

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY

Minutes of the meeting of the North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority held virtually (and at Swanspool House, Wellingborough) on Thursday 25 February 2021

Those present:

Councillors Bell (Chairman), D Brackenbury (Vice-Chairman), Abram, Addison, Allebone, Anslow, Aslam, Beattie P, Beattie R, Beattie T, Beeby, Bone, Boto, Brackenbury W, Brookfield, Brown C, Bunday, Burton, Carr, Carter, Colquhoun, Dady, Dalziel, Davies, Dearing, Don, Dutton, Edwards, Ekins, Emerson, Farrar, Francis, Greenwood-Smith, Griffiths, Groome, Hakewill, Hales, Hallam, Harrington, Harrison, Henley, Henson, Hollobone, Holloman, Howell, Howes, Hughes D, Hughes S, Jelley, Jenney B, Jenney D, Keane, Lawman G, Lawman L, Lee, Lewis, Maguire, Marks, Matthews, Maxwell, McEwan, McGhee, Mercer A, Mercer G, Mitchell, Moreton, North, O'Hara, Parker, Partridge-Underwood, Peacock, Pengelly, Pentland, Perry, Pinnock J, Riley, Roberts, Rowley, Scarborough, Scrimshaw, Shacklock, Simmons, Sims, Skittrall, Smith, Smith-Haynes, Smithers, Stanbra, Stanton, Talbot, Tebbutt, Thurland, Titcombe, Tye, Ward, Waters M, Waters V, Watt K, Watts A, Watts B, Watts K, Weatherill, Wellings, West, Wilkes and Wright.

Officers: Mr R Bridge, Chief Executive, Mrs A Wylie, Director of Legal & Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer, Mr G Candler, Director of Place & Economy, Mrs J Gotts, Director of Finance, Mr M Dickinson, Assistant Director Finance & Strategy, Mr S Darcy, Executive Director/Section 151 Officer (BCW), Mr G Hammons (Interim Chief Finance Officer NNSA), Mr G Holloway (Assistant Chief Executive), Mrs T Grant, Chief Executive (NCC), Mr P Goult, Joint Lead Democratic Services Manager (NNSA), Mr B Smith, 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 Support Officer (BCW).

The meeting commenced at 7pm. Due to technical issues members agreed to adjourn the meeting, by general assent, at 7.10pm for a short period. The meeting resumed at 7.35pm and the chairman welcomed everyone, including the viewing public, and apologised for the delay with the commencement of the meeting due to the technical issues, which were now resolved, and he thanked the technical team for rectifying the problem.

1. APOLOGIES

RESOLVED to note that apologies were received from Councillors Adams, Cassidy, Elliston, Patel, Stevenson and York (6).

2. NOTIFICATION OF REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

RESOVLED that it be noted that no requests had been received.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations were made:

Councillor	Item	Reason
Abram	5	Personal – in receipt of Council Tax Support
Groome	5	Personal – is an employee of Northamptonshire County Council's Library Service
North	5	Personal – in relation to fees & charges – pays for green waste to be collected in ENC
Orton	5	Personal – owns rental properties in Northampton.
Mercer	5	Personal – pays for green waste to be collected in ENC *
Watts B	5	Personal - Commercial waste is collected by council from business premises.

*On request, the monitoring officer informed councillors that there was no requirement to declare a personal interest in waste collection issues, but if members wished to do so they could.

RESOLVED that the declarations be noted.

4. MINUTES OF THE NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW MEETING HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2020 were received. It was moved by Councillor Harrington and seconded by Councillor A Mercer 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 109 votes cast, with 106 votes in favour, one against and two abstentions. The motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority held on 17 September 2020 be approved.

5. FINAL BUDGET 2021-22 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLANS, INCLUDING THE COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION 2021-22

The circulated report on the final budget for 2021-22 and Medium-Term Financial Plans, including the Council Tax Resolution for 2021-22 was received. The report sought approval to the recommendations of the Shadow Executive Committee to approve the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Dedicated Schools Grant and Capital Programme budgets for 2021-22.

Members were also asked to make a formal decision in relation to the statutory council tax resolution for 2021-22, which provided a legal basis upon which to issue council tax bills and collect sums due.

Councillor Jelley, Lead Member for Finance presented the first budget to the shadow council meeting.

He reported that the setting of the budget had been complex with members and officers working together as part of the medium-term financial plan and budget task and finish group. He was pleased to be able to propose a budget, taking into account guiding principles, and gave assurance that the new council would be safe, legal and compliant and that it would focus on its priorities, a financially balanced budget, that it demonstrated value for money, an acceptable level of risk and a transparent decision-making process. The budget proposal had previously been presented to the shadow executive committee. A seven-week public consultation had taken place and feedback received had been taken into consideration.

