

Full Council

North Northamptonshire Council

Wednesday 29th September 2021

At 7:00 pm in The Core Theatre, The Cube, George Street, Corby.

Those in Attendance:

Councillors Paul Bell (Chair), Larry Henson (Vice Chair), Jean Addison, Valerie Anslow, Ross Armour, Matt Binley, Jennie Bone, David Brackenbury, Wendy Brackenbury, Scott Brown, Leanne Buckingham, Lyn Buckingham, Lloyd Bunday, Robin Cater, William Colquhoun, John Currall, Alison Dalziel, Mark Dearing, Dez Dell, Scott Edwards, Jonathan Ekins, Emily Fedorowycz, Martin Griffiths, Jim Hakewill, Clive Hallam, Ken Harrington, Helen Harrison, Kirk Harrison, Helen Howell, David Howes, Philip Irwin, Bert Jackson, Ian Jelley, Barbara Jenney, David Jenney, Matt Keane, King Lawal, 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, Anup Pandey, Tom Partridge-Underwood, Mark Pengelly, Harriet Pentland, Roger Powell, Elliot Prentice, Simon Rielly, Russell Roberts, Mark Rowley, David Sims, Jason Smithers, Chris Smith-Haynes, Mike Tebbutt, Sarah Tubbs, Michael Tye, Malcolm Waters, Andrew Wetherill and Lee Wilkes.

Officers in Attendance:

Rob Bridge (Chief Executive), Adele Wylie (Director of Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer) and Paul Goult (Interim Democratic Services Manager).

33. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tim Allebone, Cedwien Brown, Jon-Paul Carr, Steven North, Jan O'Hara, Geoff Shacklock, Joseph Smyth, Kevin Thurland, Malcom Ward and Kevin Watt.

34. Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th July 2021

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 28th July 2021 had been circulated.

The Chair MOVED and Councillor Andy Mercer SECONDED that the minutes be approved.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The minutes of the Council meeting held on 28th July 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

35. Declarations of Interest

Members were requested to declare whether they had any personal or pecuniary interest in any item to be considered by the meeting. No declarations were made.

36. Chair's Announcements

The Chair read out to Council a letter of thanks received from HM The Queen's Private Secretary's Office regarding the condolence letter sent by the Chair on behalf of the Council on the recent death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

37. Leader's Announcements

Councillor Jason Smithers (Leader of the Council) gave a brief address to Council highlighting that the 6-month period since Vesting Day fell in 2-days' time. The Leader provided details of the Council's achievements during that 6-month period, whilst recognising that there were still challenges ahead and that work was still on-going on developing the structures and service delivery models of the new unitary council.

38. Public Participation

Public Statements

A number of members of the public had requested to address the Council.

Ms O'Dowd and Councillor Towns spoke against the recommendation (b) contained in Agenda Item 12 Constitutional Amendments. In addition, a written statement from Ms Robinson had been circulated.

Mr O'Brien, Ms O'Dowd, Mr Esler and Councillor Towns spoke in favour of the motion to be discussed under Agenda Item 13. In addition, written statements from Ms Robinson and Mr Padwick had been circulated.

The Chair thanked the public speakers for their contributions.

Public Questions

There were no public questions on this occasion.

39. Councillor Questions

Question 1

A question had been submitted by Councillor Lee which read -

"How many vacancies does North Northants Council have in each directorate, and have these numbers increased or decreased since May 2021?"

Councillor Jason Smithers (Leader of the Council) responded –

“On 1st April 2021, the staffing establishments from each predecessor authority were migrated to the new Council. All vacancies at that time were included and did not necessarily reflect the requirements of the service or indeed whether the posts were funded in the longer-term.

The Council is currently undertaking a review of the staffing establishment, which will include posts highlighted as vacant, to determine whether posts are funded and still required.

The vacant posts that were reported on the Council’s establishment back in May totalled 786. This figure included vacant relief posts, elected member posts as well as employee posts.

