

## MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 10 December 2018 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

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

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

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ashraf declared a personal interest as a board member on Northampton Partnership Homes.

### 2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2018 were agreed

### 3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors Meredith, Choudary, Caswell and Graystone.

### 4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor welcomed the newly elected Councillor Emma Roberts to the Council.

The Mayor announced that he had recently attended the opening of the Metro Bank on Abington Street and had supported and participated in International Men's Day.

The Mayor further announced that on the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2018, he had attended the 'Road Traffic Victims Day' which was held at the Holy Sepulchre.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Kilbride for printing the Mayor's Christmas Cards. He also gave thanks to the work of the Salvation Army in the Kingsley Ward. The Mayor noted that he had visited a number of residential care homes and that he would continue to do so in the run up to Christmas.

The Mayor explained that in conjunction with his Mayoral cause, he invited Mr Stan Robertson to the Council meeting to explain to the Chamber the work that he was doing around the Town for the homeless people in the Town.

Mr Stan Robertson invited 2 young volunteers that he had worked with that had inspired and humbled him in the compassion that they had demonstrated towards

those less fortunate than themselves, especially towards homeless people.

Anya (9) explained that she wanted to help homeless people and wanted to make a wish that every homeless person receive a gift over the Christmas period.

Levi (12, soon to be 13) said that he felt sad that there were many homeless people who did not have a family who would look after them and that he very much wanted every homeless person to be given a gift and some food and also food for their dogs.

Mr Stan Robertson explained that he ran a local project that supplied breakfast for local homeless people every day of the week. He stated that poverty and homelessness was not a problem; a lack of humanity was. He commented that there was a need for people to demonstrate compassion and understanding and to recognise the value of every person regardless of their personal circumstances.

## **5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS**

Three Hope Centre users spoke to the Council and explained their positive experiences and the changes that they had been able to make to their lives and their futures and the support that they had received from members of staff at the Hope Centre had greatly improved their lives and given them the opportunity to get off the streets. They each gave one word that they felt represented what the Hope Centre had given them: 'Humanisation', 'Safety' and 'Future'.

A petition was submitted calling on Midland Heart to rescind the eviction notice and honour the commitment to provide a permanent home for the Hope Centre at Oasis House.

## **6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Mayor advised that 4 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 (included in an updated agenda on the Council's website) unless where stated, supplementary questions were asked as detailed below.

Councillor Hibbert, in response to a supplementary question asked relating to question 2, explained that the resources were in place to support homeless people if a SWEP is issued.

Councillor Hallam, in response to a supplementary question asked relating to question 3, explained that the timetable for the implementation of the low emission strategy was underway and that all the relevant information was available on the website.

## **7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS**

Councillor Nunn, as Leader of the Council submitted his report and elaborated thereon. He explained that the next steps with the Unitary project would be the

critiquing the Structural Change Order and noted that although written by Government, they would champion the interests of Northampton residents. The Leader further explained that he had recently met with the acting Chair of the Hope Centre and that the administration were committed to continuing their support to the service. He noted that there were a number of homeless people who were difficult to reach out to and that in such circumstances, there was a real need for partnership and multi-agency working.

In response to questions asked, the Leader explained that he would meet with the Leader of the opposition and the Chief Executive to discuss information relating to Churches Conservation Trust. He responded to a further question by announcing that the administration were committed to supporting the Hope Centre. The Leader further responded to questions and confirmed that currently the Council were continuing with Unitary and noted that it was anticipated that the elections for May 2019 would be postponed. He explained that the progress on St James Mill link road had been temporarily halted as the related costs had increased considerably due to large amounts of contamination to the land which was not known originally.

Councillor Larratt elaborated on his Cabinet Member report and explained that there was one update which was that a draft report would be presented to Cabinet in the near future on webcasting.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Larratt explained that a report on 'Updated motions' was to come to a future Council once additional details had been included. He commented that he was disappointed to see the recent arson attack on the Market Square of one of the market stalls. In order to attract new traders, he explained that there was a lot of advertising and a social media project. He further noted that should food- stalls be encouraged to the market square and extension in trading hours would be considered. He noted that some market traders would be supporting the 'People's Plan. He confirmed that the current Sunday market would only be in situ until Christmas. Councillor Larratt explained, in response to questions asked, that he would be happy to write to Network Rail asking them to provide some protection to the elements for train passengers waiting outside of the station. He further noted that he would be willing to look at the prospect of supporting local farmers markets once he was fully briefed.

Councillor Eldred submitted his Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon, reminding members that the draft budget would be considered at Cabinet on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018. In response to questions asked, he confirmed that the debt collection recovery was 97% and it was anticipated that this would increase. He explained that Universal Credit was a Government decision that had to be implemented. In relation to the homelessness budget, Councillor Eldred explained that there had been a significant increase in spending but considered it a necessity to ensure people did not have to sleep on the streets.

