

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY**Minutes of the meeting of the
North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority
held virtually (and at Swanspool House, Wellingborough)
on Thursday 17 September 2020****Those present:**

Councillors: Abram, Addison, , Anslow, Aslam, , Beattie R, Beattie T, Beeby, Bell (Chairman), Brackenbury D (Vice-Chairman), Brackenbury W, Brookfield, Brown M, Bunday, Burton, Carr, Carter, Cassidy, Clark, Currall, Dady, Dalziel, Davies, de cappell brook, Dearing, Dutton, Edwards, Ekins, , Ferguson, Francis, Gell, Greenwood-Smith, Griffiths, Groome, Hakewill, Hales, Hallam, Harrington, Harrison, Henley, Hollobone, Holloman, Horley, Howell, Howes, Hughes D, Hughes S, Jelley, Jenney B, Jenney D, Keane, Lawman G, Lawman L, Lee, Lewis, Mark, Matthews, Maxwell, McGhee, Mercer A, Mercer G, Mitchell, Morrall, North, O'Hara, Partridge-Underwood, Peacock, Pengelly, Perry, Pinnock J, Reichold, Riley, Roberts, Rowley, Scanlon, Scarborough, Scott, Scrimshaw, Shacklock, Skittrall, Smithers, Smith-Haynes, Stanbra, Stanton, Stevenson, Tebbutt, Thurland, Titcombe, Tomas, Tye, Walia, Waters M, Waters V, Watts Keli, Weatherill, Wellings, West, Wilkes, Wright and York;

Officers present: Mrs E Elliott, Interim Head of Paid Service (NNSA); Mr B Gill, Interim Monitoring Officer (NNSA); Mrs T Grant, Chief Executive (NCC); Mr G Hammons, Interim Chief Finance Officer/Section 151 officer (NNSA); Mr P Goult, Joint Lead Democratic Services Manager (NNSA); Mrs A Ireson, Democratic Services Manager (KBC), Mrs C A Mundy, Senior Democratic Services Officer (Committees & Members) (BCW), Miss L Tyers, Senior Democratic Services Officer (ENC), Ms F McHugo, Democratic Services Officer (NNSA), Mrs E Robinson, Democratic Services Officer (BCW).

1. APOLOGIES

RESOLVED to note that apologies were received from Councillors Adams, Allebone, P Beattie, C Brown, Caine, Eyles, Farrar, Henson, McEwan, Peacock, Pinnock, Pinnock J, West, C Wright (15)

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Groome made a declaration as an employee of Northamptonshire County Council's Library Service.

RESOLVED that this declaration be noted.

3. MINUTES OF THE NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW MEETING HELD ON 20 AUGUST 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2020 were received. It was moved by Councillor D Brackenbury and seconded by Councillor Aslam that the minutes be approved.

The chairman put the proposition to the vote.

Members voted, using the electronic poll on the Zoom platform. There were 82 votes in favour, one against and three abstentions. The motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority held on 20 August 2020 be approved.

4. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE 11B

RESOLVED to note that no questions, from the public, to address the meeting had been received under meeting procedure rule 11B.

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH MEETING PROCEDURE RULE 11A

RESOLVED to note that no questions, from members, to address the meeting had been received under meeting procedure rule 11A.

6. APPOINTMENT OF STATUTORY OFFICERS FOR THE NEW SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM OF NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

The circulated report of the chairman of the senior appointments committee was received to recommend to the shadow authority the permanent appointment of the senior and statutory officer roles for the new leadership team for the North Northamptonshire Council.

The following recommendations were put to the meeting:

- Janice Gotts be appointed as Director of Finance and Statutory Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer) to be appointed to a salary of £135,000 (within the advertised grade of £130,000 - £140,000);
- Adele Wylie be appointed as Director of Legal and Democratic Services and Statutory Monitoring Officer, to be appointed to a salary of £110,000 (within the advertised grade of £110,000 - £115,000)
- David Watts be appointed as Director of Adult Social Services and Statutory DASS officer to be appointed to a salary of £135,000 (within the advertised grade of £130,000 - £140,000);
- Cathy Hadley be appointed as Shared Director of Children's Services and Statutory DCS (joint with West Northamptonshire Council) to be appointed to a salary of £150,000 (within the advertised grade of £145,000 - £155,000)

Members discussed the appointments and, for clarity and assurance, asked how the decisions were made on the appointment of the successful candidates, and how performance would be dealt.

