

## Full Council

North Northamptonshire Council

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023

At 6:00 pm in the Council Chamber, The Cube, George Street, Corby.

**Present: -**

**Members:**

Councillors Larry Henson (Chair), Jean Addison, Tim Allebone, Valerie Anslow, Ross Armour, Charlie Best, Matt Binley, David Brackenbury, Wendy Brackenbury, Scott Brown, Leanne Buckingham, Lyn Buckingham, Lloyd Bunday, Jon-Paul Carr, Robin Carter, William Colquhoun, John Currall, Alison Dalziel, Dez Dell, Scott Edwards, Jim Hakewill, Clive Hallam, Ken Harrington, Helen Harrison, Helen Howell, David Howes, Bert Jackson, Ian Jelley, Matt Keane, King Lawal, Graham Lawman, Lora Lawman, Paul Marks, Dorothy Maxwell, Peter McEwan, John McGhee, Zoe McGhee, Andy Mercer, Gill Mercer, Macaulay Nichol, Anup Pandey, Tom Partridge-Underwood, Mark Pengelly, Harriet Pentland, Roger Powell, Elliot Prentice, Jason Smithers, Chris Smith-Haynes, Mike Tebbutt, Michael Tye, Malcolm Ward, Andrew Weatherill, Lee Wilkes.

**Officers in Attendance:**

Rob Bridge (Chief Executive), Adele Wylie (Director of Customer and Governance/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 two minute's silence in memory of Councillor David Jenney (NNC) who had recently passed away. Several councillors made speeches of condolence.*

### 184. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Jenney, A Pandey, D Sims, S North, G Shacklock, P Bell, K Harrison, M Griffiths, S Tubbs, R Roberts, R Levell, J Ekins, R Armour.

### 185. Minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022 had been circulated.

Councillor Larry Henson MOVED the minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022 be agreed. Councillor Helen Harrison SECONDED the motion.

**RESOLVED the: -**

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022 be agreed.

### 186. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made on this occasion.

### 187. Chair's Announcements

There were no Chair Announcements on this occasion.

## **188. Leader's Announcements**

The Leader (Councillor Jason Smithers) took the opportunity to express his personal condolences to the family and friends of the late Councillor David Jenney.

The Leader also highlighted the support to be provided by North Northamptonshire Council and its partners in response to recently announced job losses in Corby, which were likely to impact on a significant number of local residents. The Council would do everything it could to provide support and advice to those impacted by these job losses and provide support to partners.

## **189. Public Participation**

Mr Reay, a local resident, had submitted the following question for Full Council –

*“Following the announcement from central government last week, does this council agree with the decision not to award much-needed funding to residents and communities in North Northamptonshire?”*

Councillor David Brackenbury (Executive Member) responded by stating that the Council were disappointed that their recent bid had been unsuccessful. One hundred bids had been successful, and many more including North Northamptonshire had been disappointed. Councillor Brackenbury noted that there were likely to be further bidding opportunities and the Council would consider participating again in the future.

## **190. Executive Presentations**

There were no Executive Presentations on this occasion.

## **191. Audit & Governance Annual Report 2021/22**

Full Council received the Audit & Governance Annual Report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022. The report detailed the work undertaken by the Committee, the attendance of Committee members at meetings and the training undertaken by them.

The report also included details of the Committee's approach to risk management and oversight of the Council's Audit Plan.

The recommendation was **MOVED** by Councillor Andrew Weatherill and **SECONDED** by Councillor Elliot Prentice.

Councillor Weatherill thanked officers and committee members for their work and support during this period. Councillor Weatherill felt that the committee had made a constructive and meaningful contribution to monitoring areas of risk and ensuring that the Council's approach to financial management was strengthened.

It was noted by Council that closure of legacy accounts from former sovereign councils had been, and continued to be, a challenge for the Committee however good progress had been made. Closure of all legacy accounts would continue to be a priority.

Within the report, a self-assessment by four committee members of the work and effectiveness of the Committee was included. It was suggested that this was a relatively small sample of respondents and should be widened. This was noted.

It was noted that an Independent Member of the Committee had been appointed by Council, however two vacancies remained. Appointment to these two vacancies would be progressed and readvertised.

*(Councillor T Partridge-Underwood left the meeting at this point).*

**RESOLVED that: -**

- (i) The Audit and Governance Annual Report 2022, as attached as Appendix A to the report, be noted.

## **192. Meeting Procedure Rules & Constitutional Amendments**

Council considered revisions to the current Meeting Procedure Rules. Both the Constitutional Working Group (CWG) and the Democracy and Standards Committee had considered this report. The Committee at its meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 agreed to recommend the revised rules to Council for ratification.