The report further detailed the extensive work that had been undertaken during the process of setting the budget. He reported that it had become evident that the work of the voluntary sector was invaluable as they were best placed and knew their own communities best and what their requirements were. He was pleased to inform the meeting that a Voluntary and Community Sector Reserve of £600,000, over a three period, had been included within budgets.

He also reported that council tax had been harmonised across North Northamptonshire and there would be an increase in core council tax of 1.99%, with an increase of 3% for Adult Social Care. This would mean that a band D council tax would be £1532.90 for 2021-22 equating to £29.48 per week, which would bring £8m to the budget. The precepts for the police and parish councils in North Northamptonshire were also detailed in the report.

He further explained that services would be protected and that no front-line cuts were proposed, there would also be a continuation of the Covid related support.

In summing up he thanked all officers and members involved with the task and finish group, for their incredible hard work which had enabled him to present this first budget, which he considered to be robust and balanced, to serve the residents of North Northamptonshire well in year one.

Councillor Jelley proposed the recommendations within the report and this was seconded by Councillor Griffiths.

Statements from Group Leaders

Statements were received from the group leaders:

On behalf of Councillor Addison, Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor Henley addressed the meeting.

Councillor Henley, as chairman of the task and finish group had worked with members and officers on the budget. He cautioned that a balanced budget was the minimum requirement as part of the safe and legal process. There would be further challenges in the coming years with a requirement to find

10% of savings each year, equating to £18m in 2022-23, £30m in 2023-24 and £43m in 2024-25.

His spoke of his concern about the future ability to finance Adult Social Care, and the financing of the Children's Trust, Capital projects, Waste Collection, the harmonisation of council tax, and highway issues, such as the much needed Isham Bypass. He was also aware that Northamptonshire County Council's balance sheets for 2018 had still not been signed off and this meant that the new council did not know what debts would be passed to it.

Councillor Ruth Groome, Leader of the Independent Group

Councillor Groome made a statement. She supported the budget and thanked officers and fellow members for the considerable work that had gone into producing it.

She considered that the consultation process had been good, and she also appreciated the opportunity to meet with financial directors. Due to her employment she said that she may abstain from voting but reiterated her support for the budget.

Councillor Stanbra, Leader of the Liberal Democratic Group

Councillor Stanbra considered the budget to be steady, safe and legal. He felt that 2021-22 would be an interesting year and that there would be many major changes, due to further transformation.

He raised various concerns over the cost of Chester House Farm and the £170k subsidy which would be required each year to make it viable. The highways contract would potentially be outsourced, and he asked if consideration had been given to this being provided 'in-house'. The number one issue residents contacted him about was highway maintenance, which needed to be addressed urgently. He also considered that the housing revenue accounts, if combined, would create efficiencies, and these could be reinvested to make home improvements to enhance the lives of the tenants. He also believed that more council homes needed to be built.

He asked if all the assets of the districts and boroughs had been assessed fully and whether all the properties they owned, which would transfer to NNC, would be required in the future and whether some could be disposed of.

Regarding green measures and climate change he felt that the new unitary council needed to lead the way, planting trees enabling cycling, reducing emissions and that this needed to be properly addressed when considering planning applications for future developments.

He was pleased that assistance would be given to the voluntary sector but felt that the funding was insufficient and more would be required.

The priorities of the new authority needed to be established and the capital programme needed to be considered carefully.

The chairman thanked the group leaders for their statements and asked if they wished to propose any amendments.

Group leaders' amendments to budget:

Councillor Addison, Labour Group Leader proposed the following amendment:

1. Harmonise Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) over a two-year period;
2. Put in place a Green Fund of £1m to “pump prime” green projects;
3. Focus funding in order to deliver disability adaptations.
4. The phasing out of zero-hour contracts over one year across Adult Learning.

This amendment was seconded by Councillor Scarborough.

Councillor Scarborough explained the reasons for the proposed amendment. There was concern over the harmonisation of council tax and the way it would disproportionately affect the least well off and those in greatest need. The county council employees currently on zero-hour contracts needed to be put on proper contracts as soon as possible. Climate change was of great importance for all in North Northamptonshire and green projects needed to be brought forward.

Members debated the amendment with Councillors Hakewill, McGee, Stanbra, Roberts, Maxwell, Jenney, Francis and Smithers speaking.

