



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held at The Great Hall, The Guildhall, Northampton on Thursday 18 May 2023 at 5.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Andre Gonzalez De Savage (Chair)

Councillor John Shephard (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Ann Addison

Councillor Rufia Ashraf

Councillor Azizur Rahman

Councillor Anthony S. Bagot-Webb

Councillor Fiona Baker

Councillor Dermot Bambridge

Councillor Harry Barrett

Councillor Sally Beardsworth

Councillor Phil Bignell

Councillor Rebecca Breese

Councillor Adam Brown

Councillor Muna Cali

Councillor Alan Chantler

Councillor Pinder Chauhan

Councillor Paul Clark

Councillor Stephen Clarke

Councillor Maggie Clubley

Councillor Raymond Connolly

Councillor Daniel Cribbin

Councillor Julie Davenport

Councillor Janice Duffy

Councillor Paul Dyball

Councillor Terrie Eales

Councillor Alison Eastwood

Councillor Rupert Frost

Councillor Jo Gilford

Councillor Terry Gilford

Councillor Matt Golby

Councillor Andrew Grant

Councillor Mike Hallam

Councillor Enam Haque

Councillor Jonathan Harris

Councillor Cheryl Hawes

Councillor Rosie Herring

Councillor Stephen Hibbert

Councillor James Hill

Councillor Nigel Hinch

Councillor Keith Holland-Delamere

Councillor Mark Hughes
Councillor Rosie Humphreys
Councillor David James
Councillor Paul Joyce
Councillor Andrew Kilbride
Councillor Anna King
Councillor Jamie Lane
Councillor Phil Larratt
Councillor Malcolm Longley
Councillor Greg Lunn
Councillor Charles Manners
Councillor Peter Matten
Councillor Dennis Meredith
Councillor Colin Morgan
Councillor Charles Morton
Councillor Jonathan Nunn
Councillor Kevin Parker
Councillor Suresh Patel
Councillor Ken Pritchard
Councillor Bob Purser
Councillor Wendy Randall
Councillor Jake Roberts
Councillor Sam Rumens
Councillor Cathrine Russell
Councillor Lisa Samiotis
Councillor Brian Sargeant
Councillor Sue Sharps
Councillor David Smith
Councillor Zoe Smith
Councillor Richard Solesbury-Timms
Councillor Laura Stevenson
Councillor Danielle Stone
Councillor Winston Strachan
Councillor Nick Sturges-Alex
Councillor Mike Warren

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Jamal Alwahabi
Councillor William Barter
Councillor Lizzy Bowen
Councillor Michael Brown
Councillor Fiona Cole
Councillor Karen Cooper
Councillor Gareth Eales
Councillor Louisa Fowler
Councillor Cecile Irving-Swift
Councillor Koulla Jolley
Councillor Daniel Lister
Councillor Ian McCord
Councillor Emma Roberts

Councillor Walter Tarasiewicz

111. Election of Chairman of West Northamptonshire Council

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting. He advised members that it had been a privilege to serve as Chairman. He had been able to attend around 350 events and had been able to promote many community groups in his year as Chairman. He highlighted the work of East Hunsbury Parish Council. He passed his thanks on to Reverend Dr Ted Hale for supporting him over the past year.

The Chairman then paid tribute to HM Queen Elizabeth II, who had passed away during his term of office. He highlighted the events he had been involved in during this period, leading up to the coronation of King Charles III. He also mentioned his chosen charities, the Air Ambulance and Northants Search and Rescue.

Councillor Longley proposed that Councillor John Shephard be elected Chairman of West Northamptonshire Council for the year 2023-24.

Councillor Nunn seconded the proposal.

Upon a vote, the proposal was agreed.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor John Shephard be elected Chairman of West Northamptonshire Council for the year 2023-24.

112. Appointment of Vice-Chairman of West Northamptonshire Council

Councillor A Brown proposed that Councillor Jo Gilford be appointed Vice-Chairman of West Northamptonshire Council for the year 2023-24.

Councillor Addison seconded the proposal.

Upon a vote, the proposal was agreed.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Jo Gilford be appointed Vice-Chairman of West Northamptonshire Council for the year 2023-24.

113. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

114. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- Former Northampton Borough Councillor Frank Lilley, who represented the New Duston Ward from 1999-2003 had passed away.

- He thanked members for electing him as Chairman and promised to work energetically and diligently in the role.
- He paid tribute to the outgoing Chairman, who had actively supported many events.
- He highlighted the work of Councillor Charles Manners, who had driven a truckload of equipment to Ukraine.
- He paid tribute to the officers of the Council who were responsible for delivering services and who had been shortlisted for awards.

115. **Minutes of Council**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd March 2023 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

116. **Updates to the Constitution: Changes to Planning Committees**

Councillor Patel presented the report which sought Council's consideration of the recommendations made by the Democracy and Standards Committee in relation to proposed updates to the Constitution in relation to the structure and operation of the Council's Planning Committees. He proposed alterations to the recommendations about the threshold for items to go to each committee, the start time of meetings and applications submitted by members.

Councillor Grant seconded the proposal.

Members discussed the report and made the following comments:

- The PAS report highlighted bad behaviours and recommended a reduction of committees.
- Northampton was being "sliced in half".
- Afternoon meetings were not serving residents.
- Public participation was central to democracy; Towcester was not accessible to many Northampton residents, and a 2pm start was not accessible to working residents or members
- Previous planning committee meetings sometimes ran for 5 hours or more; 6pm starts would mean that meetings ran late into the night.
- It was necessary for a balance to be struck between officer time and member availability.