A report produced by the Council’s systems this week shows that there has been an increase in the number of vacant posts, which total 939. This figure also includes a range of different types of vacant post.

Given the number of staff the Council employs, the number of vacant posts will change upwards and downwards regularly reflecting the transitional nature of the organisation’s workforce and the related recruitment activity.

A breakdown of the vacant posts as reported by the Council system this week has been provided below:

Service Areas	Total
<i>Enabling Services</i>	<i>266</i>
<i>Place and Economy</i>	<i>196</i>
<i>Adults, Communities and Wellbeing</i>	<i>404</i>
<i>Children’s Services</i>	<i>73</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>939</i>

Question 2

A question had been submitted by Councillor John McGhee which read -

“Will Councillor Smithers as Leader of North Northants Council join West Northants Council and a great number of charities and residents by writing to the prime minister to ask that the government stop the proposed cut to universal credit and working tax credit?

This cut will affect thousands of our residents already struggling and goes against the levelling up agenda. Indeed, this cut will put many people in to further debt and poverty at a time when the cost of living is rising dramatically.”

Councillor Smithers (Leader of the Council) responded. In his response Councillor Smithers noted the measures taken by Government during the pandemic to ensure that citizens were provided additional financial assistance where required. Councillor Smithers indicated that he would write to the Government congratulating them on the measures taken to date.

Question 3

A question had been submitted by Councillor Jim Hakewill which read -

“What are the initial predictions for increased expenditure with the announcement of new National Insurance (NI) taxation for both NNC and external contractors working for the Council? This to be based on this year’s NI bills projected forward for the financial year 2022-23”.

Councillor Smithers (Leader of the Council) responded -

“The initial forecast cost of implementing the new funding levy for Health and Social Care, which is equivalent to 1.25% of National Insurance (NI) contributions, is estimated as circa £0.7m for the employer NI rates associated with the Council’s own staff.

Inevitably it is recognised that there will also be an impact on external contractors providing services to, and on behalf of, the Council. However, assessing the potential effect that this will have on the Council finances will take longer to progress as it is influenced by the nature of the service provision, existing contractual arrangements, and commissioning decisions. Officers will be reviewing the position as part of the budget setting process which will be fed back through Members.”

Question 4

A question had been submitted by Councillor Jim Hakewill which read -

“Writing to objectors to a recent planning application at Weekley Hall Wood, the Portfolio Holder for Finance advised that to refuse the application would bear the risk of appeal costs being awarded against NNC. How much did the previous sovereign Councils pay out in appeal costs between 2016/16 - 2020/21?”

Councillor Smithers (Leader of the Council) responded -

“The previous sovereign councils paid out the following amounts in appeal costs between 2016/17 and 2020/21:

<i>Corby</i>	<i>Nil</i>
<i>Kettering</i>	<i>£17,500</i>
<i>Thrapston</i>	<i>£61,500</i>
<i>Wellingborough</i>	<i>£80,550</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>£159,500”</i>

As a supplementary question, Councillor Hakewill sought clarification as to why the Executive member for Finance had made the statement at the recent Kettering Area Planning Committee. The Leader agreed to provide a written response to the supplementary question.

Question 5

A question had been submitted by Councillor Jim Hakewill which read -

“How many homes has North Northamptonshire promised for the settlement of Afghan refugees recently airlifted from their home country?”

Councillor Smithers (Leader of the Council) responded -

“The Council issued a public statement on the 10th September 2021 setting out its firm commitment to support a minimum of 10 Afghan families resettle in the North Northamptonshire area.

The Council will provide the associated support and work closely with partner agencies to help achieve this commitment.

The Council also made the commitment that following the resettlement of 10 families, it will continue to identify opportunities to extend its pledge, exploring how the Council can support a greater number of families.