Councillor Scarborough responded to the comments made on behalf of the Labour Group.

Councillor Jelley also responded to the comments.

The chairman closed the debate and put the proposed amendment to the vote.

Members voted, using the electronic poll on the Zoom platform. There were 110 votes cast, with 34 votes in favour, 73 against and three abstentions. The amendment was declared lost.

The chairman asked Councillor Stanbra if he wished to propose an amendment on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group.

Councillor Stanbra proposed the following amendments and asked that they be voted on separately:

Amendment to General Fund Budget

1. To establish a one-off Discretionary Council Tax Hardship Fund to help those working age universal credit claimants having difficulty with payment of council tax following the move to a 25% Local Council Tax Support scheme. The budget to include all administration and other on-costs with the fund being accessed by application to the council. Each application being assessed on its merits following the submission of evidence of payment difficulties by the applicant and to be cash limited.

The budget of £500,00 (Five hundred thousand pounds) to be paid for by a corresponding one-off allocation from the General Fund Balance.

2. To establish a Climate Emergency Action Reserve to kickstart actions by the council arising out of the recommendations of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group. If any funds remain after this has been done, to kickstart any other actions that address the Climate Emergency as may be agreed by a resolution of councillors at a public meeting. Propose a budget of £2000,000 (Two hundred thousand pounds.) Paid for by corresponding one off allocation from the General Fund Balance.

Amendment to the Housing Revenue account budget

3. Housing Revenue Account Budget – to allocate funding to pay for a Green Energy Action feasibility study to establish what action can be taken to install microgeneration facilities on council owned dwellings, including, but not limited to, Solar PV, Ground Source Heat Pumps, Micro Combined Heat and Power and Small Scale Wind Turbines. The aim being to enable council officers to seek expert advice to bring forward proposals for capital projects to be added to the housing capital programme. A budget of £100,000 (One hundred thousand pounds), paid for by a corresponding one-off allocation from HRA balances in proportion to the number of dwellings in each Neighbourhood account area.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Dutton who gave his support to the proposals.

The chairman opened the debate for members.

Councillor Hakewill giving his support to the proposals.

Councillor Stanbra responded and thanked Councillor Hakewill for his words and encouraged other members to support the amendment.

Councillor Jelley also responded and confirmed that there were measures in place if someone was facing difficulties and support could be provided.

The chairman closed the debate and put each amendment in turn to the vote.

Amendment 1 - Members voted, on amendment 1, using the electronic poll on the Zoom platform. There were 107 votes cast, with 36 in favour, 69 against and two abstentions. The amendment was declared lost.

Amendment 2 - Members voted on amendment 2, using the electronic poll on the Zoom platform. There were 107 votes cast, with 34 in

favour, 71 against and two abstentions. The amendment was declared lost.

Members voted on amendment 3, using the electronic poll on the Zoom platform. There were 107 votes cast, with 34 in favour, 72 against and one abstention. The amendment was declared lost.

(Councillor Ekins left the meeting.)

The chairman received no further amendments and returned to the substantive motion, for debate.

Councillors debated the motion, and Councillors Hakewill, Lee, Roberts, Smithers, Stanbra, Addison, Scarborough, Scott, McGhee, Pengelly, Griffiths, Aslam, Scrimshaw, Maxwell, Maguire and Emerson addressed the meeting.

On the conclusion of the debate Councillor Jelley, as the proposer of the motion, responded to the points raised. He thanked members for their thoughts and comments and appreciated the support for the budget proposals, whilst noting the concerns of some.

He commended the substantive motion to the shadow council for approval.

The chairman informed members that in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 a recorded vote was required on the budget decision. Members would be invited to declare, in turn, whether they were voting for, against or abstaining on the motion before them. The Democratic Services Manager, Paul Goult, would read out each councillor's name in alphabetical order and each councillor needed to verbally declare their vote.

The following votes were cast:

For: Councillors Allebone, Bell, Bone, Boto, Brackenbury D, Brackenbury W, Brown C, Bunday, Burton, Carr, Davies, Dearing, Edwards, Greenwood-Smith, Griffiths, Hallam, Harrington, Harrison, Henson, Hollobone, Holloman, Howell, Howes, Hughes S, Jelley, Jenney B, Jenney D, Lawman G, Lawman L, Lewis, Marks, Maxwell, Mercer A, Mercer G, Moreton, North, O'Hara, Partridge-Underwood, Peacock, Pentland, Perry, Pinnock, Powell, Roberts, Rowley, Shacklock, Simmons, Sims, Skittrall, Smith, Smith-Haynes, Smithers, Stanton, Tebbutt, Thurland, Titcombe, Tomas, Tye, Ward, Waters M, Waters V, Watt, Watts B, Wellings, Wilkes and Wright (no.66)

