



NORTHAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, NORTHAMPTON GUILDHALL

Monday 24 January 2022 – 18.00

PRESENT: Councillor R Ashraf (Town Mayor);
Councillor D Meredith (Deputy Town Mayor)
Councillors: J Alwahabi, J Birch, N Choudary, R Connolly, M Hallam,
J Fuchshuber, E Haque, S Hibbert, K Holland-Delamere, F Ismail, P Joyce,
A Kilbride, L Marriott, T Miah, B Purser, C Russell, D Soan, A Stevens,
W Tarasiewicz

In attendance: S Carter (Town Clerk)

The Mayor's Chaplain led the Council in prayer before the formal start of the meeting.

37. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs G Eales, T Eales and Lane had all submitted apologies.

38. PUBLIC QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS

There were no questions or statements submitted.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

40. MINUTES

RESOLVED: To authorise the Town Mayor to sign the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 25th October 2021 as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

RESOLVED: To authorise the Town Mayor to sign the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 24th November 2021 as a true and correct record of proceedings.

41. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE UNDER MENTIONED COMMITTEES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee – 16th November 2021 be received, approved and adopted.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning Committee – 15th November 2021 be received, approved and adopted.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Environmental Services Committee – 8th December 2021 be received, approved and adopted.

With regards to these minutes it was commented that the Town Council needed to liaise with the contractor managing the allotments, there were issues with uncultivated plots, rubbish etc that needed to be addressed.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Community Services Committee – 8th December 2021 be received, approved and adopted.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning Committee – 16th December 2021 be received, approved and adopted.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning Committee – 17th January 2022 be received, approved and adopted.

RESOLVED: That the minutes and appendices of the Policy and Finance Committee – 18th January 2022 be received, approved and adopted.

42. TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2022/23

Circulated with the agenda was the proposed budget and precept for the forthcoming financial year, 2022/23.

It was explained that the budget process had been comprehensive, each committee putting forward their request to the Policy and Finance Committee who in turn had set the budget principles and then recommended a final budget to the council.

It was explained the proposed budget increased the precept by £17,800 to £1,793,300, but did not increase the Band D average due to the increased tax base.

Budget	£2,115,300
(-)WNC Transfer	£215,000
<u>(-) General Service Reserve</u>	<u>£107,000</u>
Precept	£1,793,300

In proposing the budget Cllr Marriott explained that it was broadly similar to the 21/22 budget which had been set by the cross party executive of the former Northampton Borough Council. The Council was still only 8 months old and that members needed to look 3 to 4 years into the future, before it could begin to fully establish itself.

Cllr Hallam welcomed the freeze in the amount of money residents would pay, however he stated that he thought the council was banking too much money, and that having funds just in case was not what he wanted to happen. He asked members to consider reallocating budget headings during the coming financial year if they were not being spent, to headings that may require them. Cllr Hallam also highlighted that the Council was setting a budget for a building (the Guildhall) that they did not run or own.

Members agreed that it was good that the band D average was not increasing, it was highlighted that a forward plan would need to be developed and that the budget would need to be monitored.

It was commented that WNC would likely look to pass down services in the future, history had showed that this happened in areas with newly created unitary authorities. This budget would enable the Council to look to the future and be resilient when and if this did happen.

Supporting this it was stated that the Policy and Finance Committee had gone through the budget line by line and that what was proposed would set the council in good stead, establishing reserves with an opportunity to spend in the future.

Countering this it was commented that lots of families were struggling and that the money would be better in their hands rather than in the Council's reserves.

It was reemphasised that the council was only 8 months old, the majority of which was impacted by the pandemic, and if the budget was reduced now it would only be increased later. It was also noted that the Town Council's band D level was well below the national average and that the majority of houses in Northampton were band C or lower so would be paying less.

In summing up his proposal Cllr Marriott stated that the previously mentioned Guildhall budget had been renamed as the accommodation budget. This budget needed to be retained as the Council would need to assess its long-term requirements, i.e. whether to stay at the Guildhall or start looking at alternatives, hence the need to build up a reserve. He thanked the officers for the hard work they had done in putting together the budget and the councillors for the scrutiny they had given to it.

RESOLVED: That a budget be set of £2,115,300 resulting in a precept to be submitted to the precepting authority (West Northants Council) of £1,793,300 (One million, seven hundred and ninety-three thousand and three hundred pounds)

43. TO ENGAGE WITH NORTHANTS NCALC ON ASSET MAPPING PROJECT

A report was circulated with the agenda explaining that NCALC had been awarded £280,000 to undertake an asset mapping project and were engaging town and parish councils in Northamptonshire to get involved.

'An application was submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for funding to build capacity in parish and town councils, develop a

solid evidence base, and design an administrative framework for devolution in Northamptonshire. It is a unique and ambitious project which will enable North Northamptonshire Council (NNC), West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and the county's 271 parish and town councils and parish meetings to be well prepared for any future decisions about devolution.'

It was explained that the scope was land and property owned by WNC and services provided to the community.

The main objectives were detailed as possible:

- A robust framework for devolution in North and West Northants
- Increased capacity within Town and Parish Councils via targeted training and support
- Mapping of all assets and services, (including Assets of Community Value) by every Town and Parish Council
- A Comprehensive Register of assets and services
- Increased local confidence, knowledge and skills to develop effective business cases
- Successful future submissions through the Community Right to Bid process
- Creation of a Northants CALC Association Management System (AMS) – enhancing capacity for data collection, central contact database for smarter working, improved customer service, effectiveness and value for money

The Clerk explained that this was an important and interesting project that would require the whole council to get involved in order to deliver it.

RESOLVED: That Northampton Town Council engage in the NCALC Asset Mapping Project.

RESOLVED: That a working group be set up comprising of Cllrs Kilbride, Purser, Birch, Russell, Holland Delamere, Haque, Miah, Alwahabi and Ashraf,

The meeting concluded at 18.59.

Cllr R Ashraf
Town Mayor