The resettlement of Afghan citizens requires joint working with partner agencies such as Education, Health, DWP Adult Learning, the wider Voluntary Sector and with the private housing sector. It is therefore not a question of how many homes North Northamptonshire Council can promise, rather what it can do to help facilitate and support the resettlement across a range of housing providers, including the use of its own housing stock where appropriate.

The Council has reached out to private landlords and the initial response has been positive. The information received is being reviewed so that the necessary due diligence can be undertaken around any properties we are considering offering up as part of the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme.

The Council has set up a project group chaired by the Executive Director of Housing, Communities and Wellbeing to help ensure it honours the commitment made."

As a supplementary question, Councillor Hakewill asked how many properties had actually been identified and how many of these were currently occupied by refugees. The Leader agreed to provide a written response to the supplementary question.

Question 6

A question had been submitted by Councillor Valerie Anslow which read -

"The former four sovereign Boroughs had differing levels of support for those sleeping rough during the winter months. Kettering, Corby, and East Northants had shelters that were managed in partnership with the voluntary sector. Wellingborough relied solely on a local charity to house rough sleepers between October and March. What plans do the Council have to provide shelter during this winter in Wellingborough so that there is parity across North Northants."

Councillor Smithers (Leader of the Council) responded -

"North Northamptonshire Council remains committed to the Government's 'Everyone In' initiative to provide an offer of accommodation to every verified rough sleeper.

Through Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) funding the Council is expanding its team of Rough Sleeper Workers to conduct street outreach, support rough sleepers off the streets and help them to sustain accommodation. The Council has undertaken recruitment and are on track to deliver a single North Northamptonshire Rough Sleeping team that operates consistently across North Northamptonshire. This expanded and harmonised service will significantly improve the Council's ability to respond quickly and robustly to reports of rough sleeping and the Council aims to launch the new team towards the end of October.

The Council does not currently plan to facilitate any night shelters that provide shared sleeping spaces this winter. Due to Covid-19, Government recommends against the use of such facilities in favour of self-contained emergency accommodation.

The Council has supported the shelters in Rushden and Corby to enable them to be remodelled / relocate in order to provide self-contained accommodation.

The Council are working hard to expand accommodation options available to rough sleepers this winter across the unitary area. In addition to a bid for capital and revenue funding via the

Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP), the Council is also exploring the feasibility of a proposal to provide 'winter crisis houses' that will serve as short-term rapid assessment centres to enable us to support rough sleepers off the streets whilst we undertake assessments of their needs and work to secure them more settled accommodation.

The Council does recognise that successful efforts to reduce rough sleeping require a multi-agency response. In this respect we welcome the support of partners and would be open to a conversation with faith and community sector partners in Wellingborough to further explore how we can work together to meet this local need.

A Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) for the Council is also in draft format; this sets out the Council's commitment to accommodate all rough sleepers in periods of severe weather. This has been superseded by our commitment under 'Everyone In' but nonetheless provides an additional safety net to ensure we safeguard all rough sleepers in extreme weather."

As a supplementary question, Councillor Anslow requested further details of the options being investigated to address this issue. The Leader agreed to provide a written response to the supplementary question.

The Chair thanked councillors for their questions and the Leader for his responses.

40. Executive Presentations

There were no presentations on this occasion.

41. Adoption of the Part 2 Local Plan for Corby

The report before Council sought councillor approval to adopt the Part 2 Local Plan for Corby as recommended by the Executive.

It was noted that the former Corby Borough Council had resolved to submit a local plan on 24th October 2019. Following submission, the Secretary of State appointed a planning inspector to undertake a public examination of the plan. The local plan examination process assessed whether the plan had been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, and also whether it was "sound" by applying four tests set out in the national Planning Policy Framework.

The former Corby Borough Council facilitated and participated in the public examination which involved hearing sessions between 29th September – 1st October 2020. The outcome of the examination was a judgement by the Planning Inspector that the plan produced by the Council was acceptable subject to certain modifications being made to it. The report before Council set out the background to the process and a summary of the Planning Inspectors conclusions.