Following discussion by the Constitutional Working Group (CWG) and the Democracy and Standards Committee, it was being recommended that certain amendments be made to the Meeting Procedure Rules and the Budget Council Procedure Rules. On consideration of the current Rules, it was noted that there was the need to clarify certain aspects of procedure and to incorporate certain “learning points” since Vesting Day and the operation of both Full Council meetings and those of committees.

Details of the significant amendments being recommended were included within the report. In addition, it was noted that the procedure for the Budget Full Council meeting (attached as Appendix A to the Meeting Procedure Rules) were also being recommended for amendment.

There was brief discussion regarding the current wording of the Guillotine Motion element, and a suggestion that this required clarification and that the impact of such a motion be more clearly documented. It was agreed further discussion on potential minor amendment would be held by the Constitutional Working Group.

The recommendations were **MOVED** by Councillor Lora Lawman and **SECONDED** by Councillor Macaulay Nichol.

### **RESOLVED that: -**

- (i) The revised Meeting Procedure Rules (as detailed in Appendix A) be approved, with Part A 1.1 effective immediately with other amendments effective from the close of the meeting; and
- (ii) That the revised Budget Council Procedure Rules (as detailed in Appendix B) be approved effective from the close of the meeting.

## **193. Draft Municipal Timetable 2023/24**

Full Council was required to approve a calendar of meetings prior to the commencement of each new municipal year. Attached as Appendix A to the report was a copy of the draft timetable for 2023/24.

The draft timetable referenced the formal meetings of the Council, Executive, committees, Executive Advisory Panels, and other standing bodies. The purpose of tabling this report is to provide information to members, officers, and the public of the schedule of meeting dates and allow for arrangements to be made for the booking of venues etc.

Members noted that in the timetable Full Council meetings were scheduled for 6:00 pm start time, with the Budget Full Council commencing at 10:00 am. Any Extraordinary meetings of Full Council would normally convene at 7:00 pm.

Members noted that currently there was a review of Scrutiny. The current proposal out for consultation suggested three scrutiny committees. The outcome of the consultation exercise would be reported into the Democracy and Standards Committee, with a final recommendation to Full Council in March 2023. In order to progress the consideration of the Municipal Timetable, it was being proposed that Tuesday evenings were allocated to scrutiny, with the final dates being allocated after Full Council had considered the outcome of the review.

The proposed dates of Executive Advisory Panels were indicated in Appendix A and allowed for the increase of Panels from five to six. It also allowed for each Panel to meet bi-monthly whilst ensuring that there was no more than one Panel meeting scheduled per week.

Members noted that the report commissioned by the Council into the Planning Service and undertaken by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS), was discussed by the Executive at their meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2022. The PAS report was a wide-ranging review of the Council's Planning Service. Included within this were recommendations regarding the governance structure for the Council's planning committees and suggestions regarding potential amendment. The PAS recommendations were being considered by Members through an implementation board, however the board was not decision-making and potential recommendations in relation to constitutional matters would be taken through the appropriate decision-making channel including Full Council.

Approval of the timetable by Council did not preclude extraordinary meetings being called if there was a business need to do so. It was noted that whilst Council was being requested to agree the timetable; until a summons and agenda were issued for a meeting the meeting was not lawfully called. Whilst a meeting may be scheduled in the agreed timetable, if there was a lack of business then a summons may not be issued; this was usually in consultation with the appropriate Chair.

The recommendations were **MOVED** by Councillor Lora Lawman and **SECONDED** by Councillor Jan O'Hara.

**RESOLVED that: -**

- (i) The Municipal Timetable 2023/24 be approved, subject to the outcome of the current review of Scrutiny and the review of Planning; and
- (ii) Delegation be granted to the Proper Officer (the "Monitoring Officer") responsibility for incorporating into the Municipal Timetable meetings of Scrutiny and Planning following the outcome of the respective reviews.

**194. Members' Allowances**

Full Council were requested to confirm their preference on the application of the annual increase of Members' Allowances, linked to the NJC Pay Award for staff 2022/23.

The Council had an approved Member Scheme of Allowances, based on recommendations received from an Independent Remuneration Panel. In order to ensure there was an appropriate annual uplift of allowances, the Scheme included reference to the annual NJC Staff Pay Award. Where the NJC Award allowed for an increase of staff pay e.g. 2% increase, a corresponding 2% increase would be applied to Member Allowances. In 2021/2022 the Pay Award was 1.75% and Member Allowances were therefore increased by 1.75%.

For 2022/2023 the NJC Staff Pay Award was not a percentage increase, but application of a lump sum of £1,925 across all NJC pay points. Full time employees therefore received a £1,925 uplift on their current salary, this was prorated for part time employees. Unfortunately, this was not easily transposed into an uplift for Member Allowances. As a consequence, it was necessary for Council to give instruction to officers on its application for this year.

The report outlined the background to the issue and some potential options for the resolution of this matter.

