

Full Council

North Northamptonshire Council

Thursday 28th July 2022

At 2:00 pm in the Council Chamber, The Cube, George Street, Corby.

Present: -

Members:

Councillors Larry Henson (Chair), Jean Addison, Ross Armour, Paul Bell, Charlie Best, Matt Binley, Jennie Bone, David Brackenbury, Wendy Brackenbury, Cedwien Brown, Scott Brown, Leanne Buckingham, Lyn Buckingham, Lloyd Bunday, Jon-Paul Carr, William Colquhoun, John Currall, Alison Dalziel, Mark Dearing, Dez Dell, Scott Edwards, Emily Fedorowycz, Jim Hakewill, Clive Hallam, Ken Harrington, Helen Harrison, Helen Howell, Philip Irwin, Bert Jackson, Barbara Jenney, David Jenney, Matt Keane, Graham Lawman, Lora Lawman, Anne Lee, Richard Levell, Paul Marks, Peter McEwan, Zoe McGhee, Macaulay Nichol, Anup Pandey, Mark Pengelly, Simon Rielly, Russell Roberts, Mark Rowley, Geoff Shacklock, Jason Smithers, Joseph Smyth, Mike Tebbutt, Kevin Thurland, Michael Tye, Malcolm Ward, Andrew Weatherill, 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).

(Prior to commencing the formal business of the meeting, the Chair invited attendees to observe a minute's silence in memory of former councillor Mick Scrimshaw who had recently passed away. Speeches of condolence were made by Councillors Smithers, Addison, Hakewill, Lee, Roberts & Pengelly who had served with Mick Scrimshaw on Kettering BC, or NCC or the Shadow Authority. A written submission of condolence was also read out received from Councillor J McGhee).

137. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tim Allebone, Valerie Anslow, Robin Carter, Jonathan Ekins, Kirk Harrison, David Howes, Ian Jelley, Dorothy Maxwell, John McGhee, Andy Mercer, Gill Mercer, Steven North, Jan O'Hara, Tom Partridge-Underwood, Harriet Pentland, Elliot Prentice, David Sims, Chris Smith-Haynes, Sarah Tubbs, Kevin Watt.

138. Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd June 2022

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 23rd June 2022 had been circulated. It was noted that Councillor Edwards and Councillor Bells apologies had been submitted but were not recorded; these would be recorded.

Councillor Larry Henson MOVED the minutes (as amended) of the meeting held on 23rd June 2022 be agreed. Councillor Lora Lawman SECONDED the motion.

RESOLVED that: -

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 23rd June 2022 be agreed.

139. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Andrew Weatherill declared an interest with regard to Agenda Item 11 – the report on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO), as he had a personal interest.

140. Chair's Announcements

The Chair drew Council's attention to two recent visits to North Northamptonshire by members of the Royal Family. HRH The Duke of Gloucester had recently visited Oundle, whilst HRH The Princess Royal had attended the official opening of Chester House.

141. Leader's Announcements

There were no Leader's Announcements on this occasion.

142. Public Participation

There were no public statements or public questions on this occasion.

Petition

The Council had received a petition from the Corby Hackney Owners Association (CHOA) relating to proposals currently under consideration by the Council in relation to Hackney Carriage fares. The proposal under consideration was due to be determined later in the year by the Executive.

The petition had been submitted under the Council's Petition Scheme and contained in excess of 1,500 signatories therefore meeting the criteria to trigger a debate at Full Council.

The Chair invited Mr Rielly on behalf of the CHOA to address Council. Mr Rielly was proposing that there should be separate zone increases for the next 12 months which would allow for "*proper*" consultation and save their customers from a "*huge*" increase. Mr Rielly stated that CHOA were looking for a moderate increase but felt that the harmonisation option at a higher rate would have a negative impact on their business and on their customers.

Several members expressed sympathy with the sentiments in the petition and suggested that the Executive consider the points made by the CHOA and other Hackney Carriage owners prior to making a final decision.

Councillor David Brackenbury thanked Mr Rielly for his address to Council and confirmed that all consultation responses would be taken into account. Council noted that the views of the Licensing and Appeals Committee would be considered following its meeting on 9th August 2022. The Executive would consider all responses received in reaching a final determination on this matter.

It was agreed to note the petition and refer to the Executive for consideration.

143. Councillor Questions

There were a total of 12 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.

