

Minutes of a meeting of the Council

Held at 6.00 pm on Thursday 26th October, 2023 in the Council Chamber, Corby Cube, George Street, NN17 1QG

Present:-

Members

Councillor Barbara Jenney (Chair)	Councillor Lora Lawman
Councillor Jean Addison	Councillor Bert Jackson
Councillor Tim Allebone	Councillor Ian Jelley
Councillor Ross Armour	Councillor Matt Keane
Councillor Charlie Best	Councillor King Lawal
Councillor Matt Binley	Councillor Graham Lawman
Councillor Jennie Bone	Councillor Anne Lee
Councillor David Brackenbury	Councillor Paul Marks
Councillor Wendy Brackenbury	Councillor Dorothy Maxwell
Councillor Scott Brown	Councillor Peter McEwan
Councillor Cedwien Brown	Councillor John McGhee
Councillor Leanne Buckingham	Councillor Zoe McGhee
Councillor Lyn Buckingham	Councillor Andy Mercer
Councillor Lloyd Bunday	Councillor Gill Mercer
Councillor Jon-Paul Carr	Councillor Macaulay Nichol
Councillor Robin Carter	Councillor Jan O'Hara
Councillor Melanie Coleman	Councillor Dr Anup Pandey
Councillor William Colquhoun	Councillor Tom Partridge-Underwood
Councillor Alison Dalziel	Councillor Harriet Pentland
Councillor Dez Dell	Councillor Roger Powell
Councillor Jonathan Ekins	Councillor Russell Roberts
Councillor Emily Fedorowycz	Councillor Mark Rowley
Councillor Martin Griffiths	Councillor Geoff Shacklock
Councillor Jim Hakewill	Councillor Jason Smithers
Councillor Clive Hallam	Councillor Joseph John Smyth
Councillor Ken Harrington	Councillor Michael Tye
Councillor Helen Harrison	Councillor Malcolm Ward
Councillor Larry Henson	Councillor Malcolm Waters
Councillor Helen Howell	Councillor Andrew Weatherill
Councillor David Howes	Councillor Keli Watts
Councillor Philip Irwin	Councillor Lee Wilkes

Officers

George Candler (Interim Chief Executive)
Adele Wylie (Interim Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer)
Ben Smith (Head of Democratic Services)

265 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Valerie Anslow, Paul Bell, Mark Dearing, Scott Edwards, Steven North, Mark Pengelly, Elliot Prentice, Simon Rielly, David Sims, Chris Smith-Haynes, Mike Tebbutt, Sarah Tubbs and Kevin Watt.

266 Minutes of the meeting held on 31st August 2023

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 31st August 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

267 Declarations of interest.

The Chair asked those members who wished to do so to declare any interests in respect of items on the agenda.

The following interests were declared:-

Name of Councillor	Minute Number	Interest	Reason for Declaration
Cllr Dez Dell	275 Motion 2 (Alfred East Art Gallery)	Personal Interest	As a member of the Committee for the Friends of Kettering Art Gallery.
Cllr Paul Marks	275 Motion 2 (Alfred East Art Gallery)	Personal Interest	As a member of the Friends of Kettering Art Gallery and Museum.
Cllr Keli Watts	275 Motion 2 (Alfred East Art Gallery)	Personal Interest	As a member of the Friends of Kettering Art Gallery and Museum.

[During minute 275 Cllr Martin Griffiths also declared a personal interest, having been a board member of SEMLEP when the funding for Kettering Art Gallery was approved.]

268 Chair's Announcements

The Chair made the following announcements:-

Civic Engagements

Both the Chair and Vice-Chair had been busy in recent weeks including meeting with recipients of the Rose of the Shire Awards to present their rewards.

Northamptonshire Community Foundation

Rachel McGrath, Chief Executive of Northamptonshire Community Foundation was invited to provide a brief presentation to councillors.

The presentation set out the background to and the work undertaken by the Foundation, in that it was a charity giving back to the county by providing access to

funding for community based action to improve the lives of Northamptonshire's most disadvantaged people and communities.

The Chair thanked Rachel for a very informative presentation and hoped all councillors found the wide ranging opportunities that the Foundation provided was of interest.

Cllr Willie Latta

The Chair wished to express her condolences at hearing that Cllr Willie Latta, who was an alderman of Corby and served the Borough as a councillor for 26 years has passed away.

Cllr Keane added words of tribute, noting that he was a hard working and much respected councillor who was originally elected to Corby Borough Council in 1995. He had been mayor of Corby in 2002/03 and was made an alderman of Corby in March 2021.

Cllr Latta had been involved in town projects such as the town centre regeneration, establishment of the Cube, the swimming pool and Priors Hall. He had retired at the last election, had continued to be a mentor to councillors and was highly respected across Corby. He would be much missed.

269 Leader's Announcements

On behalf of the Conservative members of the Council, the Leader confirmed that all members of the community were treated equally and without bias. In June 2023, Councillor King Lawal had posted a tweet, following which the Council's Monitoring Officer had received complaints of breaches of the Council's Member Code of Conduct.

