

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF WELLINGBOROUGH
HELD AT SWANSPool HOUSE, WELLINGBOROUGH
ON TUESDAY 15 OCTOBER 2019**

Present: The Mayor, Councillor J Beirne and Councillors Abram, Allebone, Anslow, Aslam, Bone, Carr, Francis, Gough, Graves, Griffiths, Henley, G Lawman, L Lawman, Lloyd, Maguire, Morrall, Partridge-Underwood, Patel, Scanlon, Scarborough, Simmons, Skittrall, Stevenson, Walia, Ward, M Waters, V Waters, Weatherill and York.

Officers present: Mrs L Elliott, (Managing Director), Mr A Piper and Mr E Symons (Assistant Directors), Mr S Whiteley (Electoral services Team Leader), Miss B Cox, (Communications Officer), Miss S Gibson (Mayor's Deputy Sergeant) and Mrs C A Mundy (Democratic Services Officer - Committees).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to note that apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bell, Ekins, Emerson, Hallam, Harrington and Watts

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the council's code of conduct and the council's constitution, the following declarations were made:

Name	Item	Reason
Anslow	5 - Presentation of Petition	Personal - is a friend of someone who knew the person presenting the petition
Henley	5 - Presentation of petition	Personal – knew the petitioner
L Lawman	Audit Committee 24 September 2019	Personal – is a member of the LGSS Pension Fund
Maguire	Additional Development Committee - 9 September 2019 - min 3	Personal – knew some of the speakers

3. PRESENTATION OF LONG SERVICE AWARD TO MRS F HUBBARD

The report of the assistant director was received in relation to the long service award for Mrs F Hubbard.

The mayor welcomed Mrs Hubbard and her family to the meeting.

Mrs Hubbard joined the council on 4 July 1994, as a clerical assistant/typist in the borough secretary and solicitor's department, and was promoted to mayor's secretary, looking after the mayoral office for over 22 years. In more recent years Fiona has also taken on the clerking of the planning committee and gives support to the leader of the council and the senior management team.

The mayor expressed her thanks to Mrs Hubbard, for her exemplary service, to the council and presented her with a gift of an 'One4All' voucher and a donation to the Wellingborough and Rushden Cats Protection; her husband, was also presented with a gift.

Honorary Freeman Dholakia, Honorary Freeman and Councillor Partridge-Underwood, Councillor Allebone, Councillor L Lawman and Councillor Griffiths also paid tribute to Mrs Hubbard and thanked her for the support she had given to each mayor during their term of office, her loyalty, flexibility, communication skills, reliability, kindness and compassion was very much appreciated.

RESOLVED that the long service award for Mrs F Hubbard for 25 years' service to the borough council, be noted.

4. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF 9 JULY 2019

The minutes of the council meeting held on 9 July 2019 were received.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the council meeting of 9 July 2019, be confirmed and signed.

5. QUESTIONS/PETITIONS/REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

Mrs Claire Ette, Church Secretary of Wellingborough United Reformed Church in High Street attended the meeting to speak in relation to the petition, which had been submitted, requesting that any decision on the sale of land at the High Street/Jackson's Lane site be taken by a meeting of full council, and that a public consultation be undertaken.

The mayor thanked Mrs Ette for the petition, which had already been received by the managing director.

The leader of the council repeated a previous promise, and confirmed, that it was the intention for a public consultation to be undertaken and that any decision on the sale of land at High Street/Jackson's Lane would be taken at

a future full council meeting; further information was awaited before such a meeting could be arranged. He also made reference to a town centre vision meeting that was taking place on 24 October for stakeholders and members to attend.

He formally proposed that any decision, in relation the sale of land at High Street/Jackson's Lane, would be the subject of a public consultation and a report to a future full council meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Scarborough.

The mayor put the proposition to the vote, and this was declared carried.

RESOLVED that a decision on the proposed sale of land at High Street/Jackson's Lane be the subject of a public consultation and a report to a future full council meeting.