144. Executive Presentations

There were no Executive Presentations on this occasion.

145. North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement

The report was recommending adoption by the Council of the North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

An updated SCI had been prepared for North Northamptonshire setting out how the Council would consult with local communities on planning issues and support the preparation of neighbourhood plans.

Public consultation on the draft SCI had been undertaken for a period of six weeks during December 2021 and January 2022. All representations received had been fully considered in the final SCI, which was included at Appendix A to the report.

The final SCI, along with the schedule of representations received during public consultation on the draft SCI and amendments to the document following public consultation had been considered and endorsed by Members of the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel on 24th March 2022, and also by the Executive on 14th April 2022. The Executive had recommended the final SCI be adopted by Full Council.

The recommendation was **MOVED** by Councillor David Brackenbury and **SECONDED** by Councillor David Jenney.

(Councillor Bone left the meeting at this point).

Members noted the Council was required to have an up-to-date SCI in place setting out how the Council would consult on development plans and planning applications.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The Council adopt the North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement as set out at Appendix A.

(Councillor Rielly and Councillor Leanne Buckingham joined the meeting at this point).

146. Health & Wellbeing Terms of Reference

The report before full Council was seeking approval to amend the existing terms of reference for the Council's Health & Wellbeing Board (HWB). The amendments were being proposed due to implications arising from the recent Health and Care Act 2022 and to ensure that the HWB was compliant in its membership and operation.

The proposed amended terms had been considered by the Democracy and Standards Committee meeting of 11th July 2022; the Committee were recommending that full Council approve the suggested revised terms.

The recommendations were **MOVED** by Councillor Jon-Paul Carr and **SECONDED** by Councillor Helen Harrison.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The revised Terms of Reference for the Health and Wellbeing Board as detailed in Appendix A be approved.

(Councillor Weatherill left the meeting at this point).

147. Response to Council Motion of 23rd June 2022 on Houses in Multiple Occupation

The report before Council provided a response to Members in relation to the amended motion at Full Council on 23rd June 2022. The report outlined progress and plans for gathering evidence to test and develop options on how to ensure the highest standards of licensing and strong governance for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). The report did not consider the implementation of options, which would be subject to a separate process.

The report indicated that significant progress had been made in the previous 12 months to collect evidence on HMOs following resolution at the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel on 19th July 2021 to investigate the possible use of Article 4 Directions.

The evidence gathering had been coordinated by a cross cutting officer working group, comprising subject matter experts from various service areas that interacted with HMOs in their separate functions, including representatives from Environmental Health, Private Sector Housing, Planning Enforcement, Council Tax, Development Management, Public Health, Housing Strategy and Planning Policy, under the governance of the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel that had scrutinised progress of the investigation by way of regular reports.

The first report on the 21st February 2022 outlined the range of evidence collected to support the investigation, including GIS data analysis to understand the quantity and spatial distribution of HMOs, intelligence on the effects of HMOs concentrations, and the identification of six 'hotspot' wards containing the highest numbers and concentration that would be subject to further local analysis. The report highlighted key information gaps and limitations, emphasising the importance of reliable and robust evidence to justify any additional planning or regulatory requirements, and noted the investigation was considering a wider range of measures than only Article 4 Directions to ensure the highest standards of licensing and robust governance of HMOs.

The second report on the 16th May 2022 explained actions taken to improve the quality of the evidence and outlined the process for undertaking a consultation survey to supplement the information already gathered.

The online consultation survey was launched on 15th July 2022 for a period of eight weeks via the Council's Consultation Hub. This included questions to tenants, landlords, and those living or working near HMOs. The consultation included an interactive mapping feature where respondents could identify properties they suspected were being used as HMOs, although they were required to submit evidence to support these submissions.

Work continued with a parallel project exploring opportunities for transformation of system and services to improve data sharing and establish a central database that could be accessed and updated by multiple people across the relevant departments within the Council to improve monitoring of HMOs, and which would assist in effectively measuring the outcomes and recommendations of the investigation.

A timeline of key dates was included in the report before full Council. It was noted that the plans and projected timescales for this project would need to remain flexible to take account of the evidence gathered at each stage of the project.

