

Minutes of a meeting of the Council

At 2.00 pm on Thursday 31st March, 2022 in the

Held as Council Chamber, The Cube, George Street, Corby, NN17 1QG

Present:-

Members

Councillors Larry Henson (Vice Chair, in the chair), Jean Addison, Tim Allebone, Ross Armour, Charlie Best, Matt Binley, Jennie Bone, David Brackenbury, Wendy Brackenbury, Scott Brown, Leanne Buckingham, Lyn Buckingham, Lloyd Bunday, Jon-Paul Carr, Robin Carter, William Colquhoun, Scott Edwards, Emily Fedorowycz, Martin Griffiths, Jim Hakewill, Clive Hallam, Ken Harrington, Helen Harrison, Helen Howell, David Howes, Philip Irwin, Bert Jackson, Ian Jelley, Barbara Jenney, David Jenney, Matt Keane, Graham Lawman, Lora Lawman, Anne Lee, Richard Levell, Paul Marks, Dorothy Maxwell, Peter McEwan, John McGhee, Zoe McGhee, Andy Mercer, Gill Mercer, Macaulay Nichol, Jan O'Hara, Tom Partridge-Underwood, Mark Pengelly, Harriet Pentland, Roger Powell, Elliot Prentice, Simon Rielly, Mark Rowley, Jason Smithers, Chris Smith-Haynes, Joseph Smyth, Mike Tebbutt, Kevin Thurland, Sarah Tubbs, Michael Tye, Malcolm Ward, Malcolm Waters, Kevin Watt, Andrew Wetherill and Lee Wilkes.

Officers in Attendance:

Rob Bridge (Chief Executive), Adele Wylie (Director of Governance and Human Resources/Monitoring Officer), Paul Goult (Interim Democratic Services Manager) and Ben Smith (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager).

93 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bell (Chair), Anslow, C Brown, Currall, Dalziel, Dell, Ekins, K Harrison, Lawal, North, Pandey, Roberts, Shacklock, Sims.

94 Minutes of the meeting held on 24th February 2022

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 24th February 2022 had been circulated.

It was noted that Councillor Graham Lawman had declared a Declaration of Interest in relation to agenda item 5 and had wished it recorded that he had in a civic capacity attended events previously as a guest of Kettering Amateur Swimming Club.

Councillor Bell (Chair) MOVED the minutes (as amended) of the meeting held on 24th February 2022 be agreed. The motion was SECONDED by Councillor D Brackenbury.

RESOLVED that: -

The minutes of the meeting (as amended) held on the 24th February 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

95 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Graham Lawman declared a personal interest in relation to the Urgency Report on Maintained Nurseries.

Councillor Addison declared a personal interest in relation to the Urgency Report on Maintained Nurseries.

96 Chair's Announcements

The Chair confirmed arrangements for the conduct of the business of the meeting. There were no other announcements on this occasion.

97 Leader's Announcements

Councillor Smithers (Leader of the Council) reminded members that the first anniversary of Vesting Day, the creation of North Northamptonshire Council, was the following day. The Leader took the opportunity to thank all members and officers for their work during the previous 12-months, in helping to establish the new council. Whilst recognising the previous challenges, together with those yet to be faced, the Leader felt that overall, a lot had been successfully achieved which reflected the hard work and effort of those involved.

98 Public Participation

Public Statements

There were no public statements on this occasion.

Public Questions

A question had been submitted by a member of the public, Mr Renda, which related to seeking the removal of the bus gate at a junction in Wellingborough Town Centre. Councillor Graham Lawman (Executive Member) provided a response, in which he indicated that there was no current intention to review the arrangements in place and that he hoped drivers would comply with the restrictions which were for the benefit of the wider community.

The Chair thanked Mr Renda and Councillor Lawman for their respective contributions.

99 Councillor Questions

There were a total of 18 written questions submitted. The questions and responses were circulated to all members prior to the commencement of the meeting. Supplementary questions were presented and responded to during this agenda item.

