

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 6 June 2016 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

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

COUNCILLORS: Malpas, Eales, Ansell, Ashraf, Beardsworth, Birch, Bottwood, Cali, Caswell, Choudary, Chunga, Culbard, Davenport, Duffy, Eales, Eldred, Flavell, Gowen, Hadland, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, Hill, Hill, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Russell, Sargeant, Shaw, Smith, Stone and Walker

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hadland declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in Item 7 – Cabinet Member Presentations as a Trustee of Delapre Abbey Conservation Trust.

2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18th April and the 19th May 2016 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors Golby, Aziz and Lynch.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor announced that he had attended a court tea party for the Queen's Birthday and had attended a function at Buckingham Palace.

The Mayor reminded Council that the Northampton Carnival would to be held on Saturday 11th June – with his Guide Dog Verity and urged Councillors and members of the public to attend the event.

The Mayor also announced that a Curry Night was being held at the Maha Raja on Sunday 3rd July 8pm and asked for those interested in attending to contact the Mayor's Office.

The Mayor finally requested Members to donate items for an auction to be held on the 3rd September 2016 for the Mayor's charity.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

Mr Norman Adams addressed Council and expressed his concerns in relation to the increased crime rates, specifically violent crimes. He further commented that the

funding cuts to 'Shopmobility' were unfair and that it created a false economy.

Mr Phil Leach commented that a recent tragic accident had resulted in the death of 4 young adults and that asked that shrines and memorials left in remembrance had been cleared by the Council after 2 days and asked that in the future, they be left for a week as a means of respect. He further commented that the funding cuts to 'Shopmobility' would result in disabled people being punished.

Mr David Green stated that cuts in funding to 'Shopmobility' were disgraceful and would further disadvantage people with disabilities. He further commented that accessibility to the Town was important to those less able bodied and urged the Council to reconsider the funding cut.

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Mayor advised that 15 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 given were as tabled (included in an update agenda on the website) unless where stated, supplementary questions were asked, as detailed below.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 1, Councillor Hibbert explained that homeless people were housed in Council properties and not through private lettings agencies. He also noted that the Council had introduced a Social Lettings Agency to assist with housing issues.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 2, Councillor Hibbert explained that the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) was set by central Government and that the level reflected the lowest 30% of these rents.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 7, Councillor Bottwood explained that they were working hard to ensure all areas of the Town Centre were being cleaned and cleared up.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 13, Councillor Bottwood explained that the clearing up of the Racecourse after events would be the responsibility of the events holders, officers, the Council and EMS.

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

Councillor Markham, as the Leader of the Council, submitted her Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. She explained that she was committed to working with Leaders of all Councils in Northamptonshire to review and promote consideration of

local government reorganisation. She further noted that LGSS would continue to provide Finance, Revenues and Benefits and IT Services, noting that the delegation of HR and legal services would end in 2017. She further elaborated on the Rough Sleepers Strategy which would be considered by Cabinet on the 8th June, to manage the issue of rough sleepers in Northampton.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Markham confirmed that the Greyfriars site would not accommodate any buses. She further noted that the potential development of the site was not going to be a temporary job, but that the longevity of the development was of utmost importance. Responding to further questions it was explained that with regards to LGSS, the contract entered into had been partly for cost-cutting reasons, but that there was the need to realign the service.

Councillor Nunn submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted the commitment of the Council to the improvement of the Town Centre, stating it was a top priority. He stated that Northampton were very lucky to have major sporting teams and welcomed all of their achievements.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Nunn stated that boosting retail in the Town Centre was a priority, but explained that the current financial climate was unfortunate but that the Administration were committed to making the Town Centre as attractive, clean and as safe as possible for visitors and residents. Responding to further questions, he confirmed that he would be urging the sports clubs to take on apprenticeships and would encourage and try to facilitate sports clubs working with schools. He commented he would be happy to discuss, with the Ward Councillor, the situation of Thorplands Club 81 and the possibility of arranging a pavilion. He further commented that he would work with the Ward Councillor in East Hunsbury to look at proposed changes to the football pitches.

Councillor Hadland submitted his Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. In response to questions asked, he confirmed that he would be working with the Railway Station to ensure the safety of disabled people using the facilities.