6. MINUTES TO NOTE

The minutes of the following meetings were received to note:

Planning Committee	17 July 2019
Planning Committee	21 August 2019
Planning Committee	18 September 2019
Licensing (Regulatory) Sub-Committee	16 September 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the above meetings be noted.

7. ARTS AND LEISURE SUB-COMMITTEE – 16 APRIL 2019

The minutes of the arts and leisure sub-committee of 16 April 2019 were received. The leader made reference to the ongoing work at the Castle Theatre and the success of the 3G pitch, opened recently at Redwell Leisure Centre. Quintin Allen and Northamptonshire Sport were thanked for their help in achieving this.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the arts and leisure sub-committee of 16 April 2019 be adopted.

8. PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS OF 1 JULY 2019 AND 30 SEPTEMBER 2019

The minutes of the partnerships and performance committee meetings of 1 July 2019 and 30 September 2019 were received.

Councillor Maguire referred to minute 5 and the presentation by the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) which he considered to be excellent. At that meeting he had requested that resources committee consider an extension to the contract to the CAB and asked when this would be put before committee.

The managing director clarified that this would be part of the budget setting process and would be part of the report to the resources committee in December 2019.

The chairman thanked Councillor Maguire for his comments; he referred to the minutes of 30 September and hoped that the Victoria Centre would be able to attend on a future occasion.

Councillor Scarborough referred to these minutes and presentation from Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire (ViN) and considered that following the presentation he was no wiser about what services it provided. He appreciated that the funding of this had been granted by an urgent action request but felt that full consideration needed to be given before any further funding was offered. The chairman commented that the future financing of the whole voluntary sector in Northamptonshire would need looking at in more detail.

Reference was made to minute 6 and the planning team performance. Members asked that congratulations be extended to the planning team for their improved ranking, to 14 out of 342 authorities, for the delivery of planning decisions.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the partnerships and performance committee meetings of 1 July 2019 and 30 September 2019 be adopted.

9. SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETINGS OF 2 JULY 2019 AND 1 OCTOBER 2019

The minutes of the services committee meetings of 2 July 2019 and 1 October 2019 were received.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the services committee meetings of 2 July 2019 and 1 October be adopted.

10. AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETINGS 23 JULY 2019 AND 24 SEPTEMBER 2019

The minutes of the audit committee meetings of 23 July 2019 and 24 September 2019 were received

Councillor L Lawman asked that her declaration of interest, made at the meeting, be included in the minutes of 24 September 2019.

Councillor Henley asked for confirmation that the audited accounts were scheduled for sign off in November, and whether the letter had been sent to officers thanking them for the additional work they had undertaken.

The Chairman, Councillor Simmons, confirmed that as far as he was aware sign-off was scheduled for November; he would clarify that the letter had been sent.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the audit committee meetings of 23 July 2019 and 24 September 2019 be adopted.

11. **ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the additional development committee of 9 September 2019 were received.

Councillor Maguire referred to minute 3 and the BID – new proposal and expressed his concern over the number of councillors who had abstained from voting and the way in which some of the speakers were questioned, which he personally found to be borderline bullying, shocking and embarrassing. He appreciated that there had been problems with some members of the BID over the years but considered that the speakers should have been addressed respectfully by councillors. He also complained that the chairman had failed to use his casting vote when he had the opportunity to do so and felt he should consider his position. He also felt that this matter should have been referred to council for a decision to be made.

The Chairman, Councillor Carr, responded to Councillor Maguire's comments and was disappointed and shocked that he considered there had been any form of bullying at the meeting, which he categorically denied had been the case, and commented that he considered that Councillor Maguire was now bullying him and asked him to retract his statement.

Councillor Maguire clarified that he had said 'borderline bullying' and that he recalled the chairman asking one councillor to 'calm down' with his tone of questioning.

