further question, Councillor Bottwood explained that the cost of opening Abington Street and the savings to be made to staffing levels were unrelated and that staffing levels were constantly under review. He further explained that opening up Abington Street to traffic would generate income to both businesses and the Council and explained that a business plan had been presented and that consideration to all businesses in the town needed to be considered.

Councillor Hadland, as the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning concurred with Councillor Bottwood and noted the New Homes Bonus had not yet been implemented by Central Government and expressed optimism that any financial costs incurred would not necessarily be as damaging as first considered.

Councillor Hadland submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted that there was a week-long exhibition underway as part of the Northampton Alive project and noted that the development of the new facility at Cosworth would see the creation of 70 new jobs. In response to a question asked, he informed Council that the demolition of Greyfriars and the removal of asbestos had been done in line with the necessary regulations.

Councillor Glynane proposed that Council Procedural Rules be waived so that the time allowed for Cabinet Member Presentations be extended.

Upon a vote the motion was lost.

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Capstick commented that there had been a large amount of growth and development within the town centre but noted that there were still areas of dereliction. She recognised that it was not necessarily an easy issue for the Council to deal with as some of the derelict properties lay on private property but urged the Administration to speed up progress, specifically the old Royal Mail building and requested that derelict buildings be bought back into use as soon as possible. She further noted that some building, such as Greyfriars, needed to be demolished but asked that St Edmunds and other similar derelict buildings be dealt with promptly.

Councillor Mackintosh commented that he understood the frustrations with regards to derelict sites and assured Councillor Capstick that he would look into the problems she mentioned.

Councillor Capstick commented that it would be helpful if the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning support relevant planning applications in the future that would encourage sites of dereliction to be developed.

9. NOTICES OF MOTION

Jill Hope (County Councillor) commented that St James' residents had been pushing for a change in the area to ease the congestion experienced by residents and commuters and asked that careful consideration be given to ensure that any diversion or change would not exacerbate existing congestion problems. She suggested that gated access be considered to ease traffic problems specifically on match days.

Graham Croucher commented that St James' Residents had been lobbying to get the road opened up between St James Mill Road and St James Retail Park but that it had taken a long time for any progress to be made. He stated that the Council should put pressure on Network Rail and requested that Council not to dismiss the prospect of having a bridge built over the dismantled railway.

Rufia Ashraf commented that traffic and parking in the affected area was causing havoc to the lives of the residents and that congestion in the area needed to be addressed. She further noted that there were difficulties in Argyle Street when people were using the Mosque for Friday Prayers and raised concerns about match day parking, suggesting that consideration be given to a Park and Ride scheme and more enforcement from the Police and Wardens.

- i) Councillor Eales proposed and Councillor Capstick seconded that:

“This Council notes that Cllr Wire seconded a motion on 12th September 2011 supporting the joining up of St. James Mill Road and the road end in St. James Retail Park.

This Council notes how long this policy has been in existence, disappointingly without resolution.

Linking up these particular roads would ease congestion on Peters Way and the roads in St. James and Far Cotton, which also means less pollution. It would increase the economic viability of the southwest district and particularly the Waterside Enterprise Zone and the new Rail Station. Also the major problem of heavy traffic on Saints and Cobblers match days would be much improved.

This Council asks the Cabinet to continue in putting pressure, by whatever means they see as necessary, on the Secretary of State for Transport and Network Rail to have the rail line dismantled as soon as realistically possible.

However, if this course of action proves problematic (as suggested in the Northampton Chronicle & Echo 15/5/2014), then an alternative option, such as a bridge, should be considered and implemented at the earliest opportunity.”

Councillor Mackintosh proposed and Councillor Hadland seconded an amendment.

Amended motion to read:

“This Council notes that Cllr Wire seconded a motion on 12th September 2011 supporting the joining up of St. James Mill Road and the road end in St. James Retail Park. This Council notes how long this policy has been in existence, disappointingly without resolution.

Linking up these particular roads would ease congestion on St Peters Way and the roads in St. James and Far Cotton. It would increase the economic viability of the southwest district and particularly the Waterside Enterprise Zone and the new Railway Station. Also the major problem of heavy traffic on Saints’ and Cobblers’ match days would be much improved.

This Council recognises the work already undertaken by the Administration, working with the County Council, Brian Binley MP, Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership and SEMLEP, to push Network Rail on decommissioning the rail line as early as possible and asks the Cabinet to continue in putting pressure by whatever means they see as necessary”.

Council debated the amended motion.

Upon a vote the amended motion was carried.

ii) Councillor Stone proposed and Councillor Mason seconded that:

“This Council notes the Sekhemka statue is due to go to auction on 10th July.

This also notes Arts Council England (ACE) has warned that the sale could

jeopardise Northampton Museum's Accreditation status.

This Council further notes that the Museums Association's (MA) ethics committee has urged Northampton Borough Council to rethink its sale of an ancient Egyptian statue.

This Council ask the Cabinet one last time to reconsider selling of the statue, so it can be enjoyed by the people of Northampton and visitors to the town."

Council debated the motion.

Upon a requisition for a recorded vote:

There voted for the motion: Councillors Aziz, Beardsworth, Begum, Capstick, Conroy, Davies, Eales, Glynane, Gowen, Mason, Meredith, Palethorpe, Stone and Strachan .

There voted against the motion: Councillors Bottwood, I Choudary, Duncan, Eldred, Flavell, Ford, Golby, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, King, Larratt, Mackintosh, Malpas, Markham, Nunn, Oldham, Patel and Sargeant

There abstained the Mayor and Councillor Mennell.

The motion was lost.

iii) Councillor Palethorpe proposed and Councillor Stone seconded that:

"This Council notes the 'People's March for the NHS' starts in Jarrow on 16th August and finishes in London 6th September.

This march is highlighting the detrimental impact Government policies are having on the NHS.

This Council further notes it follows the spirit of the Jarrow Crusade in October 1936, which saw 207 people troop to London to highlight mass unemployment in Britain

It will be going through 23 major towns and cities and will arrive in Northampton on September 2nd.

This Council supports the NHS. It is one of our most important institutions.

This Council is pleased the People's March for the NHS is passing through our town and we will welcome them to Northampton when they arrive."

Council debated the motion.

Upon a requisition for a recorded vote:

There voted for the motion: Councillors Aziz, Beardsworth, Begum, Capstick, Conroy, Davies, Eales, Glynane, Gowen, Mason, Mennell, Meredith, Palethorpe, Stone and Strachan .

There voted against the motion: Councillors Ansell, Bottwood, I Choudary, Duncan, Eldred, Flavell, Ford, Golby, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, King, Larratt, Mackintosh, Malpas, Markham, Nunn, Oldham, Patel, Sargeant and Yates.

There abstained the Mayor.

The motion was lost.

iv) Councillor Beardsworth proposed and Councillor Glynane seconded that:

“Rogue landlords cause increasing problems for residents on Northampton. This administration has introduced new licensing rules recently. However, the LGA say “the current system limits Council’s ability to stamp out poor quality and dangerous property conditions” and as such, these new rules are likely to have a limited effect.

This Council therefore resolves to write to local Members of Parliament, asking them to back the LGA campaign to lobby Government to toughen powers of local Councils to tackle rogue landlords effectively”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

10. 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 9.22pm