- Online consultation ends – 9 September 2022
- A summary of the consultation survey results would be reported to Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel on 24 October 2022
- HMO Officer Working Group to review consultation responses and key issues raised by these and develop options – October/November 2022
- Report to Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel to identify and advise on issues, options, and any potential implications for planning and regulatory functions – 21 November 2022

The project would run in its current form, with governance by the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel, until the Council's Executive agrees a final paper. There would then be a period of implementation that would come after that. It was expected any delivery of the recommendations would not result in an immediate change in the regulatory framework, in particular Article 4 Directions and Discretionary Licensing, that had lengthy periods of mandatory consultation and engagement as part of the process.

The recommendation was **MOVED** by Councillor David Brackenbury and **SECONDED** by Councillor Matt Binley.

Members welcomed the report and the progress made to date. The use of Article 4 Directions was noted as a potential option available, however Councillor David Brackenbury stressed there were other options and Directions may not be suitable in every circumstance. There was a legitimate role for HMOs in meeting housing demand, and the Council needed to ensure that a comprehensive system of licensing and regulation was in place.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The Council endorsed the report setting out progress and plans for gathering evidence to test and develop options on how to ensure the highest standards of licensing and strong governance for HMOs, including indicative timescales.

(Councillor Weatherill re-joined the meeting at this point. Councillor Pengelly left the meeting at this point).

148. Virement – Salary Increments 2022/23

The report before full Council was requesting approval for a virement which was in excess of £0.5m. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, virements in excess of £0.5m must be approved by full Council.

A report was presented to the Employment Committee on 28th June 2022 which set out that the Council had a range of terms and conditions relating to pay for its employees as a result of local government reorganisation. Staff transferring to North Northamptonshire Council on 1st April 2021 transferred on the terms and conditions they were subject to at their predecessor authorities.

Whilst those employees who transferred on nationally agreed pay and terms and conditions, and those who have been appointed to NNC since 1 April 2021 would contractually receive an annual salary increment (subject to being in post for 6 months prior to 1st April 2022 and not being at the top of the corresponding grading structure), those on local terms and conditions or 'other' TUPE terms would not automatically receive a salary increment.

To support the Council's ambition to become an employer of choice and ensure fairness across the organisation, the Employment Committee agreed that all eligible employees receive a salary increment.

The report requested that full Council approve the virement from the Council's corporate contingency budget in order to fund the additional payment to staff.

The recommendation was **MOVED** by Councillor Jenney and **SECONDED** by Councillor Bunday.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The use of £1.150m of the contingency budget be approved to fund a salary increment for all eligible employees in 2022/23. This would include staff not at the top of their grade where their protected TUPE terms and conditions of employment had no contractual entitlement to incremental progression as agreed by the Employment Committee at its meeting on 28th June 2022 and as reported to the Executive meeting on 14th July 2022.

(Councillor Dearing left the meeting at this point).

149. Motions on Notice

The Chair informed Full Council that a motion had been received; this was printed on the agenda paper.

Motion – Member Conduct

“The North Northamptonshire Council wishes to re-assert the importance of the ‘Nolan Principles’ of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership for all in public life. These principles serve as the foundations of our Councillor Code of Conduct and underpin how Councillors must behave when carrying out their duties.

The honour of becoming an elected representative comes with the responsibility of maintaining and building the confidence in which the democratic political process is held, both for central and local governments. These principles guide not only how decisions and functions are carried out by elected members but also how they treat officers, the public and their colleagues.

In light of the attention these principles are receiving locally and nationally, this council therefore notes:

- The seven Nolan Principles of Public Life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership) underpin the conduct and behaviour expected of our elected representatives nationally and locally.*
- The obligation as a Council and as individual Councillors to adhere to these principles at all times.*

This Council resolves:

- To defend and protect these principles as a matter of duty, so as to maintain and build the confidence of residents in their democratic institutions.*
- That members should confront and report actions or omissions by other members of this council that appear to be contrary to the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council, which includes and reflects the Nolan Principles.”*

The motion was MOVED by Councillor Alison Dalziel and SECONDED by Councillor Matt Keane. In moving the motion Councillor Dalziel stressed the importance of ensuring that there was mutual respect shown at all times and emphasised the importance in complying with the Nolan Principles at all times.

Several members across the Chamber spoke in support of the motion, many pointing out that members in signing their respective Acceptance of Office forms agreed to abide by the approved Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The motion be supported.

150. Urgent Items

There were no Urgent Items on this occasion.

151. Close of Meeting

Meeting closed at 4:01 pm.