Against: Councillors Abram, Addison, Anslow, Aslam, Beattie P, T Beattie, Beeby, Brookfield, Carter, Colquhoun, Dady, Dalziel, Don, Dutton, Emerson, Farrar, Francis, Hakewill, Hales, Henley, Keane, Lee, Maguire, McEwan, McGhee,

Mitchell, Pengelly, Riley, Scarborough, Scott, Scrimshaw, Stanbra, Watts A, Watts K, and West (no.35)

Abstentions: Groome, Hughes D, Parker (no.3)

It was confirmed that 104 votes were cast. The chairman declared that the motion was carried with 66 votes in favour, 35 votes against and three abstentions.

RESOLVED that approval is given to:

A Housing Revenue Account Budget Report 2021-22 (Annex 1)

(a) the 2021-22 Housing Revenue Account budgets consisting of the Corby Neighbourhood Account and the Kettering Neighbourhood Account as set out in Annex 1, Appendix A.

(i) an increase in dwelling rents for 2021-22 of 1.5% (based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for September 2020 + 1%) which is in line with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Policy statement on rents for social housing published in February 2019;

(ii) the Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Plan consisting of the Corby Neighbourhood Account and the Kettering Neighbourhood Account for 2022-23 to 2025-26 as set out in Annex 1, Appendix B

B General Fund Revenue Budget 2021-22 and Medium-Term Financial Plan, including Dedicated Schools Grant 2021-22, (Annex 2)

(a) 2021-22 revenue budget, which sets:

(i) a budget requirement of £608.5m, including Dedicated Schools Grant of £316.0m, resulting in a new revenue budget requirement of £292.5m as set out in the report attached at Annex 2, Appendix A;

(ii) a total Council Tax requirement for the council's own purposes of £171.5m;

(iii) a Band D Council Tax of £1,532.90 for North Northamptonshire Council, including a 1.99% increase in 'core' Council Tax and 3% Adult Social Care Precept;

(iv) Council Tax harmonisation for North Northamptonshire using the alternative notional amount approach to harmonise in the first year, as set out in the report at paragraphs 6.9 to 6.12;

- (v) Savings, pressures and income generation proposals of £26.5m as set out in Annex 2, Appendix A;
- (vi) Maximised Council Tax Long Term Empty Property Premium as set out in the report at paragraphs 6.13 to 6.14;
- (b) the detailed proposals of savings, pressures and income generation for 2021-22 as set out within the report and Annex 2, Appendix B;
- (c) the gross and net budgets for the Directorates and Corporate as set out in Annex 2, Appendix D;
- (d) a contingency sum of £5.7m as set out in the report at Annex 2, Paragraph 11.1;
- (e) corporate budget requirements to cover capital financing costs of £18.2m as set out in the report at Annex 2, Paragraph 11.2;
- (f) the revisions to fees and charges for 2021-22 as set out in the report at Annex 2, Appendix E;
- (g) the planned use of, contribution to, and movement in, reserves as identified in the report attached at Annex 2 to Appendix F, subject to the final call on reserves after any changes are required to account for final charges etc;
- (h) the flexible use of capital receipts as set out in section 7 of this report;
- (i) the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021-22 as set out in Annex 2, Appendix K, including the Affordable Borrowing Limit of £824m, and to note that an update to the Strategy will be provided once the disaggregation of Northamptonshire County Council's balance sheet has been finalised;
- (j) the utilisation of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2021-22 as set out in Annex 2, Appendix L;
- (k) delegated authority be given to the Executive Director of Finance to agree the use of the following reserves in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance:
 - (i) Social Care Reserve;
 - (ii) Transformation Reserve;
 - (iii) Public Health Reserves;
 - (iv) Waste Management Reserve;

(v) Covid-19 related reserves which include the Covid-19 reserve and those held for the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) and Test and Trace;

(l) delegated authority being given to the Executive Director of Finance to manage any variation in budget prior to 1 April 2021 as a result of final confirmation of funding or income, or unforeseen commitments, in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder;

(m) delegated authority being given to the Executive Director of Finance in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder to resolve any other financial related matters to ensure the efficient operation of the new council and to ensure that it operates within a safe and legal manner from 1 April 2021;

(n) delegated authority being given to approve the implementation of any new business rate reliefs in 2021-22 as announced by Government in the Chancellor's Spring Budget, which will increase the relief offering to businesses;

(o) to note the Section 25 Report of the Executive Director of Finance, as set out in Section 11 of the report and attached at Annex 2;

(p) to note the recommendations made by the Shadow Executive at its meeting on 10 February 2021 – as set out in Annex 2, Section 3.2 of the report.