100 Executive Presentations

There were no Executive Presentations on this occasion.

101 Housing Tenancy Policy

The report before members sought approval from Full Council for the Tenancy Policy (attached as Appendix A to the report) to be adopted by North Northamptonshire Council. This draft policy was considered by the Executive at its meeting on 18th November 2021; the Executive were recommending approval.

The Tenancy Policy was being proposed for adoption by Full Council to replace the separate documents which currently existed in the Corby and Kettering housing localities. It was a legal requirement for an authority with council housing stock, supported by a Housing Revenue Account, to have a Tenancy Policy that set out the types of tenancies it offered.

The adoption of this key document would assist in enabling consistency between the two teams within North Northamptonshire Council. The Tenancy Policy required approval from Full Council as set out in North Northamptonshire Council's Constitution.

North Northamptonshire Council had council housing stock in the Kettering and Corby areas. As of 1st April 2022 there were in Kettering 3625 homes, of which 401 were sheltered; in relation to Corby there were 4615 homes, of which 536 were sheltered

Prior to Vesting Day, the sovereign councils had different documents, policies and procedures for the management of their properties. The Council now proposed that a harmonised suite of housing policies was adopted. Adopting an overarching Tenancy Policy would lay the foundation for this transformational work.

A North Northamptonshire Tenancy Policy was required by the Localism Act 2011 and set out the tenancy offer to successful applicants and council tenants. The main tenancy offer was to grant introductory one-year tenancies to new applicants. Where tenancy conditions were met over that period, a secure tenancy would be offered. Intensive management to assist successful introductory tenancies was provided.

Two main exceptions to this were proposed. The first was where a tenant breached the terms of the introductory tenancy. Where additional support may help to sustain the tenancy, the Council may choose to offer the tenant a 2-year fixed term tenancy, rather than ending the tenancy.

The second exception was proposed to protect adapted properties which provided specialist accommodation, or where a significant amount of money had been spent to adapt a property. In order to safeguard this stock and ensure that it was utilised to meet ongoing need with finite resources, a 5-year fixed term tenancy was proposed. In the last year of the 5-year fixed term tenancy, a review would be undertaken with the tenant. If there had been no change to their circumstances, a further fixed term tenancy would be granted. If circumstances or needs had changed, options to assist the tenant to a more suitable property would be considered.

Fixed term tenancies for purpose built or extensively adapted properties would be through a 5-year term as standard. A decision would be made at the time of offer dependant on the household circumstances, and the Council may offer a longer term if appropriate. The Council was not limited on the number of times that a fixed term tenancy could be renewed and could offer a lifetime secure tenancy following the ending of a fixed term tenancy when it would be appropriate to do so.

The use of fixed term tenancies would be familiar to applicants and tenants in the Kettering locality area. However, it would not be familiar to applicants and tenants in the Corby locality area.

Councillor Andy Mercer MOVED the recommendations; Councillor David Jenney SECONDED these.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The Tenancy Policy be approved for adoption; and
- (ii) Delegated authority be granted to the Executive Member for Housing and Communities, in liaison with the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing or their delegate, to take any further decisions and/or actions required to implement this policy.

102 Pay Policy Statement 2022/2023

It was a legislative requirement under the Localism Act 2011 that the Council had to publish an annual Pay Policy Statement. The Pay Policy Statement set out pay for the directly employed workforce (excluding schools) for the year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

The report before members sought approval of the Pay Policy Statement attached at Appendix A and requested that Council note that a package of new pay, terms, and conditions of employment and associated pay and employment policies for North Northamptonshire Council were still to be agreed.

The Pay Policy Statement must articulate the Council's approach to a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce and must be published on the website by the 31 March each year. Full Council noted that there were no significant changes to the policy statement from the previous year.

Councillor Smithers noted that on page 67 of the report pack, the non-statutory Chief Officers salary ranges would be included in the table prior to publication and all data updated in line with the 2021/22 pay award.

