



**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
NORTHAMPTON GUILDHALL
MONDAY 23RD JANUARY 2023**

PRESENT: Councillor D Meredith (Town Mayor);

Councillor S Hibbert (Deputy Town Mayor)

COUNCILLORS: J Alwahabi, R Ashraf, J Birch, M Brown, G Eales, T Eales, J Fuchshuber, M Hallam, E Haque, K Holland-Delamere, P Joyce, A Kilbride, L Marriott, T Miah, B Purser, C Russell, D Soan, A Stevens, W Tarasiewicz

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mr S Carter (Town Clerk), Mrs C Maclellan, and Miss F Barford

Also present were 3 members of the public.

26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were submitted by Councillors J Lane, N Choudary and F Ismail.

27. PUBLIC QUESTIONS/STATEMENT TIME

There were no questions or statements were submitted.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hallam raised a non-pecuniary interest under item 33 as he was a member of the West Northamptonshire Council's Cabinet and had voted on the proposed parking charges.

29. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor wished members a prosperous New Year.

The Town Mayor provide attendees an update on his recent engagements to raise funds for his chosen charities, the St. Vincent De Paul's Society and the Army Benevolent Fund that included a Charity Jazz Night and a History of Northampton Event that went successfully and thanked Councillors for their support.

The Town Mayor stated he had raised a total of £7,000 in donation so far for his chosen charities.

The Mayor stated he had planned a Charity Gala to take place at the University of Northampton on the 4th March 2023, a Thanksgiving Mass on 7th March 2023 and the Mayoress' Tree Planting on 16th March 2023 at Abington Park. The Town Mayor advised Councillors if they wished to attend then contact the Mayoral Officer for further details.

The Town Mayor informed the council that he had welcomed the Community Initiative Against Violence team into the Parlour to mark their achievements in tackling knife crime across Northampton.

Finally, the Town Mayor highlighted that an event marking Holocaust Memorial Day would take place in the Guildhall Courtyard and welcomed those who wish to attend.

30. MINUTES OF THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

RESOLVED: The Town Mayor was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24th October 2022 as a true and accurate record.

31. TO RECEIVE AND WHERE APPROPRIATE ADOPT THE DECISIONS AS DETAILED IN THE MINUTES OF THE UNDER MENTIONED COMMITTEES

- a) **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 9th November be received, approved and adopted.

In presentation of the Planning Committee minutes Councillor Russell explained a large volume of applications were received each month for proposed development including many applications for Houses of Multiple Occupancy. The Committee continued to scrutinise these especially in areas with highways issues and where existing HMOs existed. The Councillor continued that the Town Council's comments were highlighted at the West Northamptonshire Council's Northampton Planning Committee and were reviewed. A Councillor added that the Planning Committee had started to review how the Town Council could support or develop Neighbourhood Plans.

- b) **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 14th November 2022 be received, approved and adopted.

In response to appoint regarding reserves, Councillor Marriot who had presented the minutes stated that the level of reserves had been scrutinised throughout the budget process.

- c) **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Environmental Services Committee held 28th November 2023 be received, approved and adopted.

In presentation of the Environmental Services Committee minutes, Councillor Stevens highlighted some of the projects the Committee hoped to undertake and acknowledged that the budget had been underspent for Financial Year 2022-23. He highlighted that the projects the Committee wished to undertake required a lot of planning and were therefore took time to plan and deliver. Councillor Stevens continued that the new sustainable planter on Abington Street was due to be installed next week and thanked the Event and Project Officers and Climate Change Forum volunteers for their work and support on the project.

The Town Mayor commended the Northampton in Bloom project as he had received many positive comments on the installations last summer.

- d) **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 7th December 2022 be received, approved and adopted.

In presentation of the Planning Committee minutes, Councillor Russell thanked Councillor Purser on his research and paper focusing on Neighbourhood Plans.

- e) **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Community Services Committee held on 12th December 2022 be received, approve and adopted.

In presentation of the Community Services Committee, Councillor Birch raised that within the Town Council's second year it had started solely organising events and highlighted that next financial year would be the final instalment of the grant provided by West Northamptonshire Council through the Events Agreement.

- f) **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 16th January 2022 be received, **approved** and adopted.

In presentation of the Policy and Finance Committee, Councillor Marriott highlighted that good discussion and debate was held regarding the budget and highlighted the importance of the Chair of the Committees meeting prior to budget setting to enable good communication and preparedness to ensure the budget was met. He went on to say that he planned to set-up a Budget Working Group made up of Chairs to track spending and assist with budget planning.

- g) **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 16th January 2023 be approved and adopted.

32. UPDATE FROM WEST NORTHANTS COUNCIL (WNC) MEMBERS

Councillor Hallam declared an interest within this item.