C Final Capital Programme 2021-25 and Capital Strategy, (Annex 3)

- (a) the Capital strategy, Capital Programme 2021-25, HRA Capital Programme 2021-25 and Baseline Development Pool, with the understanding that these will change for any scheme that are not complete by the current predecessor authorities as at the end of March 2021 and for any new schemes submitted through the agreed governance process between now and the end of March 2021;
- (b) delegated authority being given to the Executive Director of Finance to manage any variation in budget prior to the start of 2021-22 as a result of final confirmation of funding, income or unforeseen commitments; in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder

D Council Tax Setting

- (a) noting the information from the budget consultation feedback as detailed in Annex 2 (Section 5 and Appendix G);
- (b) Council Tax Resolution attached at Appendix 1 to the report, based on the budget proposals, which:

- Calculates the Council Tax requirement in accordance with Section 31A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011;
- Calculates a basic amount of Council Tax and an amount of tax for each valuation band (the council element) in accordance with Sections 31B and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992, as amended;
- Setting of an amount of Council Tax for each category of dwellings in each valuation band in accordance with Section 30 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992.

(Councillor Emerson left the meeting.)

6. CONTINUATION OF MEETING

The chairman noted that the three hour time limit for the duration of the meeting would shortly be exceeded, in accordance with the constitution, and to enable the business on the agenda to be concluded, he asked if a member wished to propose that the meeting continue.

It was proposed by Councillor Smithers that the meeting continue until 11.30pm, to conclude the business of the agenda, this was seconded by Councillor Griffiths.

An electronic poll was conducted using the Zoom platform. There were 100 votes cast, with 59 votes in favour, 40 votes against and one abstention. The motion was therefore declared carried.

RESOLVED that the meeting continue until 11.30pm.

The chairman adjourned the meeting for five minutes before continuing.

7. A NEW CONSTITUTION FOR NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

The circulated report of the Monitoring Officer, Adele Wylie, was received which detailed the work undertaken to create a new Constitution for North Northamptonshire Council to reflect the character and culture of the council.

The monitoring officer informed members that since publication of the agenda she had been notified of some administrative and typographical errors, and she would update the document to take these into account. She also informed members of some fundamental changes that were required as follows:

The Police and Crime Panel - this was a joint committee between the West and North and there would be 10 members, five from each authority.

The budget procedure referred to specific groups but needed amendment to refer to the ruling group and minority groups.

Regarding planning protocol, this would be the subject of approval in the new municipal year following member involvement and engagement.

She confirmed that any consequential amendments would be made by her to ensure that the Constitution was suitable for the new authority.

Councillor Tom Beattie, Chairman of the Governance Task and Finish Group, presented the report to the shadow authority. He explained that the new constitution would come into effect from 1 April 2021. The constitution, as an evolving document, would be continually reviewed and a Constitution Working Group would be formed for this purpose. He paid tribute to his fellow councillors from the task and finish group and all officers involved in the drafting process, which had enabled the appended Constitution to be available for use from 1 April 2021.

Following briefings and consultations, the views of members had also been reflected in the documentation with the inclusion of four area planning committees. The Constitution was based on a hybrid model, and included transparent decision making, a good scrutiny function and executive advisory panels which would ensure more cross-party member involvement in the decision-making process.

The key parts of the constitution and rationale were summarised in the report and the full Constitution was appended thereto. Interim arrangements were also detailed therein, which would allow the council to complete essential business during the interim period between 1 April 2021 and 10 May 2021.

Councillor Howell proposed the recommendation as detailed below, along with a slight amendment at point (ii), this was seconded by Councillor Howes.

- (i) The Constitution, as detailed at Appendix A to the report, be approved;
- (ii) A Constitutional Working Group, consisting of five members, (politically balanced) drawn from members of the Democracy and Standards Committee, be established, to determine the terms of reference and appointments *to the Constitutional Working Group*;
- (iii) Authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make minor and/or consequential amendments to the Constitution.

The chairman opened the report for debate.

Councillors McGhee, Hakewill, Stanbra, Henley, Aslam, Groome, Maguire, G Mercer, D Brackenbury, Maxwell, Scarborough, Hales and A Mercer addressed the meeting.