Councillor Hill elaborated on his Cabinet Member report and noted that a planning application for the development of 17 dwellings and retail units at the former Tanners Pub had been approved. He explained that work continued on the production of the Local Plan Part 2.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Hill explained that he would share information about the value and apportion of finances for Section 106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levies. He explained that in relation to the viability of the percentage of affordable houses, this was assessed independently.

Councillor Hadland elaborated on his report and responding to questions asked, confirmed that the number of new business start-ups that had failed were 2 in the Business Incentive Scheme (BIS). It was noted that the tender documents for Vulcan Works had been reviewed and a report would be submitted to the January 2019 Cabinet meeting.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Hadland stated that the decrease in footfall was on par with the national average and that the Town Centre had become better and cleaner of late. Responding to questions relating to Albion House, it was noted that it had been purchased as a strategic option for the Council. In response to questions asked, Councillor Hadland noted that he was aware of the parking issues near to the University and commented that he, along with the Cabinet Member for Planning would speak to the Ward Councillor about her concerns. He further explained that work on the Eleanor Cross would soon be underway.

Councillor King elaborated on her Cabinet Member report and responded to questions by explaining that the 2 additional Police Officers were being fully funded by the Council and were not being taken away from their duties. She thanked those who had contributed to the successful Christmas light switch on in the Town Centre. Responding to further questions, Councillor King stated that she would explore whether she could acquire information from the police on stop and search figures for a future meeting.

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

## **8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS**

Councillor Stone stated that residents were living in increasingly uncertain times with the prospect of the creation of a Unitary Council, Brexit and the introduction of Universal Credit. She reported that homelessness figures had increased both nationally and in Northampton and expressed her concern that it would get worse. She explained that life expectancy had decreased and a direct correlation could be made between that and increasing poverty. She stated that air quality, crime and child poverty in Northampton was falling below the national average and asked that more be done to address the issues in 2019. She noted that the local media had been promoting and questioning the public on ways to improve the town centre. She called for Councillors to join her in requesting local MPs to stop the cuts that are being imposed on local authorities and look to adopt an anti-poverty strategy.

In response, Councillor Nunn commented that there was a need for people to talk up the Town and to be proud of the history and heritage of Northampton. The Leader listed the achievements of the administration in 2018 and spoke of the completed

restructure under the new Chief Executive, a decrease in the number of interims employed, more Council homes being built than under any other previous administration, winning gold in East Midlands in Bloom and improvements to the Drapery. He explained that there were many more achievements that were notable and considered the list to be indicative of a successful and progressive Council.

Councillor Stone stated that there was a lack of recognition of the deep damage that had been done to some residents of Northampton, with a cap on benefits but not on rents, colossal use of foodbanks due to ongoing deprivation and poverty and suggested that the administration look at other Councils such as Liverpool and Salford and their anti-poverty strategy to address the challenges that residents of Northampton faced.

## **9. NOTICES OF MOTION**

Anne Wankiiri addressed motion i) and noted that many BAME women were affected by domestic abuse and that was exacerbated by a number of conflicts such as their immigration status; she explained that many women from African countries were distrusting of the police, due to their experiences of corruption in their countries of origin,) and were therefore not able to access the help that they needed.

Marianne Kimani stated that the difference between domestic abuse of white women and BAME women was that there were many instances of forced marriages, rape within the extended family and honour killings and asked that a working group be established to specifically address such issues.

Maheepjot Kaur commented that whilst there were numerous incidents of domestic abuse, there was a distinct lack of support for the victims. She stated that BAME women could be abused by extended family members and that this was exacerbated by guilt and shame; some women lacked faith in established systems and referred to the financial controls that their abusers had, which forced them to remain in the abusive relationship or face destitution.

i) Councillor Ashraf proposed and Councillor Stone seconded:

“BAME (Black and minority ethnic) women are disadvantaged, economically, socially and politically. They are also subject to increasing levels of domestic slavery and domestic abuse. There is a growing issue with women and their children without recourse to public funds. We know there is an issue with FGM. We therefore call on Northampton borough council to establish a working group with and for BAME women to examine the issues, and with partners, to suggest solutions”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon the requisition for a recorded vote there voted for the motion: Councillors Ashraf, Beardsworth, Birch, Cali, Chunga, Davenport, Duffy, G Eales, T Eales, Haque, Joyce, B Markham, Marriot, McCutcheon, Roberts, Russell, Smith and Stone.

There voted against the motion: Councillors Aziz, Bottwood, Eldred, Flavell, Golby, Hibbert, Hill, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, M Markham, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel,

Sargeant, Shaw and Walker

There abstained the Mayor.

