



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, M Brown, N Choudary, G Eales, T Eales,
M Hallam, J Fuchshuber, E Haque, S Hibbert, K Holland-Delamere,
F Ismail, P Joyce, A Kilbride, J Lane, L Marriott, T Miah, C Russell, D Soan,
W Tarasiewicz

In attendance: S Carter (Town Clerk)

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

44. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs R Connolly, B Purser and A Stevens all submitted apologies.

45. PUBLIC QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS

There were no questions or statements submitted.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

47. MINUTES

RESOLVED: To authorise the Town Mayor to sign the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 24th January 2022 as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

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

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Environmental Services Committee held 7th February 2022 be received, approved and adopted.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning Committee held 16th February 2022 be received, approved and adopted.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held 28th February 2022 be received, approved and adopted.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Community Services Committee held 7th March 2022 be received, approved and adopted.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning Committee held 14th March 2022 be received, approved and adopted.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Extraordinary Policy and Finance Committee held 16th March 2022 be received, approved and adopted.

49. NOTICE OF MOTION

The Town Council considered the following:

To consider the following motion of support to the people of Ukraine as endorsed by the Society of Local Council Clerks, National Association of Local Councils and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions

“We, local and regional leaders across Europe, strongly condemn the multiple attacks and violations of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. We express our full support and solidarity to the Ukrainian people and our peers in local and regional government. We will not accept that our European values and integrity be attacked again by the Russian Federation after the violation of Georgian territories by Russia in 2008. We are firmly opposed to the dismemberment of a free and democratic state in Europe.”

In proposing the motion Cllr Jane Birch condemned the aggression undertaken by Russia and praised the people of Ukraine for their bravery. Cllr Birch highlighted the work the people of Northampton were doing to support Ukrainians fleeing war, and how she and her fellow councillors had helped coordinate efforts to send provisions. It was noted that the Town Council had been working with Northampton based Goodwill Solutions in order to get supplies and equipment to Ukrainian refugees in Poland. Cllr Birch praised the response from the people of Northampton and stated that the town council had been proud to help coordinate it.

Seconding the motion Cllr Mike Hallam highlighted the long history Northampton had in supporting those fleeing troubles at home for whatever reason. Cllr Hallam went on to state how proud he was that Northampton was responding in such a way to help the people of Ukraine!

It was noted that West Northants Council continued to fly the Ukrainian flag outside the Guildhall as a symbol of solidarity, and the Town Council would continue to support and coordinate local efforts to get supplies and provisions to the people of Ukraine.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council support the motion and make the statement that:

“We, local and regional leaders across Europe, strongly condemn the multiple attacks and violations of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. We express our full support and solidarity to the Ukrainian people and our peers in local and regional government. We will not accept that our European values and integrity be attacked again by the Russian Federation after the violation of Georgian territories by Russia in 2008. We are firmly opposed to the dismemberment of a free and democratic state in Europe.”

50. NOTICE OF MOTION

The Town Council considered the following motion:

To consider the following motion as per a request from the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) and Lawyers in Local Government (LLG)

‘This Council supports the petition launched by ADSO and LLG on 5 January with regard to remote and hybrid meetings. We agree to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities calling on the Government to change the law to allow councils the flexibility to hold such meetings when they deem appropriate within agreed rules and procedures.’

A report was circulated with the agenda giving information on this motion. It stated that ADSO and LLG did not wish to impose remote meetings on councils and that councils should have the choice to decide how to run meetings depending on local circumstances. The report also explained that they also accepted that some meetings (for example, full council meetings) were more suited to physical attendance. However, what they were seeking was the ability to be flexible when required.

ADSO and LLG highlighted that during the period of lockdown remote meetings brought many benefits to local democracy and residents, apart from the obvious public health safeguards. It was no longer just a response to Covid. The wider benefits they had highlighted were:

- *Increased attendances at remote meetings by both councillors and the public*
- *Significant cost savings for some authorities arising from much less travel to meetings*
- *The environmental benefits of less travel, particularly in the large county authorities*
- *A better work/life balance for councillors*
- *Improved equality of access to meetings for all and opening up opportunities for more people to stand for election as councillors*
- *More transparency and openness for the public to see council meetings*
- *An option to move meetings online when there are constraints, for example bad weather such as snow or flooding.*

Speaking on behalf of the Motion, Cllr Birch stated the wider benefits were self-evident and that the ability to hold remote meetings would give local authorities including this one, flexibility. She concurred that not all meetings would be suitable but giving Council's the ability to have the option was a positive step.

Seconding the motion Cllr Hallam agreed that having flexibility was a positive. Allowing the Council to make a decision on whether it wanted to hold remote meetings would be a step forward and potentially enable greater interaction between councils and the general public.

RESOLVED: That the Council support the motion as detailed above and write to Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

The meeting concluded at 18.50.

Cllr R Ashraf
Town Mayor