Councillor David Brackenbury took the opportunity to thank all officers and councillors involved in the process and highlighted the importance of the Plan and its potential impact on the continuing growth and development of Corby and surrounding area.

Councillor David Brackenbury MOVED the recommendations within the report; Councillor Macaulay Nichol SECONDED the recommendations.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The Part 2 Local Plan for Corby (set out in Appendix A to the report) be adopted;
- (ii) Delegated authority be granted to the Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and Economy, to make any further Additional Modifications to the Part 2 Local Plan for Corby or its accompanying Policies Map that relate exclusively to factual updates, grammatical corrections, and formatting for the purposes of publishing the plan to presentational standard; and
- (iii) Delegated authority be granted to the Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and Economy, to prepare and publish the Adoption Statement (Appendix E) and the Sustainability Appraisal Statement and fulfil other duties required under Regulation 26 and 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

42. Cheltenham Road Housing Development

The report before Council sought approval to amend the budget for the Cheltenham Road housing development and resume construction on site following delays caused by the discovery of Great Crested Newts in an area adjoining the site.

Council noted that the Cheltenham Road housing development was a scheme to build 18 new homes on a vacant site in Oakley Vale, Corby. Approval for the development had been agreed by the Former Corby Borough Council, and a development budget allocated from the Council's Housing Revenue Account.

However, work on site had been halted on 29th October 2020 due to the discovery of Great Crested Newts in the area. As these newts were a protected species, construction work had to be suspended pending an investigation by Natural England.

Natural England had issued a new licence in June 2021. Following works to trap and remove the newts, the site would be ready for the contractor to resume work in October 2021.

Building costs had increased since work on the site had been suspended. An amendment to the previously agreed budget was being recommended, increasing the overall budget from £3,195,000 to £3,861,380.

Councillor Andy Mercer in introducing the report felt that it was a good scheme, and whilst the proposed increase to the budget was unfortunate, it would continue to provide additional well-built social housing in the area.

Councillor David Jenney had registered a number of concerns prior to the Council meeting regarding the report and proposal. Whilst he supported the overall recommendations, Councillor Jenney felt there were still a number of specific issues and questions that needed to be resolved. Councillor Jenney felt that it was important the Council ensured value for money was being achieved, and that any requests for additional costs by the contractor were appropriately scrutinised.

Councillor Andy Mercer confirmed that the Cheltenham Road scheme was just one of a number of projects underway across North Northamptonshire to increase the Council's stock of social housing.

Councillor Andy Mercer MOVED the recommendations within the report; Councillor Helen Howell SECONDED the recommendations.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The amendment of the budget for the Cheltenham Road scheme to £3,861,380 be approved so that construction can resume following delays caused by the discovery of Great Crested Newts; and
- (ii) Delegated authority be granted to the Executive Member for Housing and Communities, in liaison with the Assistant Director Housing and Communities, to take any further decisions and/or actions required to conclude this procurement and deliver this capital programme.

43. Outside Bodies – Procedure and Appointments

Full Council were being requested to endorse a set of procedure rules in relation to how the Council's Outside Bodies list would be collated and maintained. The Council had an important role to play in a variety of organisations at national, regional, and local level.

It was important that Council involvement in any organisation was of benefit and constructive, and that councillors felt confident that their individual involvement was meaningful and provided value.

It had been agreed at Full Council in May 2021 that a review would be commenced into Outside Bodies and appointments made to them on behalf of the Council. Work had been undertaken since then to understand the Outside Bodies previously appointed to by the predecessor Councils and the nature of the appointments to them.

The Democracy and Standards Committee received a copy of the draft Outside Bodies Procedure Rules at its meeting held on 16th September 2021 and were invited to comment. The Committee endorsed the Rules for formal discussion by Council and recommended approval. The Procedure Rules would ensure that there was a clear procedure for appointments to Outside Bodies.