The motion was lost.

Charlotte Creasy spoke on motion ii) and explained that many young girls were having to improvise with their periods as they were experiencing period poverty. She reported instances of women, and girls, using socks and rags as substitutes for sanitary products. She referred to the 'Red Boxes' explaining that they were used for all experiencing period poverty to access free sanitary products. She further reported that the Red Box project had been very successful in schools and she had continued to support and donate sanitary products to foodbanks and youth clubs and expressed her concern that this was an issue being faced by women.

ii) Councillor Smith proposed and Councillor T Eales seconded:

"Period Poverty has long been recognised as an issue for women with those who can least afford it, suffering the most. There are several national campaigns that aim to support women and make a stand against period poverty such as "Bleeding Insane Campaign" and "Red Box".

We think that is a disgrace that in 2018 anyone should have to choose between buying food and buying Tampons, or that women and girls are missing work or school because they cannot afford sanitary products. The average cost to a women is £4,800 during their life for sanitary products.

We call on the council to become ambassadors and set a great example for other businesses to follow by:

1. Provide free sanitary products in all council work place bathrooms.
2. Establish a red box donation point and join the Red Box Project.
3. Work with our local to communities to raise awareness of this issue"

Council debated the motion.

Upon the requisition for a recorded vote there voted for the motion: Councillors Ashraf, Beardsworth, Birch, Cali, Chunga, Davenport, Duffy, G Eales, T Eales, Haque, Joyce, B Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Roberts, Russell, Smith and Stone

There voted against the motion: Councillor Aziz, Bottwood, Eldred, Flavell, Golby, Hallam, Hibbert, Hill, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, M Markham, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Sargeant, Shaw and Walker.

There abstained the Mayor.

The motion was lost.

Zoe Tatham addressed Council on motion iii) and explained that refuges had no funding in place and that by 2019 they would need financial support and whilst she recognised the importance of the money that the Council had previously given, she requested that Members support the motion and ensure that the refuges stay open.

Natreice Westwood stated that she had been in contact with a victim who had been isolated and the implications of the abuse she had suffered had significantly impacted on her mental health. She reported that once support had been given to the victim and her children, she had been offered support and had been tutored in identifying warning signs in perpetrators of violence.

Nicky Hornby spoke as the development manager of EVE and explained that they offered a holistic approach to supporting both the victims and the perpetrators (who recognised their need to change) and reported that since March 2017 they had received no funding from the Borough Council. She stated that they were currently supporting themselves by using their reserves but noted that they wanted to take steps to prevent closures.

iii) Councillor T Eales proposed and Councillor Stone seconded:

“Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Service (formerly women’s aid) do valuable work to support victims of domestic abuse. They currently run 5 refuges with 21 beds, which will not be funded from April 2019. Partner organisation Eve is at risk of losing 13 beds. NDAS have launched a fundraising campaign to raise £100k by March to keep the refuges open for 12 months. Losing these refuges will mean that the responsibility of helping these victims out of abusive homes will fall onto NBC.

We therefore call upon this council to not only recognise NDAS for the service they have been providing to domestic abuse victims but to give some much needed financial assistance”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

Brian Hoare addressed Council on motion iv) and stated that he was pleased to support the motion. He commented that he considered the Council’s website as somewhat inadequate as he had found it very difficult to find information on Air Quality management and associated data and asked that consideration be given to the issuing a monthly update on the air quality of the Councils website that would be easy to access.

The Mayor noted that an amendment had been proposed by Councillor Hallam and noted that Councillor B Markham had accepted the amendment. The altered motion had would be seconded by Councillor Hallam:

iv) Councillor B Markham proposed and Councillor Hallam seconded:

“This Council recognises the value of openness and transparency in communicating with the public about air quality and the steps that it is making to monitor and to reduce air pollution.

This Council notes that other authorities, such as Kings Lynn and West Norfolk District Council, make effective use of corporate websites to share information about air quality monitoring in an accessible way, including regular monthly publication of raw data from air quality monitoring tubes.

Northampton Borough Council resolves to review the accessibility, frequency of update and timeliness of the air quality data and activity published on its own website in order to match the openness and transparency achieved by other local authorities.

This Council also notes that it is important that members of the public understand that the raw data can only be properly analysed and trends assessed after a 12 month period to take account of any seasonality or specific in-month events that might skew the data such as road traffic closure.

Council also notes that this is a highly complex and technical area of work and resolves to work openly with all those with appropriate expertise in this area.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

At this juncture of the meeting, Councillor Beardsworth thanked the Democratic Services Manager for her work and wished her well in the future.

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

There were no items to be considered as a matter of urgency.

The meeting concluded at 9.47pm