As leader of the Conservative Party, swift action was taken pending determination of the complaint. Following due process and the completion of the complaint process, he wished to invite Councillor Lawal to address Council.

Councillor Lawal addressed Council in the following terms:-

'On 29th June 2023 I posted a tweet which I understand some people were offended by. The tweet was an expression of my Christian faith by quoting passages from the bible. As a councillor I act equally for the residents of the areas in which I am elected in all areas of debate and discussion I represent all members of my constituency without fear or favour and undertake my role as a councillor with impartiality and without bias. My intent in posting the tweet was not to cause harassment, alarm or distress to any person or persons.

Thank you.'

270 Public Participation

The Chair noted that there were no public statements on this occasion.

The following member of the public asked a question to Council in accordance with meeting procedure rule 16.

Mr Chris Ashton – asked if the Council was prepared to administer a recall petition should this take place in Wellingborough constituency? If so, would the Council publish guidance on the rules and conduct of a recall petition to assist local electors.

Adele Wylie, Petitions Officer answered that following notification from the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Electoral Services team had put in place arrangements to deliver a recall petition. The Council was well prepared to administer urgent matters such as a recall petition. The Council's website would have information about the recall petition and how registered electors could sign the petition within the Wellingborough Constituency. In addition, registered electors would receive a Notice of Petition (like a Poll Card in an election) to ensure that they knew how and where to sign the petition should they wish to do so.

Mr Ashton asked the following supplementary question – What timeframe would be on receiving Notices of Petition?

Adele Wylie answered that they would be sent out on or around 3rd November 2023.

The Chair thanked Mr Ashton for asking his question and for the officer response.

271 Executive Presentations

The Leader confirmed that there were no Executive presentations to be made on this occasion.

272 Motion Presented to Council on 31 August 2023 - Conclusion of Debate

The Chair confirmed that councillors would now consider the conclusion of the debate on the Motion proposed by Cllr Valerie Anslow and seconded by Cllr Lyn Buckingham at the meeting of Council held on 31st August 2023, which had been adjourned following the reaching of the guillotine.

The proposed motion was as set out on the agenda for the meeting.

During debate a range of views were set out regarding housing in North Northamptonshire around the building and development of social housing and prevention of homelessness.

At the conclusion of debate, the motion was voted on, with 15 councillors voting in favour, three abstaining and 43 against.

The motion was duly **lost**.

Resolved:-

That Council rejects the proposed motion, as set out on the agenda for the meeting.

273 Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Strategy Annual Report 2022/23

Consideration was given to a report which provided Council with an update on the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report for 2022-23. A copy of the report is filed with the agenda, marked as 'Agenda Item'.

The recommendations in the report were proposed by Cllr Wendy Brackenbury and seconded by Cllr Lora Lawman.

During debate, it was noted that this would be the last joint Corporate Parenting Board report for Northamptonshire, noting that both North and West Northamptonshire Councils had adopted their own Board for the 2023/24 municipal year onwards.

Following conclusion of the debate, the motion was voted on, with 57 councillors in favour, 3 abstaining and 1 against.

The motion was duly **approved**.

Resolved:-

That Council:

- i) Approves the content of the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report which gives an overview of the Corporate Parenting Board's activities.
- ii) Notes that the Northamptonshire Children's Trust Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-25 sets out four key priorities and the update on each areas progress contained in the annual report.

Reasons for Decisions:

- *To promote and monitor the Northamptonshire Children's Trust Corporate Parenting Strategy;*
- *In recognition of all Members and employees role as corporate parents;*
- *Following consideration of the overview of the work of Northamptonshire Children's Trust and in support of the discharge of Corporate Parenting duties.*

Alternative Options Considered

Do Nothing – The Council has statutory duties as Corporate Parent for children in care and care leavers. Whilst the role of the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member is defined in legislation there are wider corporate responsibilities on all staff and elected Members. Not approving the Corporate Parenting Annual Report would mean that the Council failed to deliver all or parts of its statutory responsibilities in this area.

274 Revenue Budget Update 2023/24

Consideration was given to a report requesting approval for the use of the Transformation Reserve to fund one-off revenue implementation costs of the Development and Regulatory Services Case Management Systems and the inclusion of ongoing annual revenue savings of the system into the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). A copy of the report is filed with the agenda for the meeting, marked as 'Item 10'.

The recommendations in the report were proposed by Cllr Lloyd Bunday and seconded by Cllr David Brackenbury.

During discussion it was noted that approval of the funding would allow the scheme to move forward to procurement and delivery.

Following conclusion of the debate, the motion was voted on, with 54 councillors in favour, 6 abstaining and 0 against.

The motion was duly **approved**.

Resolved:

That Council:

- a) Approves the funding for the following changes to the revenue budget:
- i) Development and Regulatory Case Management System (CMS) – approves a revenue budget of £600k in 2023/24 for the procurement and one-off implementation costs of a new CMS funded through use of the Transformation Reserve and approve the inclusion of ongoing revenue savings of £40.4k in 2024/25 onwards over the 5 years of the contract.