The chairman responded and said that some of the questions asked at the meeting were repeatedly asked by councillors, as the answers were not forthcoming. This had resulted in some members being unable to make a decision, and they had subsequently chosen to abstain from voting. He confirmed that he had chosen not to use his casting vote, but had personally put the amendment to the meeting that the assistant director (corporate landlord) be instructed to abstain from voting and that this proposition had been resolved.

He also pointed out that even if the decision of the council had been to vote for the BID to continue, the BID would have failed to gain another five-year term, as the result was based on the rateable value of those voting; the result indicated that the larger stores in the town voted against it continuing. With regard to the item being put before council, this would not have been possible due to the time constraints of when the decision was required.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the additional development committee of 9 September 2019 be adopted.

(Councillors Francis and Maguire abstained from voting on the adoption of the minutes.)

12. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM SUB-COMMITTEE

The minutes of the local government reform sub-committee of 10 September 2019 were received.

Councillors commented on minute 4 and the reference to the elections in 2020 and subsequent count taking place over the International Waendel Walk Weekend, which would prohibit the use of the Redwell Leisure Centre by some of the armed forces and overseas walkers for overnight accommodation.

The managing director clarified that the leisure centre would not be available for use over that weekend, and that as returning officer, she had made the decision that Redwell was the only facility within the borough that was suitable for the count.

The chairman of the Waendel Walk Working Party commented that he was concerned that this decision would result in walkers being unable to find suitable alternative accommodation and that there would be an additional cost.

The managing director suggested that the working party could put a proposal to the resources committee in December, for financial assistance to be considered, though this would not be guaranteed.

Councillor Scarborough referred to the county council's financial position and the recent resignation of the Director and Deputy of Children's Services due to the financial constraints they operated under and asked if the county council was any nearer to achieving a balanced budget, as this would have an impact on the new unitary councils.

The managing director responded to this question and informed the meeting that the budget papers for the next NCC cabinet meeting, to be held on 12 November, would be published on 6 November. Work was ongoing to try to address the finances in Children's Services, along with the disaggregation of county services and split between the North and West. This was a priority for finance officers, and she assured members that she would communicate any information in due course.

Councillor Scarborough stressed that 'time was running out', he also thanked her for the excellent communication she provided.

The leader of the council reminded members that all councillors were welcome to attend the North Northamptonshire Joint Committee as observers.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the local government reform sub-committee of 10 September 2019 be adopted.

13. RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 25 SEPTEMBER 2019

The minutes of the resources committee of 25 September 2019 were received.

Reference was made to minute 9 – Capital Programme monitoring, and the recommendation contained therein that approval be given:

- (i) to the supplementary budget requests as detailed in section 7 of the current 2019-20 capital programme;
- (ii) to capital funding of £32,692 being approved.

On being put to the vote this recommendation was declared carried.

The leader updated members on developments in regard to the multi storey car park; consultants Morgan Sindall had been appointed to progress the refurbishment of the multi storey car park at a cost of £3,249,000, they would shortly be carrying out surveys and draft plans, and would make sure that any works did not impact on shoppers during the Christmas period. Information had also been received from Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue to support the installation of sprinklers to ensure the safety of residents and users of the car park.

The leader referred to minute 10, property matters, and updated the meeting about the potential sale of 20 Sheep Street, as there had been some interest in the building; further information would be available in due course on this. Some progress had also been made in relation to the Drill Hall, which was subject to planning permission, and this would be reported back in due course.

Councillor Graves referred to the same minute and the crematorium and paid tribute to the facility and the new outside canopy and gardens. He also thanked Councillors Bell and Maguire and Mrs Tracy Lawrence, the manager at the crematorium, and the senior officers at the council who had all worked well together to achieve this excellent facility for the borough.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the supplementary budget requests, as detailed in section 7 of the current 2019-20 capital programme, be approved;
- (ii) the capital funding of £32,692 be approved;
- (iii) the minutes of the resources committee of 25 September 2019 be adopted.

14. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM – ADDITIONAL TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT COMMITTEE

The annexed circulated report of the managing director was received to agree to the amended terms of reference for the North Northamptonshire Joint Committee (NNJC).