Councillor Smithers MOVED the recommendations; Councillor Lora Lawman SECONDED these.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The Pay Policy attached as Appendix A be approved; and
- (ii) It be noted that terms and conditions of employment (including a new pay structure) will be considered by Full Council.

103 North Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme

Members noted that the Council was required by legislation to prepare and publish a Local Development Scheme (LDS). An LDS was a project plan providing a timetable for the preparation of documents that make up the area's Development Plan.

The LDS provided detailed timetables for the Council's next programme of Development Plan Documents, including the North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan, a Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Policy, and the remaining stages of the Part 2 Local Plan for East Northamptonshire. Future reviews of the LDS would be necessary to ensure it remained as up to date as possible, and to add any new Development Plan Documents to be prepared, for example the North Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan. The LDS was attached at Appendix A to the report.

The Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel had met on 9th December 2021 to discuss the content of the Local Development Scheme, endorsing the content with additional suggested amendments. The Executive then met on 13th December 2022 and agreed that the Draft LDS be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

Councillor David Brackenbury MOVED the recommendations; Councillor Tebbutt SECONDED these.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The North Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme as set out in Appendix A be adopted.

104 Tackling Climate Change across North Northamptonshire

The report provided Full Council with an update, following the first report to Council in July 2021, on the work being undertaken to improve the organisation's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030.

The work included the development of a Climate Change Route Map (attached as Appendix 1 to the report) that built on the previous Climate Change Framework, and had been endorsed by the Climate Change, Environment and Growth Executive Advisory Panel in late 2021.

Further work would continue throughout 2022 including the creation of a Carbon Management Action Plan that would detail, and have costed, the actions needed to ensure the 2030 target was met.

Councillor Pentland MOVED the recommendations; Councillor Allebone SECONDED these.

Several members welcomed the report, together with the work undertaken to date by the Executive member, the Executive Advisory Panel and officers. It was felt that the Council had made a positive start in this area, whilst recognising that there was still much more to complete, and it was important that tackling the Climate Crisis remained as one of the core objectives of the Council.

It was felt that it was important that the Council take a positive lead in this matter, which would assist in generating greater awareness, support and action from the wider local community.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The current Climate Change Route Map (Appendix 1) and the actions contained within it be agreed;
- (ii) The carbon baseline figures, once established, be published; and
- (iii) The Carbon Management Action Plan be reported back to the Executive later in 2022.

105 Political Balance of Committees

The report before Full Council requested that Council note the changes in political group membership since the previous review of political proportionality. The report indicated the circumstances that had resulted in officers undertaking a recalculation of political balance on committees, the factors taken into account and the methodology used.

Following the recalculation, it was noted that there was only one suggested amendment, with the Conservative Group losing one full member on the Kettering Area Planning Committee, with that seat being filled by the Green Alliance Group. The revised membership of that committee would be 7 Conservative Group and 2 Green Alliance Group.

It was further noted, as required by statute, that a further review would be undertaken at Annual Council.

Councillor David Brackenbury MOVED the recommendations; Councillor Rowley SECONDED these.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The revised allocation of seats for the committees as set out in Appendix A be approved, to recognise political groups in accordance with the proportionality provisions of the Constitution.

106 Draft Municipal Timetable 2022/2023

The report before Full Council detailed a draft meeting timetable for the Municipal Year 2022/23. It was noted that in the Council's Constitution the responsibility for determining the Municipal Timetable fell on Annual Council, however in order for officers to commence arrangements for the coming months, members views on the draft were requested.

Councillor Lora Lawman MOVED the recommendations; Councillor Maxwell SECONDED these.

Some members raised concerns regarding the current start time of ordinary Full Council meetings; these were commencing at 2:00 pm on a trial period. It was noted

that there had been few ordinary meetings since the trial period commenced. It was acknowledged that there needed to be an assessment of the positive and negative aspects of the trial, and that Full Council would review the situation, following consideration by the Democracy and Standards Committee.

