

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 20 July 2020 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

PRESENT: HIS WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR Councillor Sargeant (in the Chair).

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

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting held 15 June 2020 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillor Flavell.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor invited Council to save the date for his Charity Civic Service on Sunday 21st February 2021. The Mayor highlighted several notable events that had recently taken place including Srebrenica, which was commemorated online, Northampton's Pride week and the Battle of Northampton at Queen Eleanor's Cross. He announced that online charity fundraising campaigns for the Lowdown were in progress and charity pots would be placed in local businesses. On Sunday 26 July 2020, the Mayor would be celebrating Liberia's Independence Day online. He reminisced on last year's wonderful event and shared that he was looking forward to this year's celebration on Sunday.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

The Mayor announced that three members of the public had registered to speak. Jayne West requested to speak before Motion ii was debated, and Ruth Hemmingway requested to speak before Motion iv was debated.

At the Mayor's invitation, Keith Buckby addressed Council and announced that an open letter from the Northampton Town Football Club Supporter's Trust had been submitted to the Council this week.

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Mayor advised that thirteen questions had been received from Councillors and that the answers had been tabled in accordance with the Constitution. Questions and answers were given as tabled unless where stated, supplementary questions were asked as detailed below.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 9, Councillor Hadland confirmed that the Leader had regular contact with the Northampton Town Football Club Supporters Trust.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 13, Councillor Hibbert confirmed he was aware of the micro-home scheme in Cambridge and explained that NBC was looking into a range of housing projects.

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

Councillor Nunn presented his report as Leader and highlighted that there were no current plans for colleagues or members to return to the Guildhall, and home working was going well. Support for businesses continued to be issued in the form of grants with over £32.81m paid to local businesses in Northampton. The Leader explained as a Board Member of the Town Centre BID, he had been attending regular meetings and this focussed on reopening local businesses. He thanked the licensing department for their support and guidance. In terms of Future Northants activity, he updated Council that the current focus was working towards ensuring that West Northants would be 'Safe & Legal Plus' for vesting day on 1st April 2021. In answer to a question regarding the condition of the local economy due to Covid-19, the Leader responded that no forecasting was currently available, and that the economy is what we make it, so we need to all work together to bounce back from the pandemic. In answer to a question regarding the environment and promotion of walking and cycling, the Leader responded that active travel money was available for encouraging walking and cycling and NBC had asked the county council to change Weedon Road to a 24-hour bus and cycle lane. In response to a question regarding the pursuit of residents for Council tax payments and the use of bailiffs, the Leader responded that Councillor Eldred would have more information on this matter, and the Council were keen for payments to be made so that services would continue to be delivered.

Councillor Larratt presented his report as Deputy Leader and reiterated his thanks to Democratic Services who have successfully facilitated the transition to remote meetings, and colleagues at NBC for their hard work. In terms of the streetlight project, he was pleased to see the Racecourse with the new lights installed. In response to a question on a vetting process for market traders, the Deputy Leader confirmed there was a process and details could be confirmed by the market manager. In answer to a question on the reopening of the coroner's court, the Deputy Leader responded that this was a responsibility of Northamptonshire County Council. In response to a question on a briefing session to be arranged for members on the future plans for rail, the Deputy Leader confirmed he was happy to agree to a briefing in the future.

Councillor Hadland, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise, presented his report and explained that in terms of the community asset transfers, Parish

Councils continued the due diligence process. He explained that two SEMLEP projects had been brought forward and he commended staff issuing business grants for their hard work. In response to a question regarding the asset transfers and changes to council tax, Councillor Hadland responded that council tax may decrease, but Parish Council's may increase council tax so it may remain the same to cover costs as land continues to be maintained. In answer to a question regarding the development of the Weston Favell Health and Wellbeing Hub and if consultations would include those in the Eastern district, Councillor Hadland confirmed that it would include them.

Councillor Hallam, the Cabinet Member for Environment, presented his report and highlighted the error on page 39 with the table of statistics. He announced the deep cleanse programme was still underway and had received positive feedback from residents. In answer to a question regarding statistics, Councillor Hallam confirmed that these could be found within Councillor Larratt's report. In terms of fly tipping a trial was being investigated offering CCTV in volunteer residents' homes to catch perpetrators. In answer to a question regarding maintenance of street furniture and the cleaning of refuse lorries, Councillor Hallam confirmed a full sanitisation regime was in place and he would take forward points on Councillor Terry Wire's bench. He confirmed that street furniture had been recently replaced on Abington Street. The deep cleanse would be taking place on Adelaide Street in Semilong this week. In response to a question on the bins by Blackthorn School, Councillor Hallam confirmed that he did remember the walkabout and would follow up the matter.

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor G Eales delivered his statement on "A Recovery Plan for Northampton – Clean, Safe and Green." He expressed that the Covid-19 pandemic had highlighted inequalities in society and exposed those from the poorest backgrounds. He stressed the need for a recovery plan and contingency plan, given the worldwide pandemic, and likelihood of a worldwide depression. He shared his concerns for those out of employment and feared that mass unemployment would become the norm. He hoped that a generation of employment and creation of new jobs would become available to support local people. He expressed the need for the Cobblers stand to be completed, and recreational activities after the pandemic. He reiterated the need for a contingency plan, as a second-wave pandemic could occur.

