

Full Council

North Northamptonshire Council

Thursday 29th September 2022

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

Present: -

Members:

Councillors Armour, Best, Binley, Bone, D Brackenbury, W Brackenbury, S Brown, Lyn Buckingham, Leanne Buckingham, Carr, Carter, Colquhoun, Currall, Dearing, Dell, Ekins, Fedorowycz, Griffiths, Hakewill, Hallam, Harrington, Howell, Howes, Irwin, Jelley, Lawal, G Lawman, L Lawman, Lee, Marks, Maxwell, McEwan, J McGhee, Z McGhee, Pandey, Partridge-Underwood, Pengelly, Pentland, Prentice, Rielly, Roberts, Rowley, Shacklock, Smithers, Smith-Haynes, Tebbutt, Thurland, Tubbs, Tye, Ward, Watt, Weatherill, 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).

152. Election of Chair of the Meeting

Due to apologies received from both the Chair and Vice-Chair, the meeting was requested to elect a Chair for the meeting. The nomination of Councillor Russell Roberts was **MOVED** by Councillor Jason Smithers and **SECONDED** by Councillor David Brackenbury. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED that: -

Councillor Roberts be elected as Chair of the meeting.

153. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H Harrison, Bunday, Anslow, Smyth, North, Sims, Henson, O'Hara, Levell, Edwards, Jackson, A Mercer, G Mercer, Allebone, Bell, K Harrison, B Jenney, C Brown, R Powell, D Jenney, Nichol, Keane, Addison, Dalziel.

154. Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 28th July 2022

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 28th July 2022 had been circulated.

Councillor Russell Roberts **MOVED** the minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2022 be agreed. Councillor Jason Smithers **SECONDED** the motion.

RESOLVED that: -

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 28th July 2022 be agreed.

155. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were registered.

156. Chair's Announcements

The Chair informed the meeting that Saturday 1st October 2022 would see the start of Black History Month, and North Northamptonshire Council would proudly fly the Pan-African flag at its civic buildings to celebrate the impact of black heritage and culture on North Northamptonshire, and the world as a whole.

As part of the month-long celebration, the Council would share useful links to organisations in the county on its website and social media channels, as well as highlight local events and information. One event highlighted was a special display at Wellingborough Library to honour Mike Prescod MBE, the town's first black mayor

157. Leader's Announcements

There were no Leader's Announcements on this occasion.

158. Public Participation

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

159. Councillor Questions

There were a total of 22 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.

160. Executive Presentations

There were no Executive Presentations on this occasion.

161. Councillor Learning and Development Policy

Full Council received a report requesting its approval of a Councillor Learning and Development Policy to assist in the Council's previously agreed aim to eventually achieve accreditation of the East Midlands Regional Councillor Development Charter.

The East Midlands Regional Charter for Councillor Development aimed to promote best practice in councillor development. The Charter had an accreditation process which was set against standards. These standards had been developed in conjunction with the Local Government Association and other regions.

There were three essential criteria to achieving the Charter. These were:

- (i) There was a clear commitment to councillor development and support.
- (ii) The Council had a strategic approach to councillor development.
- (iii) Learning and development was effective in building councillors' skills and knowledge.

Within each of these criteria there were elements and requirements to demonstrate that the criteria were being met. These did not dictate what should be in the Council's strategy or the nature of the content or the delivery mechanisms that should be used. The emphasis was on ensuring that all councillors were appropriately developed and supported so that they could be effective in their roles. Achieving the Councillor Development Charter was a chance for the Council's work to be recognised.

The draft Councillor Learning and Development Policy had been drafted over the course of the previous year, along with some other essential documentation to enable work to begin on collation of the evidence required for award of the Charter.

The Member Development Working Group had met on 8th August 2022 to consider the draft policy prior to submission to full Council for approval. It endorsed the document submitted as Appendix A with a recommendation that the Policy be approved by Council.

The Council was required to regularly review and refresh its Councillor Learning and Development Policy once it had been approved by Council, and it was proposed that this process was overseen in future by the Democracy and Standards Committee every three years.

The recommendation was **MOVED** by Councillor Lee Wilkes and **SECONDED** by Councillor King Lawal.

Councillor Wilkes stressed the importance of ensuring that where possible the delivery of training was dovetailed to the needs of individual councillors. It was recognised that councillors had competing demands on their time and also appreciated a variety of approaches to training and learning. It was important that the roll out of training and development opportunities tried to capture councillor preferences where possible.

Councillor Lee expressed concern that currently not all councillor requirements for training in relation to IT were being captured. It was important that councillors had confidence to fully utilise IT in undertaking their Council duties; this needed to be prioritised.