They appreciated the work that had been undertaken by the task and finish group and extended congratulations to all involved for the hard work that had resulted in an excellent constitution that was a 'living document' and could be enhanced as and when required. They considered that this would give a good framework for the new council from 1 April 2021.

Many raised the importance of localism and the need for local knowledge in the decision-making process and were keen to include as many councillors as possible in this process through the advisory panels. It was felt that public engagement was essential, particularly regarding controversial planning matters, and that this needed to be considered further within the constitution and enhanced. Concerns over the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board were also raised with a suggestion that volunteer groups also be

involved in the membership, to ensure the wellbeing of the residents of North Northamptonshire.

Councillor A Mercer proposed an amendment in relation to the interim arrangements for strategic planning which were not referenced in the documentation. He believed there would be a requirement for a meeting to be held during the interim period to determine planning issues on minerals and waste that were expected imminently and would previously have been determined by the current county council. He proposed that provision for a strategic planning meeting be included in the interim arrangements.

Councillor G Lawman, agreed that it had been indicated to him that an application would be forthcoming, and he seconded the proposed amendment.

Councillor Roberts and Smithers clarified that following discussions with senior officers at the county council they had been assured that there would be no requirement to hold such a meeting during the interim period, as further information was required before any applications could be put before committee.

Whilst Councillors Mercer and Lawman were surprised to receive this information, they agreed to withdraw the amendment.

Councillor Howell, responded to the points raised and thanked members for a good debate, she reiterated that this was a working document, and asked for any feedback to be submitted to democratic services. Comments received will then be considered by the Monitoring Officer.

The chairman closed the debate and put the motion, with the amendment to add the following words at (ii) 'to the Constitutional Working Group', to the vote.

Members voted, using the electronic poll on the Zoom platform. There were 87 votes cast, with 83 votes in favour, three against and one abstention. The motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The Constitution, as detailed at Appendix A to the report, be approved;
- (ii) A Constitutional Working Group, consisting of five members, (politically balanced) and drawn from members of the Democracy and Standards Committee, be established to determine the terms of reference and appointments to the Constitutional Working Group.
- (iii) Authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make minor and/or consequential amendments to the Constitution.

8. INTERIM PERIOD APPOINTMENTS AND INDEMNITY FOR OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

The circulated report of the Monitoring Officer was received to seek the appointment of members to committees for the interim period between 1 April 2021 and 10 May 2021 inclusive, so that decisions could continue to be made during such period.

Councillor Roberts presented the report.

The report detailed the appointment of members to committees for the interim period. It also dealt with the interim appointment of members and officers to outside bodies (as required). Existing and future appointments would be the subject of a further report after the conclusion of the interim period.

There was also a requirement for members to have a form of indemnity to cover them for the interim period, and this was in place.

Further details of the interim arrangements were set out within the North Northamptonshire Council Constitution.

Councillor W Brackenbury moved the motion and this was seconded by Councillor L Lawman.

Members considered the report and noted the arrangements.

Councillor Brackenbury confirmed that all future appointments would be the subject of a further report following the interim period.

The chairman put the proposal to the vote.

Members voted, using the electronic poll on the Zoom platform. There were 88 votes cast, with 75 votes in favour, four against and nine abstentions. The motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the governance structure for the interim period be noted;
- (ii) the appointment of members to committees, as set out in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.12 of the report be approved;
- (iii) the appointment of members to outside bodies for the interim period, as set out in paragraph 4.13, including the delegation to the monitoring officer to make the appointments highlighted, be approved;
- (iv) the indemnity for officers and members, as set out in appendix 1 to the report be approved, and that authority be given to the Chief Finance Officer to make changes from time to time as necessary to reflect legislative change or recommended good practice;
- (v) authority be given to the Chief Finance Officer to decide on a case-by-case basis whether it is appropriate to pay any sums upfront for the defence of criminal proceedings or await the conclusion of such proceedings before making any payment;
- (vi) it be noted that existing and future officer and member appointments to outside bodies and special roles would be the subject of a future report;
- (vii) delegated authority be given to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the chairman of the council to make appointments to the Local Government General Assembly and to East Midlands Councils for the interim period.

9. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

The circulated report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services was received to appoint Independent Persons to North Northamptonshire Council.

The Monitoring Officer introduced the report.

She explained that local authorities were required to put certain arrangements in place for promoting and maintaining standards of conduct, including the provision for the appointment, by the authority, of at least one Independent Person. The report recommended the appointment of several Independent Persons, to North Northamptonshire Council, in accordance with those requirements.