It was confirmed that a national recruitment campaign had been launched in May 2020, developed by leaders in conjunction with the future northants HR programme and Penna a recruitment partner. Seven candidates had undertaken the technical assessment process and five had been shortlisted and interviewed.

A transparent and inclusive selection approach was agreed and this included the involvement of councillors and stakeholders. A main interview panel was formed along with member panels and partner panels. The partner panels included representatives from the Police, Health Service and the voluntary sector.

The report detailed the recommendation for appointment of each candidate, details of the interview panel and a summary of the candidate's employment history.

Members were also informed that as all candidates were currently local government employees and that there would not be a probationary/trial period. Any issues would be dealt with under the performance management process in line with all employees.

Councillor Martin Griffiths formally proposed the above appointments and this was seconded by Councillor Lesley Thurland.

Members voted on the proposal using the electronic poll on the Zoom platform. There were 85 votes in favour, zero votes against and six abstentions. The motion was declared carried.

The report also informed members that the current interim officers for the roles of Head of Paid Services and Monitoring Officer had indicated their wish to end their interim designations. In accordance with the requirements of the Northamptonshire (Structural Changes) Order 2020 there was a need to appoint to these two positions.

Councillor Griffiths thanked, both Liz Elliott and Bhupinder Gill for their hard work over the last few months, and proposed that Graham Soulsby be appointed as the Interim Head of Paid Service and Martin Hammond be appointed as Interim Monitoring Officer.

This was seconded by Councillor Thurland.

An electronic vote was taken, using the Zoom platform. There were 86 votes in favour, zero votes against and four abstentions. The motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED that approval be given to the following appointments:

- (i) Janice Gotts, as Director of Finance and Statutory Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer); to be appointed to a salary of £135,000 (within the advertised grade of £130,000 - £140,000);
- (ii) Adele Wylie as Director of Legal and Democratic Services and Statutory Monitoring Officer; to be appointed to a salary of £110,000 (within the advertised grade of £110,000 - £115,000);
- (iii) David Watts as Director of Adult Social Service and Statutory DASS officer; to be appointed to a salary of £135,000 (within the advertised grade of £130,000 - £140,000);
- (iv) Cathi Hadley as Shared Director of Children's Services and Statutory DCS (joint with West Northamptonshire Council): to be appointed to a salary of £150,000 (within the advertised grade of £145,000 - £155,000);
- (v) Graham Soulsby as Interim Head of Paid Service;
- (vi) Martin Hammond as Interim Monitoring Officer.

The chairman and members extended congratulations to all, and wished them every success in their new positions.

7. NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE UNITARY COUNCIL DRAFT BLUEPRINT FOR APPROVAL

The circulated report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing was received to set out the draft blueprint for North Northamptonshire Unitary Council and how services were generally expected to be organised at vesting day.

Three speakers were welcomed to the meeting. Steven Ester and Dez Dell spoke about the issue of climate change expressing their concern that there was little mention of this in the blueprint documentation for North Northamptonshire, both considered that priority needed to be given to this subject and called for a dedicated Climate Board to be established to give instruction and advise on preventative measures and address the current climate emergency.

John Chadwick also addressed the meeting regarding his concern over 'forgotten children' who had gone missing from the education system. His concern was over who, in the future, would be responsible for these children. He also wanted to ensure that preventative measures were put in place, with early assessment of a child being imperative. Many of these children had complex needs and if help wasn't forthcoming they would be permanently lost to education and a good future.

The chairman thanked the speakers for their input.

The Leader of the Shadow Authority, Councillor Russell Roberts, addressed the meeting and clarified that the recommendation in the report at 2.1.1 was for noting, not approval.