A recommendation for Council to approve Option 4 within the report, to waive any increase in Members' Allowances for 2022/23, was **MOVED** by Councillor Jason Smithers and **SECONDED** by Councillor Helen Howell.

An amendment to the substantive motion was **MOVED** by Councillor Jim Hakewill and **SECONDED** by Councillor Charlie Best. The amendment read: -

*“In view of the incredibly difficult cost of living circumstances our residents are currently enduring we propose that there be no increase in member allowances for 22-23 or 23-24 and that an Independent Panel Review be convened in 2024-25 to recommend Allowances for the new Council to be elected in May 2025.”*

Following debate, a recorded vote was taken on this amendment.

Those voting in favour of the amendment – Councillors J Addison, V Anslow, C Best, S Brown, Leanne Buckingham, Lyn Buckingham, W Colquhoun, A Dalziel, D Dell, S Edwards, E Fedorowycz, J Hakewill, H Harrison, D Howes, B Jackson, M Keane, A Lee, P McEwan, J McGhee, Z McGhee, A Mercer, M Pengelly, S Rielly.

Those voting against the amendment – Councillors T Allebone, M Binley, J Bone, D Brackenbury, W Brackenbury, C Brown, L Bunday, J-P Carr, R Carter, J Currall, M Dearing, C Hallam, H Howell, P Irwin, I Jelley, K Lawal, G Lawman, L Lawman, P Marks, D Maxwell, G Mercer, H Pentland, R Powell, E Prentice, M Rowley, J Smithers, C Smith-Haynes, J Smyth, M Tebbutt, M Ward, K Watt, A Weatherill, L Wilkes.

Those abstaining – Councillors L Henson, M Tye, M Waters.

The amendment fell.

There was general support among Members that the pay award for 2022/23 should be waived, in recognition that Members had already received an uplift of 1.75% for 2021/22 and that independently the Allowance Scheme had been reviewed during 2022 resulting in an increase in Basic Allowance and some Special Responsibility Allowances.

A recorded vote on the substantive motion was requested.

Those voting in favour of the motion – T Allebone, V Anslow, C Best, M Binley, J Bone, D Brackenbury, W Brackenbury, C Brown, S Brown, Leanne Buckingham, Lyn Buckingham, L Bunday, J-P Carr, R Carter, W Colquhoun, J Currall, A Dalziel, M Dearing, D Dell, S Edwards, E Fedorowycz, J Hakewill, C Hallam, H Harrison, H Howell, D Howes, P Irwin, B Jackson, I Jelley, M Keane, K Lawal, G Lawman, L Lawman, A Lee, P Marks, D Maxwell, P McEwan, J McGhee, Z McGhee, A Mercer, G Mercer, M Nichol, J O’Hara, M Pengelly, H Pentland, R Powell, E Prentice, S Rielly, M Rowley, J Smithers, C Smith-Haynes, J Smyth, M Tebbutt, M Ward, K Watt, A Weatherill, L Wilkes.

Those voting against the motion – M Tye.

Those abstaining – J Addison, L Henson, M Waters.

**RESOLVED that: -**

- (i) An increase in Members’ Allowances be waived for 2022/2023.

## **195. Winter 2022/23 Temporary Heating**

Council noted the introduction of an NNC Standard Operating Procedure for the payment of a goodwill gesture to tenants of the Council, when temporary heaters were left in their property, as a result of a breakdown of their primary heating system during the current winter (2022/23).

It was recognised that during the winter period (the Council had defined this as 1st November to 30th April based upon Met Office 1991-2020 minimum average temperatures data), there was a greater impact upon Council tenants if their central heating boiler should break down and was not repairable for a period of time.

Previously North Northamptonshire Council did not have a procedure for goodwill payments when a central heating boiler broke down and was not repairable for a period of time. Instead, the legacy Council policy was followed where this existed. For example, in the Corby area this amounted to the issuing of two electric heaters and a payment of £2.00 per day (payable from

the day after the engineer's initial visit if they were unable to repair the boiler to the date the boiler was then operational or replaced). The New NNC SOP was implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

Estimated costs had been based on last winter's figures for temporary heaters provided in the former Kettering area (Corby data was not available due to the contractor not recording this). There were 96 instances of this nature in Kettering. Pro rata for Corby stock it was estimated that this would equal 121 instances. Therefore, a combined approximate total of 217 instances of where temporary electric heaters would need to be left could be expected for the Council this winter. An estimated maximum cost to the Council of £18,228 this winter had been estimated. It was noted that 14 days was the maximum that the Council could be expected to pay the gesture of goodwill for. It was expected that most breakdowns would be resolved in a shorter timeframe than this. The HRA would fund these costs through the revenue budgets dedicated to heating repairs.