The Procedure Rules would be supplemented by Guidance to Members about Outside Bodies. In addition, the Council would develop fact sheets for each of the Outside Bodies throughout the year to ensure that Members were advised on key information about the appointment such as whether there were indemnities and insurance in place, how often the meetings were and how they should report back to the Council. These would be developed with those Members who were appointed in 2021/22 and would be ready for the Annual Meeting to be held in May 2022.

The Scrutiny Commission at its meeting held on 24th August 2021 agreed to establish a Scrutiny Panel in order to draft a suggested list of approved Outside Bodies for consideration by Council for 2021/22. The Scrutiny Panel firstly determined whether the Council should make appointments to the organisations on the Outside Body list. They also categorised the Outside Bodies into categories of Key Strategic Partnerships and Community Partnerships. Those that were identified as Strategic would be appointed to by the Leader of the Council. The Outside Bodies listed in Appendix B would be appointed by Full Council.

It was noted that a review of Outside Bodies would be undertaken each year by a Scrutiny Panel to enable appointments to be made prior to or at the Annual Meeting. Those Members

who were appointed to Outside Bodies would be asked to complete an annual review submission to assist the Scrutiny Panel in their review.

Councillor John McGhee agreed that it was important that the Council monitored its involvement with Outside Bodies, including costs associated with any membership. Under this item Councillor McGhee also hoped that a review of officer involvement with external organisations would be conducted, to ensure appropriate benefit to the Council was being achieved.

Councillor Maxwell supported the proposal that clear and regular information was fed back to all councillors from representatives on Outside Bodies. This would assist in ensuring that the Council's continuing involvement with these organisations was beneficial to all parties, and all councillors felt more engaged.

Nominations for the vacant positions had been sought from the recognised political groups prior to the meeting, these had been circulated. Two positions were contested; the Chair conducted a ballot by show of hands as appropriate.

Councillor David Brackenbury MOVED the recommendations within the report; Councillor Helen Harrison SECONDED the recommendations.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The Outside Bodies Procedure Rules (Appendix A) be approved; and
- (ii) The following Outside Bodies appointments be made: -

Leicestershire and Northamptonshire Rail Action Committee (LANRAC)	Councillor Graham Lawman
Stanwick Lakes Management Board	Councillor Helen Howell
University of Northampton Court	Chair of the Council
Rural Services Network	Councillor David Howes
Longtown Outdoor Education Centre	Councillor Macaulay Nichol
Victoria Management Centre	Councillor Matt Binley
CPRE, the countryside charity (formerly the Campaign to Protect Rural England)	Councillor Tim Allebone
The Industrial Communities Alliance	Councillor John McGhee
Wellingborough School – School Council	Councillor Elliott Prentice
Northampton General Hospital – Governors Council	Councillor King Lawal
Kettering General Hospital – Governors Council	Councillor Jennie Bone
Domestic Violence Forum	Councillor Scott Brown

44. Constitutional Amendments

Full Council were requested to consider potential amendments to the Council's Constitution. The suggested amendments covered three areas: - • Substitute Allocations • Start time of Full Council Meetings • Presentation of Planning reports.

The Constitutional Working Group had received a copy of the draft Constitutional Amendments at its meeting held on 23rd August 2021 and were invited to comment. The Group endorsed the Rules for formal discussion by the Democracy and Standards Committee and

recommended approval. The Democracy and Standards Committee considered these items at its meeting of 16th September 2021. Following discussion, the Committee agreed for these recommendations to be forwarded to Council for determination.

With regard to Substitute Allocations as detailed in Appendix A, currently there was no clear guidance relating to the substitute arrangements for all of the Council's committees. The purpose of the proposal was to ensure this guidance was put in place. This would assist recognised political groups in knowing what nominations were required and assist in the arrangements for Annual Council in the number of positions which needed to be filled. The Committee were recommending support for this proposal.