Appended to the report were the suggested changes to the NNJC terms of reference.

It was proposed by Councillor Griffiths and seconded by Councillor Scarborough that these additional terms of reference be adopted. On being put to the vote this was declared carried.

RESOLVED that the new terms of reference for the North Northamptonshire Joint Committee, as detailed in the appendix, be approved.

15. PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY FOR MEMBERS

The annexed circulated report of the managing director was received in relation to the adoption of a parental leave policy for members. The proposed policy was appended to the report.

The leader referred to the appendix to the report and proposed that members approve the policy, in principle, subject to officers making some small bespoke amendments to the policy, in consultation with the leader and leader of the opposition. This was seconded by Councillor Scarborough and on being put to the vote declared carried.

RESOLVED that the parental leave policy for members be approved, in principle, subject to officers making some small amendments to the policy in consultation with the leader of the council and the leader of the opposition.

16. CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

The annexed circulated report of the managing director was received to advise members of the outcome of the inaugural meeting of the climate change working group to refresh the council's climate change strategy.

Appended to the report were the following:

Appendix A – Northamptonshire climate change strategy (2017-2020);
Appendix B – Progress within the borough and potential future actions.

The report detailed the discussions that had taken place at the working group with members expressing a wish for there to be short term, medium term and longer-term goals showing the council's commitment to mitigating and adapting to climate change.

A further working group had been arranged for November 2019, to consider the impact of council activities through the process of transition to unitary council and identify council projects that effectively reduce carbon emissions or improve air quality.

The report also referenced the Northamptonshire Climate Change Officers Group and the ongoing work, and decision to refresh the Northamptonshire Strategy, to take account of changes in the local and national context, to ensure that it remained consistent with government agreed national targets, particularly in relation to net-zero greenhouses gases by 2050. The leader thanked officers for the good work undertaken and informed the meeting that the council would start by setting an example of no longer using plastic water bottles for meetings with immediate effect.

Councillor Scarborough referred to the proposals within the report around the Stanton Cross development, the need for further tree planting, and working more closely on environmental issues with Wellingborough Norse and Greatwell Homes over home building. He also referenced his concerns over emissions in the London Road area of the town and through the town centre. For many years these were monitored and highlighted as a major health issue. The centre of Wellingborough had poor traffic management and emissions were high. He hoped that consideration would be given to making improvements in the future and that this would be fed back to officers.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the progress as detailed at appendix B to the report on the potential future actions be noted;
- (ii) a refreshed Northamptonshire Climate Change Strategy be received in due course.

17. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

The annexed circulated report of the managing director was received in relation to the outcome of the consultation on the proposals relating to polling districts and polling places for the borough.

Appended to the report were the following:

Appendix A - List of proposed polling districts, polling places and polling stations;

Appendix B - Representations received as part of the consultation survey;

Appendix C - Maps of the new proposed polling districts for Stanton Cross and Glenvale Park

The acting returning officer considered the following against the representations made, and alternatives suggested or identified by officers:

Polling district WCA: Officers identified the Kingsway Methodist Church as a potential polling station site as an alternative to Wrenn School, due to the council's ongoing commitment to not utilise schools where possible to prevent disruption to students, parents and school staff in the borough. At the time of writing this report, no response has been received from the Methodist Church. As a result, it is recommended that Wrenn School continues to act as a polling station for electors in the relevant polling district.

Polling district WEA: Recommendations to consider an alternative site in Finedon were made, specifically with note to Finedon Infant School. Due to the running of multiple successful polls from 2015 through to September 2019 in Finedon at the Independent Wesleyan Chapel, and the fact that Finedon Town Hall was considered as part of the 2018 review, alongside the council's ongoing commitment to not utilise schools where possible to prevent disruption to students, parents and school staff in the borough, it is recommended that the Independent Wesleyan Chapel continues to act as a polling station for electors in Finedon ward.