Separate votes were taken on each proposed alteration.

Upon a vote, the alteration to paragraph 5.5 of the report (relating to thresholds that would identify the most relevant committee) was agreed.

Upon a vote, the alteration to recommendation B (iv) (relating to meeting start times) was lost.

Upon a vote, the alteration to paragraph 5.4.9 (relating to applications submitted by members) was agreed.

Upon a vote, the alteration to Section 17 of the Constitution (relating to applications submitted by members) was agreed.

RESOLVED:

Council:

- a) Noted the decision taken at the previous meeting to abolish the existing three Local Area Planning Committees and the establishment of two new Planning Committees;
- b) Approved the following recommendations of the Democracy and Standards Committee:
 - i. That the Planning Committee – North be composed of eleven members and be constituted to deal with planning applications falling within the following wards: Braunston & Crick, Brixworth, Moulton, Long Buckby, Daventry West, Daventry East, Woodford & Weedon, Duston West & St Crispin, Duston East, Dallington Spencer, Abington & Phippsville, Kingsthorpe North, Kingsthorpe South, Boothville & Parklands, Headlands, Talavera and Billing & Rectory Farm;
 - ii. That the Planning Committee – South be composed of eleven members and be constituted to deal with planning applications falling within the following wards: Bugbrooke, Towcester & Roade, Hackleton & Grange Park, Silverstone, Deanshanger, Middleton Cheney, Brackley, St George, Sixfields, East Hunsbury & Shelfleys, Delapre & Rushmere, Castle, Riverside Park and Nene Valley.
 - iii. That the Planning Committee – North will meet in Northampton and the Planning Committee – South will meet in Towcester, except where the applications on the agenda are exclusively located within Northampton wards;
 - iv. That meetings of both Planning Committees convene at 6pm, subject to the provisions of the Constitution.
 - v. That named substitutes be permitted but limited to 2 Conservative, 1 from each of the other groups, to be drawn exclusively from the other Planning Committee and/or the Strategic Planning Committee;
 - vi. That the threshold for applications to be determined by the Planning Committees be amended as set out in section 5.5 of the report (as amended);
 - vii. That the threshold for applications to be determined by the Strategic Planning Committee be amended as set out in the report (as amended);
 - viii. That Section 17 of the Planning Protocol (Development Proposals submitted by Councillors and Officers) be amended to clarify that planning proposals submitted by Councillors should be determined by the Planning Committee that does not cover the ward to which the application relates.
- c) Noted the retention of the Strategic Planning Committee and the Planning Policy Committee as currently structured.
- d) Agreed that these changes come into effect immediately and will be reviewed by the Democracy and Standards Committee, in consultation with Planning Committee chairs after a period of six months.

- e) Delegated to the Monitoring Officer the power to make these amendments and any consequential amendments that may be necessary.
- f)

117. **Committee Proportionality and Appointment of Members to Committees and other bodies**

Councillor Nunn presented the report to Council which sought Members' approval regarding allocation of places on committees between the political groups in accordance with the political balance requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and to confirm the appointment of Committee Chairs, Deputy Chairs and members. The report also invited Council to note the names of the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of the political groups and to note the members of the Cabinet.

Councillor A Brown seconded the report.

Members discussed the report and made the following comments:

- Some members had been removed from committee appointments without warning, they felt that this was unacceptable.
- There were equalities issues; only 3 chair/vice chair posts were filled by women.
- There was concern around the appointment of some chairs that had previously had responsibility for "failed" services at Northamptonshire County Council.
- Opposition members should be chairing Overview and Scrutiny committees; the authority should not be able to "mark its own homework".
- Residents had been contacting Cabinet Members and getting no responses. Assistant cabinet members should respond if Cabinet Members were too busy.

RESOLVED:

Council:

- a) Received the names of the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of the political groups as set out at Appendix A of the report.
- b) Noted the members of the Cabinet set out at Appendix A of the report.
- c) Agreed to constitute and decide on the allocation of places on committees between the political groups in accordance with the political balance requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as set out in section 5 of the report.
- d) Confirmed the appointment of Committee Chairs, Deputy Chairs and members to the various Committees and Joint Committees as set out at Appendix A of the report.
- e) Delegated to the Monitoring Officer the power to appoint Councillors and substitute Councillors to Committees and sub-Committees in accordance with the wishes of the Group Leaders except where appointments to those bodies is exercisable only by the Cabinet.

118. **Calendar of Meetings 2023-24**

Councillor Patel presented the report which sought Council's approval of the Calendar of Meetings for the year 2023-2024.

Councillor Kilbride seconded the report.

Members discussed the report.

RESOLVED:

1. Council approved the calendar of meetings for 2023-2024, as set out at Appendix A of the report.

119. **Honorary Alderman Scheme**

Councillor Gonzalez De Savage presented the report which proposed that former Councillors who had served for 12 years or more as Councillors in the area of West Northamptonshire be eligible to be considered for conferment of the title of "Honorary Alderman". For the purposes of continuity, this would apply to Councillors who served at the former Northampton Borough Council, Daventry District Council, South Northamptonshire Council, and the part of Northamptonshire County Council which covered the West Northamptonshire area.

Councillor Larratt seconded the report.

Members discussed the report.

RESOLVED:

Council:

- a) Agreed to the scheme for the enrolment of Honorary Aldermen of West Northamptonshire Council as set out in Appendix A of the report.

120. **Urgent Business (previously agreed with the Chairman)**

None advised.

The meeting closed at 6.57 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____