Anna Earnshaw presented the report to the meeting. She detailed the work that had been undertaken on the designs for the two new unitary councils, which had been considerably affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The focus

of the Future Northants programme had changed to ensure that on vesting day the focus was for a 'safe and legal' transfer, to ensure that services would safely operate, with all 'must haves' being in place to comply with the Structural Changes Order deadline of 1 April 2021.

Where possible implementation transformation would also take place and the services of the county council would be split into the two new unitary footprints from day 1 to reduce service and staff disruption.

The draft blueprint, appended to the report, represented a functional view of how services would be formed. This provided the foundation to commence discussions with staff and unions about how staff will be designated to the North or West Northants councils and will form part of a consultation process on future plans and TUPE arrangements.

Adults Social Care were already creating its new Shadow North and West Structures ahead of vesting day. This would align the changes that had resulted from service transformation, which was already underway, to ensure minimal disruption for staff and adults customers on day 1.

The report referenced the new council 'service maps' setting out how each unitary council will be made up from the county council and district and borough services. This was complex with existing contract arrangements needing to continue and there were recommendations that one of the new councils would act as the 'lead' commissioning council or temporary 'host' of such services.

The county council functions would be designated into four areas, for disaggregation, externally provided, hosted or lead.

The current functions of the North district and boroughs would transfer to the North Northamptonshire Council. The majority of employees would remain in their current locations on day 1. Members were assured that services would continue to operate safely and effectively on day 1, with minimal disruption to employees and no disruption to residents.

The future aspiration for both the North and West councils would be for those living in Northamptonshire to 'grow up, get on and grow old'.

The blueprint provided the foundation for developing the future designs and plans for the new council and linked into the work of the task and finish groups to shape the future organisation.

Future budgets for North Northamptonshire Council would also need to take into consideration the disaggregation of the county council services and additional costs of splitting services, along with the aggregation of district and borough services and impacts created by Covid-19.

Paul Helsby also addressed the meeting; he explained that this was 'living document' and the start of the process not the end. This was not a policy document, policies would be developed moving forward and a more detailed blueprint would also be circulated for further discussion. Many changes would be made to this blueprint.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Councillor North and seconded by Councillor David Jenney.

Members debated the report.

Members commended the work that had been undertaken on the blueprint in what had been extremely difficult circumstances during the pandemic. The comments of the speakers were addressed and Climate Change was of importance and would be addressed in the work of North Northamptonshire Council. The concerns over children lost to education was also highlighted and it was agreed that it would be imperative for support to be given to these children and it would be essential for this to also be included in work plans.

Some members expressed that there had been insufficient input from backbench members and cross-party consultation. It was commented that there needed to be more scrutiny of the document.

Other councillors assured all members that this was a living document and that this would drive and determine the future services and how they were provided. There were positive comments about the introduction of 10 community hubs for adult's services to give access at local levels which was considered important..

Councillor Scrimshaw thanked Mrs Earnshaw and Mr Helsby for their informative presentation and referenced an updated and more detailed blueprint that had been circulated but was yet to be scrutinised. He proposed an amendment to the recommendation to 2.1.3 of the proposal within the report as follows:

“that the authority notes the publication of the more detailed blueprint on 14 September and to ensure proper review that this version go to the next Overview and Scrutiny committee as part of wider consultation with all elected members to ensure that expectations and aspirations were met. This proposed amendment was seconded by Councillor Henley.

A lengthy debate ensued on the proposed amendment.

Many councillors commented that they felt that as backbenchers they were being disenfranchised and were not able to scrutinise the decisions that were being made by the shadow executive and that few were making decisions for many. The next full shadow authority meeting was not due to be held until February and a lot of decisions would need to be made prior to such meeting. There was concern that the shadow executive had approved the blueprint prior to the overview and scrutiny committee seeing it. The detailed version would also be approved by the shadow executive without scrutiny. Comments were also made that task and finish groups were held in private and the agendas and notes therefore had not been made available to all councillors. Some felt that there were a lot of issues that had been overlooked and needed more member involvement.