Councillor Hallam submitted his Cabinet Member report and reported that a night time economy weekend multi-agency hub had been established in partnership with McDonald's at their premises on the Drapery. It was also noted that the Town Centre BID was also funding 'Street Wardens' who would provide additional support in key areas of the Town Centre.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Hallam explained that there were numerous reasons for increased overall crime figures including an increased number of thefts from motor vehicles due to expensive technology being left on display to changes in the reporting of some crimes such as domestic abuse. He further explained that tackling violent crime was a priority of the Council and that the collaborative working with streets pastors would help to ensure safety.

At this juncture, Councillor Larratt proposed the suspension of Council procedural rule 25 to extend the period of time for the Cabinet Member Presentations. This was seconded by Councillor Beardsworth. This was voted upon and was carried.

Councillor King elaborated on her Cabinet Member report and explained that whilst there had been a reduction in the amounts that some organisations had received, the funding was limited. In response to questions asked, Councillor King commented that she would work with officers and members of the Disabled People's Forum to explain the position of reduced funding to Shopmobility and commented that she had already assisted some people by helping them apply for grant applications. Responding to further questions, Councillor King explained that she would be happy to share the Equality Impact Assessment information with regards to those awarded funding to gather information regarding age, sex and ethnicity. In response to a further question, Councillor King commented that an urgent Forum meeting would be arranged which she would attend to address and answer any concerns.

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Stone made a statement as set out in the agenda. She questioned where the money had gone from the Sixfields loan and spoke of the cost of the Hardingstone appeal. She referred to the LGSS contract and stated that a plan was needed to end the unsuccessful venture and that consideration should be given to the financial deficit of Northamptonshire County Council. She stated that there was a need to make a contribution to the migrant crisis in Northampton and spoke of the biggest challenge was the lack of housing in the Town.

The Leader responded by stating that LGSS had not been an unsuccessful venture as it saved the Council money, but that there was a need for some of the services to be bought back in house. Councillor Markham also stated that the Council were not helping migrants, but that it had been made clear by Northamptonshire County Council that there was a lack of funding, school place and social care in place for increased capacity.

In response, Councillor Stone commented that she welcomed the information that migrants were not unwelcome.

9. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2015/2016

Councillor Lane, as the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, proposed a report to note the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2015/16 and thanked the Scrutiny Officer for their work.

Councillor Sargeant seconded the report and spoke in favour of the cross party working that had been undertaken as part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

That Council noted the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16.

10. CHANGES TO CONSULTATION APPOINTMENTS

Councillor Patel proposed a report that sought confirmation to changes to the

membership of the Community Enabling Fund Advisory Group.

Councillor Oldham seconded the report.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Kilbride replaces Councillor Sargeant on The Community Enabling Fund Advisory Group.

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr Norman Adams addressed Council on Motion i) and stated that he supported the motion as the housing stock was being diminished and that there was no economic sense in the Right to Buy Scheme.

Council noted that the proposer of Motion i) had agreed to incorporate the amendments submitted by the Conservative Group and agreed to the alteration (as below).

i) Councillor Ashraf proposed and Councillor Chunga seconded:

“This Council notes in April 2012 the Coalition Government increased the discounts available for council tenants who buy their home using Right To Buy. This Council notes it was also announced that receipts from RTB would be used to replace the housing stock. This Council believes that RTB has been beneficial to tenants. We currently have plans to replace those lost under RTB. Since the announcement in March 2014 to build 100 new homes in Dallington we have lost at least 202 properties but plans are near completion to replace these in line with the Government requirement within 3 years.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was lost.

ii) Councillor Davenport to propose and Councillor Cali to second:

“This Council believes we need to secure more temporary / emergency accommodation of an appropriate standard in Northampton.

This Council must strive, as far as reasonably possible to secure accommodation within Northampton. The Council must try to place an applicant as close as possible to their social networks.

This Council believes it is not acceptable that some vulnerable people are placed in Wellingborough, particularly if they have children who go to school in Northampton.

This Council calls upon the Cabinet to explore ways of increasing the supply and the quality of our temporary and emergency accommodation offer within the next two

years.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a requisition for a recorded vote;

There voted for the Motion: Councillors Ashraf, Beardsworth, Birch, Cali, Choudary, Chunga, Culbard, Davenport, Duffy, G Eales, T Eales, Gowen, Haque, Marriot, McCutcheon, Meredith, Russell, Smith and Stone.

There voted against the Motion: Councillors Bottwood, Caswell, Eldred, Flavell, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, J Hill, M Hill, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, Markham, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Sargeant, Shaw and Walker.

There abstained the Mayor.

The Motion was lost.

12. 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 8:52 pm