The Town Mayor explained that he had asked the Clerk to add this item to enable Councillors who also sit on West Northamptonshire Council to highlight any issues or topics that would be of benefit to the Town Council.

A Councillor raised the proposed increase and changes to parking charges in the Northampton Area and that a local petition has been created by local residents and the Northampton BID in opposition of the changes, furthermore, many considered that the consultation had been minimal.

A Councillor stated that the increase to parking charges would cause great detriment to the Town Centre's economy and would be voting in opposition of any proposal at West Northamptonshire Council that include any parking charge increases.

Councillor Hallam encouraged the Town Council to provide their comments to West Northamptonshire Council's proposed parking charges increase.

A Councillor raised that there should be a formal agenda item on the proposed parking charges to enable the Town Council to provide a formal written response.

It was suggested that this format in terms of asking WNC members to provide updates may not be the best to get the views and news from West Northamptonshire Council and that the Town Clerk be asked look at how other large Town Councils do it.

NOTED

33. TO SET THE BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR THE 2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR

Sent out with the agenda was a comprehensive report and budget for consideration.

In proposing the budget Councillor Marriott explained he was pleased to present it to the Council as it had been developed tirelessly through months of work to prevent any increase for our Northampton residents.

A Councillor in response state he welcomed the freezing of the Town Council's Council Tax precept however, due to the amount the Council held in reserves wished for it to be decreased. The Councillor continued that the

Council could fund a future accommodation purchase through the Public Work Loans Body at affordable interest rate.

A Councillor welcomed the implementation of quarterly reviews (Budget Working Group) of each Committee's expenditure to monitor and review it. .

A Councillor stated he had continually scrutinised the amount held in reserves however, he understood the pertinence of ensuring funds were available for accommodation.

In response to the comments about reserves it was stated that the reserves were formulated by the Acting Town Clerk in formation of the Council to prevent the Council from increasing the Council Tax each year and allow financial security. The relatively cheap cost of Northampton Town Council's average Band D compared to other town and parish councils was also highlighted.

In response to questions about the accommodation reserve a Councillor highlighted that accommodation was the highest risk on this Council's risk register and until accommodation was secured the reserve must be maintained.

AGREED: That a recorded vote on the Budget and Precept be held.

RESOLVED: That a budget of £2,139,337 (two million one hundred thirty-nine thousand three hundred thirty-seven) be set for the financial year 2023-2024.

COUNCILLOR	VOTE ON BUDGET
MEREDITH	FOR
HIBBERT	FOR
KILBRIDE	AGAINST
FUCHSHBER	FOR
BROWN	ABSTAINED
HALLAM	AGAINST
SOAN	AGAINST
BIRCH	FOR
MARRIOTT	FOR
PURSER	FOR
RUSSELL	FOR
TARASEIWCIZ	FOR
STEVENS	FOR
HOLLAND	FOR
ASHRAF	FOR
HAQUE	FOR
JOYCE	FOR
ALWAHABI	FOR
T EALES	FOR
G EALES	FOR
MIAH	FOR

RESOLVED: That a precept of £1,807,837 (one million eight hundred seven thousand eight hundred thirty-seven) be requested from West Northamptonshire Council who were the precepting authority.

COUNCILLOR	VOTE ON PRECEPT
------------	-----------------

MEREDITH	FOR
HIBBERT	FOR
FUCHSHUBER	FOR
KILBRIDE	AGAINST
BROWN	ABSTAINED
HALLAM	AGAINST
SOAN	AGAINST
BIRCH	FOR
MARRIOTT	FOR
PURSER	FOR
RUSELL	FOR
TARASEIWCIZ	FOR
STEVENS	FOR
KEITH	FOR
ASHRAF	FOR
HAQUE	FOR
JOYCE	FOR
ALWAHABI	FOR
T EALES	FOR
G EALES	FOR
MIAH	FOR

34. NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Brown proposed the following motion requested that:

This Council will write to the Home Office to ask that any future Hotel bookings for migrants who cross the channel in small boats do not take place without meaningful consultation with local people, West Northants Council and the Parish Council.

Councillor Brown stated the rationale behind the motion was that the Home Office had completed great consultation and there was a flow of information in previous resettlement schemes however, the current resettlement scheme had lacked thorough consultation with Local Governments Authorities.

In seconding the motion Councillor Soan stated he believed that West Northamptonshire Council, stakeholders, Northampton Town Council and local residents should be consulted prior to any confirmation of hotel bookings.

Councillor Alwahabi proposed an amendment to the motion that rather than using the term migrants, it be changed to asylum seekers and explicitly requests that Northampton Town Council be consulted. This amendment was seconded and approved.

RESOLVED: Northampton Town Council write to His Majesty's Home Office to ask that any future hotel bookings for asylum seekers do not take place without meaningful consultation with the local people, Northampton Town Council and West Northamptonshire Council.

MEETING CONCLUDED 7:21PM