With regard to the Start Time of Full Council Meetings as detailed in Appendix B, it was suggested that the normal start time of Full Council meetings was moved from 7:00 pm to 2:00 pm with the Full Council Budget meeting starting at 10:00 am. Some concern was expressed by members in discussion that bringing the start time of Full Council meetings forward may create difficulties for some councillors, however it was noted that Full Council meetings were infrequent, that Full Council meetings that may run late into the evening created issues for some councillors, that the proposed start time still allowed for work etc in the mornings, and that councillors were allowed in some circumstances time off from work for public duties. Following debate, the Committee were recommending that the start time be brought forward but be subject to review prior to Annual Council 2022.

With regard to the Procedures for speaking at planning committees the Committee considered the normal order of speakers at Planning committee meetings. Some concern was expressed regarding the inability within the existing procedure rules for the Planning Officer presenting a report to address issues raised by public speakers. It was agreed that it was important for Planning Officers to present their reports to Committee, including the provision of any relevant update information. This information would also be of interest to public speakers ahead of them being called by the Chair to address Committee. It was also felt important that the Planning Officer had the ability to address Committee following all public contributions. In order to clarify the procedure, it was being suggested that the existing 2.2 of the procedure be amended to read: - "For each item, the Committee Chair will introduce the item and ask the Planning Officer to present their report and any updates. The Chair will then call any registered speakers to present their comments to the Committee." The order of speakers under 2.3 of the Procedure would be unamended and continue as written and would allow the Planning Officer to summate under 2.3.e.

Councillor Lora Lawman introduced the report and the rationale behind each of the three recommendations.

In relation to the proposals on substitute arrangements, Councillor Lawman explained that currently the Constitution included provision for some committees in relation to the number of substitute positions available but was silent with respect to others. The suggested amendment would provide consistency.

In relation to the proposal to bring forward the start time of Full Council meetings, Councillor Lawman explained there had been significant debate at Committee regarding this proposal. Concerns had been raised that it may cause problems for those who worked daytime shifts or had caring commitments. Overall, it was felt that given the potential length of meetings and the significant matters for debate at Full Council, allowing an earlier start time would be

preferable. It was also being suggested that the Full Council Budget meeting held in February each year commence at 10:00 am.

The Committee having acknowledged concerns raised agreed to recommend that the next three Full Council meetings commence at 2:00 pm, and that the level of public participation and attendance be monitored. Following review, a decision relating to a permanent start time would be made. In addition, Councillor Lawman whilst introducing the report moved from the floor, that the usual day of Full Council meetings be Thursday, a proposal seconded by Councillor Harrison. Councillor Lawman acknowledged that the Chair's prerogative to vary the date and time of Council meetings as stated in the Constitution remained unamended.

Several councillors in debate raised concern that moving the start time of Full Council meetings to 2:00 pm may adversely impact both public participation and public attendance. In addition, there were concerns expressed that those councillors currently in fulltime employment or with caring commitments may struggle to attend daytime meetings.

A Motion Without Notice to recommendation (b) within the report was MOVED by Councillor Jim Hakewill and SECONDED by Councillor Tubbs. The amendment proposed that the decision relating to start times of Full Council meetings be deferred, and that the Scrutiny Commission be requested to consider this matter, consider options, and look at best practice elsewhere. The Commission would be requested to forward proposals back to Full Council for determination. The amendment was debated by Council. A recorded vote on the amendment was requested.

Those voting FOR the amendment: - Councillors Addison, Anslow, Armour, Binley, S Brown, L Buckingham, L Buckingham, Colquhoun, Currall, Dalziel, Dell, Fedorowyyz, Griffiths, Hakewill, Irwin, Keane, Lee, McEwan, J McGhee, Z McGhee, Pengelly, Prentice, Rielly, Sims and Tubbs.