Polling district WDA: Officers identified the St John Ambulance building on Elizabeth Way as a potential new polling station in Earls Barton with a view to introducing a new polling district and allowing electors in Earls Barton to vote in multiple locations. At the time of writing this report, no response has been received from St John Ambulance. Given the continued successful use of the Youth Club on Harrowick Lane, it is recommended that the Earls Barton Youth Club continues to act as a polling station for all electors in Earls Barton ward.

Polling district WFC: Representations were received regarding Wilby Primary School identifying The George pub as a potential alternative. Officers visited The George to undertake a risk assessment. The pub itself is now closed, and despite the adequate parking facilities on site, disabled access was a concern, with no level access to the building aside from a deep gravelled path which would not provide stable access for wheelchair users. The car park at The George Inn could accommodate a portakabin but this would come at a significant cost to a relatively small polling district. It is therefore recommended that, without a suitable alternative, Wilby Primary School continues to act as a polling station for electors in the relevant polling district.

The acting returning officer will determine the location of polling stations in line with the next revision to the register to enable premises to be booked in good time for the scheduled elections in May 2019.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the proposed polling districts and places, as set out in the report, be published and adopted;
- (ii) any recommendations be sent to the acting returning officer, in writing, in respect of the location of individual polling stations, as appended to the report.

(The senior managers present left the meeting during discussion on the following item and did not return.)

18. SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The report of the leader of the council was received in relation to amendment to the senior management structure of the council.

The leader of the council welcomed Sam Maher, Director of Human Resources at East Midlands Councils' to the meeting and thanked her for her support in preparing this report.

He explained that since the creation of the existing management team the future of local government in Northamptonshire had considerably changed, resulting in the focus of the council also changing with consideration being given to immediate priorities and to also preparing for the future unitary councils. The impact of the local government reform programme was detailed in the report.

Following the departure of a senior office, an opportunity had arisen for a shared director for BCW, ENC and KBC; an appointment had been made to the position of shared director of growth and infrastructure, who will be employed by East Northamptonshire Council to deliver planning for Wellingborough (BCW), East Northants (ENC) and Kettering (KBC).

An appointment to the position of chief legal officer had also been made, to be employed by Kettering, to lead District-Law and act as BCW's and ENC's monitoring officer.

There was now a reduction in the number of directly employed officers in BCW's senior management team to six. The previous 'primus inter pares' (first among equals) model was no longer workable and a new job description and person specification for the roles of executive director and manager director were appended to the report. Based on the new roles it was proposed to review the remuneration for the posts, removing the need for special responsibility allowances previously awarded and creating two distinct grades for each post. Remuneration would be reviewed within the whole senior management team to ensure that salaries were comparable with neighbouring authorities.

Councillor Griffiths put the proposition as contained within the report to the meeting and this was seconded by Councillor Partridge-Underwood. On being put to the vote it was declared carried.

RESOLVED that the:

- (i) proposed structure, as detailed in appendix 1 of the report be approved;
- (ii) job descriptions and person specifications to remove the previous 'primus inter pares' generic approach, as set out in appendix 2 of the report, be approved with effect from 1 November 2019;
- (iii) proposed changes to remuneration, as set out in appendix 3 of the report, be approved with effect from 1 November 2019;
- (iv) appointment of Bhupinder Gill, as the council's monitoring officer, be approved from the date of commencement of his employment of 4 November 2019 and that approval be given to the appointment of Karen Denton, as the deputy monitoring officer from the same date.

19. CORRESPONDENCE, COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE DIRECTOR OR THE MAYOR OR THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING

The mayor reminder members of the following events:

- Town centre vision briefing - 24 October 2019 between 2pm and 4pm;
- Member briefing - 4 November 2019 at 6pm for Wellingborough Norse to present their business plan;
- Member briefing - 11 November 2019 at 6.30pm with the managing director and senior management team to present the annual business plan for 2020-21.

Mayor

The meeting concluded at 8.50pm.