In response to Councillor G Eales' statement, the Leader echoed his concerns and explained it was an important issue that would require joint party working. He explained he was committed to the local living wage and community resilience would continue to be available to support the most vulnerable. He confirmed the stand would be built, and SEMLEP strategic planning was underway and the Northants economic cell would continue to monitor the local economy.

9. MEMBER/OFFICER PROTOCOL

At the Mayor's invitation, Councillor Nunn proposed the report as recommended by the Standards Committee.

Councillor Larratt seconded the report.

RESOLVED:

That full Council noted and thanked the Standards Committee and relevant officers for their work on the Protocol on Member/Officer relations.

That full Council considered the comments of the Standards Committee on the draft Protocol on Member / Officer relations, subject to any additions Members may consider appropriate.

That full Council approved the Member/Officer Relations Protocol attached as Appendix one for adoption into the Council's Constitution and delegates the power to the Monitoring Officer to incorporate the changes into the constitution.

10. CHANGE TO COMMITTEE PLACES

Councillor Patel proposed the report which sought Council's approval for Councillor Parekh to replace Councillor Hibbert on the Audit Committee.

Councillor Oldham seconded the report.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Parekh replaces Councillor Hibbert on the Audit Committee.

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

Councillor Smith proposed and Councillor Stone seconded.

"Predictions are there is going to be a spike in evictions this Autumn following the Covid-19 crisis moratorium on evictions and the movement of people. Our social lettings agency has an ever more important role to mitigate against this happening. We call on the Council to invest to save by renting or buying up houses to let in the private sector where tenants or landlords are defaulting."

Council debated the motion.

Upon a requisition for a recorded vote:

There voted for the motion: Councillors Ashraf, Beardsworth, Birch, Cali, Choudary, Davenport, Duffy, Eales G, Eales T, Haque, Joyce, Markham B, Marriott, Meredith, Russell, Roberts, Smith and Stone.

There voted against the motion: Councillors Ansell, Aziz, Bottwood, Eldred, Golby, Graystone, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, Hill, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, Malpas, Markham M, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Shaw and Walker.

There abstained: Councillors Chunga and Sargeant.

The motion was lost.

Jayne West addressed Council and expressed both her own and residents' concerns regarding cleanliness in Northampton. Ms West stressed that fly tipping in Northampton was a long-standing issue, which affected residents' wellbeing, community pride and potential economic investment.

Councillor Russell proposed and Councillor Ashraf seconded the motion.

“Since lockdown began on 26 March, the borough of Northampton has been overwhelmed with illegal dumping and fly tipping, filling our streets and any available vacant area with evil smelling and unsightly rubbish. Our residents pay their ever-increasing council tax and find themselves facing the most appalling situations. We call on the Council to set up a multi-agency team to track down perpetrators and ensure the appropriate action is taken:

- against criminal and illegal operators who knowingly rob their customers by charging for the removal of rubbish, which is later dumped in our streets;
- against landlords who dump household waste on pavements;
- against and being seen to impose hefty fines on social groups and partygoers who leave piles of used food containers and bottles on our parks;
- to actively support tenants and residents who want to use the recycling depots but for whatever reason are unable to, and;
- to work with the University to offer a collection service to student landlords.”

Council debated the motion.

The altered motion was carried.

Councillor King proposed and Councillor Nunn seconded the motion.

“This Council recognises the importance of Northampton’s arts and cultural sector as the ‘soul’ of Northampton and will work with our Conservative MPs and central government to access Northampton’s portion of the record-breaking national support package, the biggest ever one-off investment in UK culture. This will not only help to secure local jobs, but also mean that our iconic venues can weather the storm created by coronavirus and come back stronger, and continue to be there for local residents and future generations to enjoy. This council will work tirelessly to ensure that this sector emerges from this crisis by continuing to invest in the work of our Heritage, Culture and Communities team in order to provide the support required.”

Council debated the motion.

The altered motion was carried.

At the Mayor’s invitation, Ruth Hemmingway addressed Council as a resident of Abington. She expressed that she was shocked to see this motion and to see the Council would be supporting the development of the North-West Relief Road and Orbital Road. She suggested that alternative greener methods of transport be explored, given that the Covid-19 pandemic had seen an increase in home-working as well as walking and cycling.

Councillor Birch proposed and Councillor Joyce seconded the amendment to the motion.

Upon a requisition for a recorded vote:

There voted for the altered motion: Councillors Ashraf, Beardsworth, Birch, Chunga, Duffy, Eales G, Eales T, Haque, Joyce, Markham B, Marriott, Meredith, Russell, Roberts, Smith and Stone.

There voted against the altered motion: Councillors Aziz, Bottwood, Davenport, Eldred, Golby, Graystone, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, Hill, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, Malpas, Markham M, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel and Walker.

There abstained: Councillors Cali and Sargeant.

The altered motion was lost.

Councillor Larratt proposed and Councillor Aziz seconded the motion.

Upon a requisition for a recorded vote:

There voted for the altered motion: Councillors Aziz, Bottwood, Eldred, Golby, Graystone, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, Hill, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, Malpas, Markham M, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel and Walker.

There voted against the altered motion: Councillor Beardsworth.

There abstained: Councillors Ashraf, Birch, Choudary, Chunga, Duffy, Eales G, Eales T, Haque, Joyce, Markham B, Marriott, Meredith, Russell, Roberts, Sargeant, Shaw and Stone.

The motion was carried.

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 9:38 pm