In addition, there was the cost of heaters estimated at £2,916.48. However, it was recognised that the Council currently purchased heaters and gifted them to tenants, so this would not be seen as an additional cost. Whilst consideration had been given to collecting the heaters back in from tenants once they had finished with them, it was deemed uneconomical to do this due to the requirement to complete a Portable Appliance Test (PAT) on each heater prior to reissuing them.

Councillor Lyn Buckingham, whose motion at a previous Full Council meeting had highlighted this issue, welcomed the report. Councillor John McGhee also welcomed the report but stressed the importance of the need to look at the underlying causes resulting in failed boiler and heating systems, ensuring that old and defective units were replaced in a timely fashion.

The recommendation was **MOVED** by Councillor Matt Binley and **SECONDED** by Councillor King Lawal.

**RESOLVED that: -**

- (i) the Implementation of the Standard Operating Procedure for the payment of a goodwill gesture to tenants of the Council, when temporary heaters are left in their property, as a result of their primary heating system during the winter of 2022/2023 be noted.

**196. Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2021/22**

Full Council received and considered the Annual Report of the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board for 2021-22. The Report had been considered by the Executive at its meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2022, with the Report's recommendations being recommended for approval by Full Council.

The recommendation was **MOVED** by Councillor Scott Edwards and **SECONDED** by Councillor Lora Lawman.

**RESOLVED that: -**

- (i) the Council approve the implementation of four key priorities for the Corporate Parenting Board, specifically –
  - (a) Note the establishment of Corporate Parenting Operational Groups as set out in Section 3 (page 19) of the annual report.
  - (b) Notes that the Head of Paid Service will consider the inclusion of corporate parenting responsibilities being set out in every North Northamptonshire job description as set out in Section 3 (page 19) of the annual report.
  - (c) Notes that North Northamptonshire Council will further consider becoming a Fostering-Friendly employer, as set out in Section 3 (pp19-20) of the annual

report and delegates authority to the Executive Member for Children, Families, Education & Skills in consultation with the Chief Executive to approve.

- (d) Note that whilst not requiring a specific decision, the board's annual report also asks that due regard is paid to how NCT and both councils continue to contribute to the Local Offer for Care Experienced Young People. The Offer sets out the services (statutory and additional) provided to young people leaving care as they transition to independence.

#### **197. Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2021/22**

Full Council received and considered the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) Annual Report 2021-22. The Report had been considered by the Executive at its meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023, with the Report's recommendations being noted.

The recommendation was **MOVED** by Councillor Scott Edwards and **SECONDED** by Councillor Dorothy Maxwell.

**RESOLVED that: -**

- (i) Council receives the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's Annual Report 2021/2022 (Appendix A) and note the findings.

#### **198. Motions on Notice**

A Motion on Notice had been received, this read:-

*"The definition of consultation as defined by the Consultation Institute is:*

*The dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views and, with the objective of influencing decisions, policies, or programmes of action.*

*This council has engaged in several consultations in its short existence, as you would expect, given that there are so many elements of public life that need to be brought together for the betterment of the people if serves.*

*With so many consultations going live there has been some confusion from both members of this chamber and members of the public. North Northants council believes in being a listening council, and as such we should only provide the best quality consultation.*

*This motion asks for a consultation panel to be created, this will be a cross-party group that is able to quality assure all consultations are of the highest quality and have passed a "reasonable person test". To ensure that this panel does not stall activity It should meet monthly and digitally. The panel will give advice on stakeholders that should have been engaged in the process and advise methods that should be utilised."*

The motion was **MOVED** by Councillor Leanne Buckingham and **SECONDED** by Councillor Lyn Buckingham.

In introducing the motion, Councillor Leanne Buckingham noted that the Council conducted a number of consultation exercises of varying quality. Councillor Buckingham felt that a more consistent corporate approach should be introduced, ensuring key criteria were introduced that would enhance future consultation exercises and ensure that the Council were consulting the right groups to benefit from their experience and knowledge. Ensuring that all consultation exercises complied with best practise would enhance outcomes, and ensure decision makers had all available views and opinions available.

During debate, Council's attention was drawn to the impending need for a Guillotine Motion. Councillor Helen Harrison MOVED that the guillotine be moved to 9:30 pm. This was SECONDED by Councillor David Brackenbury.

**RESOLVED that: -**

- (i) The guillotine be extended to 9:30 pm.

Members debated the merits of the proposal contained in the motion. Some members felt there was a need to improve the effectiveness of consultation. Other members felt that consideration of relevant good practise was already considered prior to consultation being conducted and thought given to whether any consultation should be targeted.

**RESOLVED that: -**

- (i) The motion fell.

**199. Councillor Questions**

A total of 25 written questions had been 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. Details of questions submitted and responses had been posted on the Council's website.

**200. Urgent Items**

There were no Urgent Items on this occasion.

**201. Close of Meeting**

Meeting closed at 9:30 pm.