Other members felt that there was the opportunity for scrutiny – members could raise issues at any point and if they had questions or concerns these could be expressed. There was consultation taking place on the blueprint and

this was the opportunity for all to voice their concerns. It was imperative that work progressed on this as quickly as possible. Members were reminded that this document was for noting not approving and again that it was a work in progress. All members agreed that a high level of scrutiny was vital, the particular concerns raised over climate change and the use of One Angel Square were both on the radar.

The chairman closed the debate.

Councillor Addison proposed that a recorded vote be taken on this amendment; this was supported by more than 17 of her fellow councillors.

The Joint Head of Democratic Services read out all councillors' names and asked them to state if they were for the amendment, against the amendment or wished to abstain from the amendment.

The following votes were cast:

In favour of the amendment: Councillors Abram, Addison, Anslow, Aslam, T Beattie, R Beattie, Beeby, Brookfield, A Brown, Colquhoun, Currall, Dady, Dalziel, Don, Dutton, Ekins, Elliston, Emerson, Francis, Groome, Hakewill, Hales, Hallam, Henley, D Hughes, Jones, Keane, Lee, Lewis, McGhee, Mitchell, Pengelly, Riley, Scarborough, Scott, Scrimshaw, Smith, Stanbra, B Watts, K Watts & York (no. 41).

Against the amendment : Councillors Bone, D Brackenbury, W Brackenbury, Bunday, Carr, Davies, de Capell Brooke, Dearing, Edwards, Griffiths, Harrington, Harrison, Hollobone, Howell, Howes, Jelley, B Jenney, D Jenney, G Lawman, L Lawman, Maxwell, A Mercer, G Mercer, Morrall, North, Partridge-Underwood, Perry, Reichhold, Roberts, Rowley, Simmons, Sims, Skitrall, Smith-Haynes, Smithers, Thurland, Titcombe, Tomas, Tye, Ward, M Waters, V Waters, K Watt, Weatherill, Wellings & Wilkes (no.46).

Abstentions: Councillors Bell, Marks & Tebbutt (no.3).

The amendment was therefore declared lost with 41 votes in favour, 46 votes against and three abstentions.

The chairman opened up the debate on the original motion.

Members commented that the blueprint was a comprehensive framework for the ongoing work; policies would be drawn at a later date. Overview and scrutiny would be important and invaluable to ensure that nothing was missed. Climate change and the green agenda were of paramount importance and a lot of work had been undertaken by the joint planning and delivery unit over the years and would continue to progress. It was hoped that future meetings of Overview and Scrutiny would be well attended and that members would pass comment and ask questions.

It was also asked if changes could be notified to councillors as individual items with the reasons why the changes had been made.

There was some criticism of the executive method of governance as opposed to the committee system which a number of members believed would be preferable and was more inclusive for all members.

The leader of the shadow authority thanked members for the good debate on this item, going forward there would be plenty of opportunity to scrutinise and there would be more opportunity for all members to join in discussions.

Councillor North, as proposer, also thanked members for the informative debate.

An electronic poll was taken, using the Zoom platform.

There were 56 votes in favour, 22 against and eight abstentions. The motion was therefore declared carried.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the progress made on preparation for the new unitary council and the draft blueprint, including how the services are likely to be configured within the new council, taking into account the arrangements agreed with the shadow executive with regard to the disaggregation of Northampton County Council (NCC) services and aggregation of district and borough councils be noted;
- (ii) the aspirations and opportunities set out in the papers as a result of bringing services together, and the underpinning capabilities being progressed in relation to the digital transformation as well as the consideration of future aspirations for the People and Place of North Northamptonshire be noted;
- (iii) the wider engagement programme, with all members and stakeholders, as detailed in section 4 of the report, on the content of the blueprint and more detailed work to understand the service plans for day 1, be endorsed.