Councillor Howes requested that the provisional dates be included in members diaries as soon as possible, to assist those members who were also local councillors and/or had other external commitments. This request was noted.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) Approval in principle of the draft Municipal Timetable 2022/23 be given.

107 Constitutional Amendments - Planning Committees

The Constitutional Working Group (20th December 2021), and the Democracy and Standards Committee (8th February 2022), met to consider revisions to the administration and operation of both Area Planning Committees and the Strategic Planning Committee. This was in addition to “planning committee” matters previously approved by Full Council on 1st December 2021.

Following previous discussion at Full Council regarding the current Planning Committee Public Participation Policy, there had been further discussion whether any amendments were to be recommended. Details of the proposed revised Policy were provided in Appendix A together with the suggested Guidance Note for Chairs.

In addition, consideration had been given to the current delegation scheme and the “trigger points” when an application for planning consent be brought before a committee. It was noted there was disparity as to how a body or individual objection resulted in an application being determined by a committee. The Democracy and Governance Committee considered the current procedure in relation to public objections, local council objections and ward member objections. In the interests of openness and transparency it was felt that there needed to be greater consistency and clarity. Details of the current Scheme and the proposed Scheme were detailed in Appendix B.

Councillor Lora Lawman **MOVED** the recommendations; Councillor David Brackenbury **SECONDED** these.

In debate an amendment was tabled in relation to the revised Planning Committee Participation Policy. This requested a modification to the speaking arrangements for ward members at planning committee. The amendment requested that where only one ward member wished to address the committee that they be permitted a maximum of 5-minutes. Where two or more ward members wished to address committee, they be permitted a maximum of 3-minutes each, a potential total of 9-minutes in total if all three ward members wished to speak.

The amendment was **MOVED** by Councillor Lora Lawman and **SECONDED** by Councillor Gill Mercer.

There was general support for the proposed amendment, although some concern was raised that it had not been subject to discussion at the Constitutional Working Group or the Democracy and Standards Committee prior to being tabled at Full Council.

The Chair undertook a vote on the amendment only. The amendment gained majority support and was included in the proposed revised Policy.

A proposal to refer-back the draft policy to committee for further discussion prior to determination by Full Council was rejected. The majority of members felt that there had been sufficient discussion on these matters and Full Council had overall authority and responsibility to determine the recommendations (as amended).

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) That the revised Planning Committee Participation Policy (as amended) and the Guidance for Chairs of Planning Committees in the use of Chair's Discretion (Appendix A) be approved; and
- (ii) The revised Officer Delegation Scheme (Appendix B) be approved.

108 Capital Programme Update

The purpose of the report was to request approval for £0.825m for capital schemes which required borrowing and were more than £0.5m. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, schemes that required borrowing and were more than £0.5m must be approved by Council.

Approval of the funding would allow the schemes to move forward to procurement and delivery. The Executive considered the report at its meeting on 17th March 2022 and were recommending that Full Council grant approval for the borrowing.

This report contained details of schemes which had been submitted by officers to the Council's Strategic Capital Board as part of the Council's Capital Approval Process. Each scheme had completed a business case setting out the changes requested to the Capital Programme, including the purpose of the spend, the expected outcomes and the financial implications together with funding routes.

Councillor Bunday MOVED the recommendations; Councillor Graham Lawman SECONDED these.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) Approval be given to the following changes to the capital programme which were over £0.5m –
 - (a) Wellingborough Norse Fleet and Equipment – to increase budget by £0.630m for the provision of Waste and Street Cleaning fleet and equipment to be funded from capital receipts. Of this sum, £123k would be for the purchase of new equipment and would be recovered over time as a revenue contribution following cessation of the Norse contract;
 - (b) Kettering High Street Heritage Action Zone – to increase the budget by £0.504m to be funded from additional grant from Historic England;

- (c) Highways Funding – to increase the Capital Programme for 2022/23 by £9.955m in respect of the Department of Transport grant allocation announced on 28th February 2022, which covered the following areas:
- i. Pothole Funding - £3.735m
 - ii. LTP Maintenance - £3.735m
 - iii. LTP Incentive for Maintenance - £0.934m
 - iv. LTP Integrated Transport - £1.551m
- (d) To amend the Development Pool in light of the confirmation of the highways grant funding for 2022/23 and the indicative funding for 2023-25, which was as per the allocation at item (c) above, noting that the final allocation for these years will be subject to the results from the self-assessment of the existing highways maintenance incentive programme. The detail was set out in paragraphs 5.17 to 5.20 of the report.