Those voting AGAINST the amendment: - Bone, D Brackenbury, W Brackenbury, Bunday, Dearing, Edwards, Ekins, Hallam, Harrington, H Harrison, K Harrison, Henson, Howell, Howes, Jelley, B Jenney, D Jenney, G Lawman, L Lawman, Levell, Marks, Maxwell, A Mercer, G Mercer, Nichol, Pandey, Pentland, Powell, Roberts, Rowley, Smithers, Smith-Haynes, Tye, Waters, Wetherill, and Wilkes.

Those ABSTAINING: - Bell, Carter, Jackson, Lawal, Partridge-Underwood and Tebbutt.

The amendment fell and discussion on the report's recommendations (as amended) continued.

Councillor Wilkes reminded the Council that the change in start time was for a trial period only and would be reviewed for 2022/23. Councillor Kirk Harrison agreed that it was important that the trial period be allowed to run with a review by Annual Council 2022.

Councillor Helen Harrison reminded Council that the proposal to move the start time of Full Council meetings (subject to review) was agreed by both the cross-party working group and the cross-party Democracy and Standards Committee.

Councillor Ekins felt it was important to remember a number of people worked in the evening and/or worked shifts. Trialling an earlier start time would provide some benefit and give the Council an ability to compare take-up rates for public attendance and participation.

Councillor S Brown felt that overall, a move to an earlier meeting start time would be detrimental, as the majority of workers worked during the day.

Councillor Dalziel raised concern, as a working councillor, as to whether she would be able to gain time off work to attend. Some employers were reluctant to release staff.

Councillor Maxwell felt, which ever start time was agreed, councillors needed to show commitment to their local residents by attending.

Councillor Pengelly queried how it was going to be reviewed following the next few Full Council meetings.

In summation, Councillor Lora Lawman felt that it was important that Council monitor the level of public participation and attendance during the trial period. Starting earlier in the day would allow for more considered, healthy debate without fatigue setting-in or debate being rushed.

Councillor Lora Lawman **MOVED** the recommendations (as amended) within the report; Councillor Gill Mercer **SECONDED** the recommendations.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) The proposals in Appendix A (Substitute Allocations) be approved;
- (ii) The proposals in Appendix B (Start Time of Full Council Meetings) be approved, including the amendment that Full Council meetings would normally be held on a Thursday; and
- (iii) That amendment to Part 2 Procedures for speaking at planning committees be approved, in that under 2.2 add "...their report and..." be inserted after the words "...the Planning Officer to present...".

45. Motions on Notice

The following motion was **MOVED** by Councillor Dez Dell and **SECONDED** by Councillor Sarah Tubbs: -

"This motion proposes that all planning meetings include 30 minutes total for public speakers to speak for and against a planning application. This would allow a maximum of 5 speakers for and against, with 3 minutes each".

Several councillors expressed concern that the current provision for the public to speak at planning committee meetings was inadequate. The reliance on the Chair of the respective committee to increase the number of speakers could be arbitrary in nature and vary from committee to committee. It was felt that where there were a significant number of public objectors the re needed to be the greater ability to participate.

It was recognised that there was a possibility by increasing public participation this may prolong meetings, however by careful agenda management this could be avoided. Applications which attracted significant levels of public objectors and interest should be included on single-item agendas.

During the debate the Chair MOVED, and Councillor Howell SECONDED that the guillotine provision (10.1) of the Meeting Procedure Rules be suspended to allow the completion of business on the agenda. This was agreed by Full Council.

Some councillors raised concern that the motion as proposed would be unworkable, leading to prolongation of meetings, even those with a limited agenda.

Councillor David Brackenbury reported to Council that there was a current review of planning management and discussion of best practice. The review would take on board the views of all interested parties. It was intended to be an all-embracing review of the Council's approach to delivering the Council's Planning Authority responsibilities and duties.

The motion was put to a vote. The motion fell.

46. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items on this occasion.

47. Close of Meeting

Meeting closed at 10:12 pm.