Councillor Griffiths particularly recommended the training and development opportunities sponsored by the Local Government Association (LGA). Councillor Griffiths felt these were exceptional and were to be highly recommended to all councillors.

Councillor Maxwell whilst appreciating that some specialist training needed to be mandatory felt that it was important not to coerce councillors into training.

Councillor Hakewill suggested that there should be exploration of joint training with town and parish councils for example relating to planning. Councillor Carr and Councillor D Brackenbury supported the consideration of this.

Councillor John McGhee also spoke in favour of engagement with LGA training and development opportunities. The Leadership Academy was commended.

Councillor Best felt that it was important that councillors took all opportunities to attend briefings and training particularly on issues that were central to the Council's core objectives such as tackling climate change.

Councillor Jelley felt that it was important that scrutiny members received appropriate training in order to fulfil their specific duties and responsibilities.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The draft Councillor Learning and Development Policy attached to the report as Appendix A to the report be approved.

(Councillor Tom Partridge-Underwood joined the meeting at this point).

162. Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22

Full Council were being requested note the Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22. The Scrutiny Commission and the Finance & Resources Scrutiny Committee had considered the report. The report detailed the work undertaken by the two committees in the first year following Vesting Day.

The report noted that a Scrutiny Conference had been held in 2021 to formulate a Scrutiny Work Plan which the committees were addressing. This Plan would be subject to review. The Report also detailed the specific tasks undertaken by the respective committees during 2021/22.

The recommendation was **MOVED** by Councillor Wendy Brackenbury and **SECONDED** by Councillor Mark Pengelly.

Councillor Hakewill felt it was important that scrutiny members received further training and considered opportunities for greater public interaction, a view supported by Councillor John McGhee.

Councillor John McGhee suggested that going forward all chairs of scrutiny committees should be allocated to Opposition councillors, to demonstrate greater transparency and challenge.

Councillor Smithers restated his view that a strong and challenging scrutiny process was important to the Council. Councillor Smithers indicated that he was aware the Monitoring Officer was undertaking a review of current arrangements in order to strengthen governance structures and enhance scrutiny arrangements.

Councillor Wendy Brackenbury, in conclusion, confirmed that training for scrutiny members was already identified as a priority.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22 as attached as Appendix A to the report be noted.

163. Motions on Notice

Motion 1

The Chair informed Council that the following motion on notice had been received.

“The cost-of-living crisis will have an impact on the Council’s most vulnerable tenants, especially if the winter turns out to be long and hard, and no one knows if it will be mild or harsh winter. Whilst the government works out what it needs to do, we as a landlord also need to look at and prepare for how we ensure our tenants remain safe and well.

Our housing stock is getting older and whilst we as a Council do have a boiler replacement scheme, it is still possible we could have many boiler failures over the coming winter, with tenants facing long waits for either boiler parts or replacement.

This motion asks –

North Northamptonshire Council to review the energy efficiency of any temporary heating given to families to help in those conditions where tenants have a boiler failure and face a long wait for repairs or replacement, as the current temporary heating (usually fan heaters) could cost up to 84p per hour to run per heater, over a month this could add £100s per month compared to average heating costs; the motion also asks if heating in these circumstances could be subsidised by the Council in properties where there are children under 5, the elderly and the disabled, who are disproportionately affected by the need and ability to keep warm.”

Councillor Lyn Buckingham MOVED the motion. Councillor Leanne Buckingham SECONDED the motion.

Councillor Lyn Buckingham expressed concern regarding the potential for an increase in fuel poverty during the current energy crisis and the financial problems being faced by large sections of the community. Councillor Buckingham was particularly concerned regarding vulnerable people who were Council housing tenants and seeking assurances that the Council maximise assistance to these residents.

Councillor John McGhee felt that it was important that the Council took action as soon as possible and sought assurances that the boiler replacement programme was accelerated to ensure that the need for repairs to faulty devices could be minimised. It was important that the Council’s tenants did not suffer from lack of a reliable source of heating.

Councillor Binley confirmed that the Council did have a fully costed boiler replacement programme which was being rolled out. The Council operated a 24-hour response service to

reports of faulty boilers as this was obviously seen as a priority. Boiler replacements were dealt with within days.

Councillor Hakewill suggested that the motion could be referred to scrutiny for consideration, however after discussions this referral was withdrawn, and the mover and seconder of the motion sought permission to amend the tabled motion, so that the words were added at the end of the final paragraph “...and that a report be brought back to the next Council meeting or the meeting after that.”

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The motion (as amended) be approved.

Motion 2

The motion on notice submitted by Councillor Fedorowycz was withdrawn with the agreement of the seconder Councillor Tubbs and permission of Council.

164. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items on this occasion.

165. Close of Meeting

Meeting closed at 3:52 pm.

Chair

Date