8. NOTICES OF MOTIONS RECEIVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH MEETING PROCEDURE RULE 12

The chairman referred to the notice that had been received, as detailed on the agenda, and reminded members that in accordance with meeting procedure rule 12, a maximum of 15 minutes was allowed for debate on a notice of motion. Such period included any speeches made by the mover, and seconder. No speeches shall exceed three minutes. No amendments to the motion may be moved. The motion was moved by Councillor Dutton and seconded by Councillor Stanbraas follows:

In relation to shadow executive functions:

This shadow authority notes that many councils across the county have agreed there is a climate emergency and commends the work that has already been undertaken locally to deal with that emergency.

The shadow authority believes that as the shadow successor authority, we should treat this issue with the seriousness it deserves and which the public rightly expects.

This shadow authority calls upon the shadow executive to set up a task and finish climate emergency group to advise on the way forward.

When set up this shadow authority calls on this group to consider and make proposals on:

- (a) How best to draw on the knowledge, expertise and commitment of climate emergency groups;
- (b) How to engage all partners in the issue;
- (c) How to put the climate emergency on everyone's agenda and in everyone's work plan and
- (d) How to ensure that this council's policies on the environment and the climate emergency are incorporated into its planning policies and implemented in the planning and development control decisions taken by the council after vesting day next year."

Members debated the motion with all being supportive that climate change was of great importance. Many commented on the ongoing work with Rockingham Forest and the planting of additional trees to complement the ancient forestry. A reminder about the ongoing important work of the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Delivery Unit and the Joint Planning Committee in this respect were also expressed. The portfolio holder for climate change was Councillor Smithers and he confirmed that this motion would be considered at the shadow executive meeting.

The chairman concluded the debate and confirmed that this would be dealt with by the shadow executive.

The second motion was proposed by Councillor Stanbra and seconded by Councillor Dutton:

This shadow authority notes:

1. The publication by government of the White Paper, Planning for the future, on 6 August 2020, which sets out proposals on reforms to the planning process for the future.
2. That the vast majority of planning applications are given the go ahead by local authority planning committees, with permission granted to around 9 out of 10 applications.
3. That research by the Local Government Association has said that there are existing planning permissions for more than one million homes that have not yet been started.

This shadow authority is concerned that the proposals seek to:

1. Reduce or remove the right of residents to object to applications near to them.

2. Grant automatic rights for developers to build on land identified as 'for growth';
3. Remove section 106 payments for infrastructure and their replacement with a national levy.

This shadow authority further notes:

1. The Royal Institute for British Architects called the proposals 'shameful and which will do almost nothing to guarantee delivery of affordable well-designed and sustainable homes. RIBA also said that 'proposals could lead to the next generation of slum housing.
2. The reforms are opposed by the all-party local Government Association currently led by Conservative Councillors.

This shadow authority believes:

1. That existing planning procedures throughout sovereign councils allow for local democratic engagement over future development and give local people a say in planning proposals that affect them.
2. That proposals for automatic rights to building in 'growth' areas and increased permitted development rights, risk unregulated growth and sustainable communities.
3. That local communities must be in the driving seat on shaping the future of their communities, and local determination of the planning framework and planning applications play an important part in this process.

This shadow authority resolves to:

1. Take part in the consultation in the planning proposals and to make representations against the proposals as outlined in this motion;
2. Write to and lobby all of our local Members of Parliament, urging them to oppose these proposals and to circulate their replies to members;
3. Publish its consultation response through the Future Northants webpages.

Members debated and supported the motion, with all agreeing that the proposals were of severe concern. All sovereign councils would be individually responding to the White Paper, as would the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning unit. It was feared that if this White Paper was progressed it would cause massive issues for North Northamptonshire. All members were also encouraged to respond individually with their concerns. The Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils has also written to all parish councils encourage them to submit their comments. There was some concern expressed that as a shadow authority powers were limited but it was considered to be imperative that a response was submitted.

The chairman concluded the debate and confirmed that the motion would be referred to the shadow executive committee.

9. CLOSE OF MEETING

There being no further business the chairman, thanked everyone for their attendance, and closed the meeting at 9.45pm.

Chairman