It was proposed by Councillor Gill Mercer and seconded by Councillor Harrison that the following be appointed:

- Mike Sawford;
- Vivienne Barnard;
- Dean Smith

The chairman opened the debate.

Councillors addressed the meeting and commended the Independent Persons, all had previously worked with the current sovereign councillors in this role, and who, in their opinion had given invaluable advice when needed.

The chairman closed the debate and put the proposal to the vote.

Members voted, using the electronic poll on the Zoom platform. There were 83 votes cast, with 78 votes in favour, two against and three abstentions. The motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED that approval be given to the appointment of Mike Sawford, Vivienne Barnard and Dean Smith as Independent Persons for North Northamptonshire Council.

- The chairman was informed that Mr Dempsey, who was presenting the next item on the agenda was experiencing some problems joining the meeting, the chairman therefore decided to re-order the agenda and deal with item 10 of the agenda next.

10. NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The report of the HR Portfolio Holder, Councillor Tom Beattie was received and presented to the shadow authority by Councillor Beattie.

He informed the meeting that the Pay Policy Statement, as attached to the report at Annex 1, was updated annually in accordance with Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011. The policy statement details the pay for the directly employed workforce (excluding Schools) for the year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

This was an interim Pay Policy Statement. A package of new pay, terms and conditions of employment and associated pay and employment policies were still to be agreed. An updated Pay Policy Statement for 2021-22 will be brought to full council for approval in the summer of 2021.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Jelley and seconded by Councillor O'Hara.

The chairman asked members if they wished to debate the report.

Councillors asked for clarification on the terms and conditions of employment for employees transferring to NNC from 1 April 2021.

The Chief Executive, Rob Bridge, confirmed that employees would be transferred under their sovereign council's own terms and conditions to North Northamptonshire Council as at 1 April 2021. The terms and conditions of new starters were currently being considered to ensure that the council became an 'employer of choice'.

The chairman closed the debate and put the proposal to the vote.

Members voted, using the electronic poll on the Zoom platform. There were 84 votes cast, with 79 votes in favour, two against and three abstentions. The motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED that approval be given to the Interim Pay Policy Statement.

11. SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES – REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

The circulated report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services was received in relation to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel to approve a scheme of Members' allowances for North Northamptonshire Council to take effect from 1 April 2021 until the scheme is amended or revoked by the council.

Mr Ged Dempsey, a member of the Independent Remuneration Panel, joined the meeting and presented the report, explaining how conclusions and recommendations had been reached, and that they were based on the proposed governance structure. The panel had also taken into consideration the need to encourage a more diverse selection of the community to stand for election to ensure there were no financial barriers to prevent people from standing.

The draft scheme was appended to the report and detailed the allowances that members would receive. This equated to £1,260,000 for the municipal year 2021-22.

Councillor Griffiths proposed the motion, and this was seconded by Councillor Jelley.

The chairman opened the report for debate.

Continuation of meeting - Before the debate commenced, Councillor Smithers proposed that as the revised guillotine time extension for the meeting (to 11.30pm) was approaching that the meeting continue for a further 20 minutes, to conclude the agenda, and in accordance with the constitution. This was seconded by Councillor Griffiths.

Members voted, using the electronic poll on the Zoom platform. There were 85 votes cast, with 70 votes in favour, 14 against and one abstention. The motion was declared carried and it was resolved that the meeting would continue until 11.50pm.

Councillors Hakewill, G Mercer, Maguire, Allebone, Maxwell, Simmons, Howes, McGhee, Aslam, Jelley and Smithers all spoke. Many supported the recommendations contained within the report and considered them to be fair and appropriate. Other councillors shared various concerns including the difference in the allowances proposed for councillors in the West to that in the North; the lack of IT allowance, and the cost of broadband which members considered was essential to conduct their role. Comments were also made about the best way in which to attract younger councillors and how to encourage diversity so that councillors could stand for election from all walks of life, including those with disabilities. Councillors commented that under the current scheme those with disabilities would often be prevented from standing as the allowance would affect any benefits they were in receipt of.

Councillor Simmons proposed an amendment to the scheme to enable an IT allowance to be paid and to reduce the general allowance, this would have the effect of reducing the income tax paid to HMRC and enable VAT to be recovered by the council, also from HMRC. Councillor Aslam seconded this proposal. On debating the proposal Councillor Aslam withdrew as seconder. Another seconder was not found, and the amendment fell and was not debated.