Reasons for Recommendations:-

- *Expiry of incumbent contracts by 31st March 2024;*
- *Benefits from a single CMS, service delivery improvements and process efficiencies.*

Alternative Options Considered:-

- *Do nothing.*
- *Do Minimal – replacement solution for Kettering.*
- *New supplier single solution.*

275 Motions on Notice

The Chair confirmed that there remained three motions on notice to be considered at this meeting, having been carried over from the 31st August 2023 meeting.

Motion 2 – Alfred East Art Gallery

Cllr Anne Lee moved and Cllr Keli Watts seconded the motion to Council, as set out on the agenda for the meeting.

In debating the motion and amendments all councillors were in favour of the Art Gallery being opened, however the timeframe for doing so and the implications for the rest of the premises were discussed in detail.

During the debate an amendment was moved by Cllr Helen Howell and seconded by Cllr Jon-Paul Carr to amend the motion in the following terms:-

“The Alfred East Art Gallery in Kettering has now been closed for two years for works to improve and maximise its potential. North **Northamptonshire** ~~Northants~~ Council **will**

~~continue to undertake~~ to keep councillors informed of progress made on repairing/replacing the roof of the art gallery building and the adjoining library roof. , and to request ~~Also it is requested~~ that the Executive ~~continue to~~ progress the project with a ~~the~~ view to ~~reopen the~~ open Cornerstone, and with it, the Alfred East Art Gallery by the summer of 2024 at the latest. ~~as soon as is practically possible.~~”

The amendment was voted upon with 46 councillors in favour, 1 abstaining and 13 against. The amendment was **carried**.

The substantive motion was then voted upon, with 59 councillors in favour, 1 abstaining and 1 against. The substantive motion was **carried**.

Resolved:-

That the following motion, as amended, be approved:-

“The Alfred East Art Gallery in Kettering has now been closed for two years for works to improve and maximise its potential. North Northamptonshire Council will continue to keep councillors informed of progress made on repairing/replacing the roof of the art gallery building and the adjoining library roof. Also, it is requested that the Executive continue to progress the project with the view to open Cornerstone, and with it, the Alfred East Art Gallery as soon as is practically possible.”

The Council adjourned for a period of 10 minutes

Following the re-commencement of the Council meeting, Cllr Jon-Paul Carr left the meeting for the duration of Motion 3 below.

Motion 3 – Library Service

Cllr Jim Hakewill moved and Cllr Charlie Best seconded the motion as set out on the agenda for the meeting.

The mover of the motion noted and supported the comments of the member of the public Chris Stanbra, who had spoken in favour of the motion via a public statement at the last meeting of the Council held on 31st August 2023.

During debate it was noted that completion of the handover of the last two libraries had been completed during the year (Raunds and Rothwell) to community management. It was also noted that at this time, 85% of the library service been disaggregated, with no intention to change or close any statutory or community managed libraries - which had service level agreements in place.

Following the debate the motion was then voted upon, with 17 councillors in favour, 1 abstaining and 40 against. The motion was duly **lost**.

Resolved:-

That Council rejects the proposed motion, as set out on the agenda for the meeting.

Motion 4 – River Nene

Cllr Emily Fedorowycz moved and Cllr Harriet Pentland seconded the motion as set out on the agenda for the meeting.

During debate, it was noted that this was a cross party motion and this was welcomed, noting the importance of waterways within North Northamptonshire. Councillors noted how important the River Nene was as an asset in terms of ecology and tourism, but expressed concern about the increases in rivers being polluted and conditions of sewerage infrastructure, seeking reassurances from the Environment Agency.

Following the debate the motion was then voted upon, with 60 councillors in favour, 0 abstaining and 0 against. The motion was duly **carried**.

Resolved:-

That Council approves the following motion:-

“The River Nene is one of NNC’s most important assets in terms of tourism and ecology and, as such, needs proper guardianship.

The Environment Agency has primary responsibility for the River Nene. NNC is one of many that has riparian responsibilities and also an important role in flood management.

This Council will:

Ask the Environment Agency to provide the current levels of pollution in the Nene River and North Northants waterways;

Continue to engage with the EA and Ofwat to understand what work is being undertaken in North Northamptonshire to protect waterways and consider options for ensuring the health of our waterways including, but not limited to, investigating Bathing Water Status for key leisure areas;

Continue to engage with the EA and Ofwat on the processes for feeding in reports of pollution incidents.”

276 Councillor Questions

The Chair noted that two questions had been carried over from the meeting of 31st August 2023 and a further nine submitted to this meeting.

All 11 questions were received and responded to, as well as supplementary questions and answers where requested.

A full copy of the questions and responses made, as well as any supplementary questions and responses, are filed with these minutes.

Prior to the conclusion of councillor questions, the Chair asked if members were in favour of completing the business of the agenda to a conclusion, should the guillotine be reached.

Having been moved and seconded, councillors voted in favour of the guillotine motion, by show of hands.

Chair

Date

The meeting closed at 8.56 pm