109 Motions on Notice

The following motion had been submitted for consideration by Full Council –

“North Northamptonshire Council recognises the importance of being a responsible Organisation when it comes to food waste. As such the council will only hold meetings, training and other forms of offsite events at venues where the sites have a sustainable food waste policy to minimise food going to landfill; a policy whether written or verbally agreed with the council prior to any booking made that food waste wherever possible will be donated to foodbanks, homeless shelters or other various outside organisations and not put into general waste.”

The motion was MOVED by Councillor Matt Binley and SECONDED by Councillor Scott Brown.

Following discussion, the MOVER of the motion accepted a slight amendment to the wording, to remove the word “waste” and replace with “surplus.” The amended motion read -

“North Northamptonshire Council recognises the importance of being a responsible Organisation when it comes to surplus food. As such the council will only hold meetings, training and other forms of offsite events at venues where the sites have a sustainable surplus food policy to minimise food going to landfill; a policy whether written or verbally agreed with the council prior to any booking made that surplus food wherever possible will be donated to foodbanks, homeless shelters or other various outside organisations and not put into general waste.”

Members were generally supportive of the proposal, whilst stressing that it was important that food hygiene rules were always complied with and noted the motion stressed that the policy be enacted “...wherever possible...”

RESOLVED that: -

The motion (as amended) passed.

110 Urgency Motion

Virement – Maintained Nurseries 2022/23

Following a meeting of the Executive on 29th March 2022, Full Council were requested to consider an urgency motion relating to a virement being proposed by the Executive of £650,000 from the Council's central contingency budget into Children and Education Services.

A report was presented to Executive on 29th March 2022 regarding the distribution of the Maintained Nurseries Supplementary Fund in 2022/23 which was funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant. Executive made the decision that a revised distribution methodology should be applied in 2022/23 which sought to move towards a participation-based formula for the funding of maintained nurseries. This intermediate position was a "halfway house" between a participation-based model and a 0% Minimum funding guarantee for three (Croyland, Highfield, Ronald Tree) of the four nurseries.

This change in methodology resulted in funding changes for each of the four nurseries, with a reduction for Pen Green Nursery and increases for each of the other three nurseries. In making this decision Executive considered the wider impact of the change and the support that the Council could offer the nurseries during this transition period as changes become fully operational, whether to achieve change and efficiency (through reduced costs or increased income) or to ensure that any new investment was applied effectively to enhance provision and increase participation. Any grant payable would be subject to a separate grant agreement with each of the nurseries.

The Executive also approved that the funding for Maintained Nurseries would be subject to a formal scrutiny review of finance, provision and performance arrangements as determined by the Scrutiny Commission and that there would be an audit of all the nurseries covering the period 2017/18 to 2021/22.

The motion was **MOVED** by Councillor Lloyd Bunday and **SECONDED** by Councillor Scott Edwards.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) A budget virement of £650,000 to Children and Education Services from the Council's contingency budget be approved, to fund additional one-off grant applications to each of the Council's four maintained nurseries in 2022/23 in line with the decision of the Executive at its meeting on 29th March 2022. The payments would be subject to a grant agreement with each nursery; and
- (ii) Delegated authority be granted to the Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills and the Executive Member for Finance and Transformation, in consultation with the Executive Director of Children's Services and the Executive Director of Finance, to agree terms of the grant agreement.

111 Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 6.30pm.

Chair

Date