Mr Dempsey responded to some of the queries and explained that there had not been any discussions with the IRP acting in the West and that the allowance had been decided on independently and were based on best judgment and with the information the panel had at the time. The report suggested that the scheme be reviewed in a year. Regarding an IT allowance, it was the intention that all councillors would be provided with a suitable device for use for council business. The cost of broadband had been included within the allowances

Councillor Griffiths responded to other points raised.

The chairman closed the debate and put to the motion to the vote.

Members voted, using the electronic poll on the Zoom platform. There were 84 votes cast, with 80 votes in favour, two against and two abstentions. The motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED that approval be given to the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendation for the Members' Allowance Scheme for North Northamptonshire from 1 April 2021 as follows:

1.1

- (1) The basic allowance in North Northamptonshire be set at £12,500;
 (2) Special Responsibility Allowances should be allocated as follows:

	£
Leader of the Council	27,000
Deputy leader of the Council	18,000
Member of the Executive:	13,500
Leader of the largest opposition party	10,000
Deputy leader of the largest opposition party (if 15 or over)	4,000
Leader of a party with 10 or more members	7,000
Leader of a party with 4 to 9 members	4,000
Chair of Scrutiny Committee (see recommendation 3 below)	13,500
Chair of Strategic Planning Committee	7,500
Chair of an Area Planning Committee	3,750
Chair of Licensing & Appeals Committee (see recommendation 4 below)	7,500
Chair of Audit and Governance Committee (see para 2.33 of the report)	7,500
Chair of Democracy and Standards Committee	7,500
Chairs of Employment Committee and Police & Crime Panel and Health and Wellbeing Board	4,000

- (3) A total allowance of £40,000 should be allocated to the Scrutiny function to be distributed within this financial envelope;
- (4) A total allowance of £10,000 be set aside and allocated amongst members chairing Licensing Panels of major significance during the municipal year;
- (5) The personal civic allowance paid to the chair of the Council should be set at £10,000 and that of the Deputy Chair, £5,000;
- (6) SRAs should not, at the present time, be allocated to the vice-chairs of the committees and boards listed. This recommendation should be reviewed at the end of the 2021-22 municipal year;
- (7) An attendance allowance of £400 per meeting should be paid to non-council members that have been co-opted onto council committees such as Audit and Governance and Democracy and Standards, to the Parent Governor representative on the Scrutiny Committee and to any other co-optees subsequently appointed;
- (8) No hourly rate should be specified for the childcare and dependant's carers' allowance. Payment should be made on the production of receipts, within a maximum ceiling of £6,500 per municipal year for any one councillor;
- (9) The criterion used for the annual updating of members allowances should be the NJC pay award to officers;
- (10) Travel and subsistence allowances should be in accordance with HMRC specified mileage allowances and the LGA recommended travel and subsistence payments. These rates should be equally applicable to co-opted members.

- (11) No additional allowance for IT equipment and use should be paid to members. The Basic Allowance has been set to incorporate an IT element.
 - (12) The allowances scheme should be reviewed in a year's time, when experience of operating the new decision-making structure will have accumulated;
 - (13) If the size of the executive is reduced, then the total allocation to the executive members should be redistributed within the same financial envelope, unless the change involves a substantial delegation of executive responsibilities to officers;
 - (14) If a councillor holds two positions of which SRAs are payable, it is only the higher of these SRAs which can be claimed;
 - (15) A 'diversity strategy' aimed at encouraging a wider range of groups to stand for council election should be a priority for the new council;
 - (16) Where appropriate, those individuals who are Members of North Northamptonshire Council from 1 April 2021 will receive pro-rata payments of Basic and SRA allowances for the period up to 10 May 2021 (to be known as the 'Interim Arrangement');
- 1.2 The council is required to determine how the total allowance of £40,000 allocated to the scrutiny function should be distributed. It is proposed that this will be determined by the new council early in the municipal year by Members.
- 1.3 The council is required to determine how the total allowance of £10,000 allocated to the licensing function should be distributed. It is proposed that this will be determined by the new council early in the municipal year by members.
- 1.4 That council adopt a scheme of Members' Allowances for North Northamptonshire Council with effect from 1 April 2021 until the scheme is amended by the North Northamptonshire Council and that the draft Scheme attached at appendix 2 to the report be approved.

12. CONCLUSION OF MEETING

The chairman allowed the Leader, Councillor Roberts to address the meeting. He thanked everyone for their attendance, at what was an historical meeting for North Northamptonshire, he also thanked the chair for his excellent chairmanship of a complex and long meeting where all the business on the agenda had been concluded.

The chairman thanked Councillor Roberts for his kind words, and fellow members and officers for their attendance.

He declared the meeting closed at 11.45pm.

Chair.....