



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at The Forum, Towcester, NN12 6AF on Tuesday 9 November 2021 at 6.00 pm.

Present

Councillor Adam Brown (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Fiona Baker
Councillor Lizzy Bowen
Councillor Rebecca Breese
Councillor Matt Golby
Councillor Mike Hallam
Councillor Phil Larratt
Councillor David Smith

**Substitute
Members:**

**Also
Present:**

**Apologies
for
Absence:** Councillor Jonathan Nunn
Councillor Malcolm Longley

Officers Belinda Green, Assistant Director - Revenues and Benefits
Stuart Lackenby, Executive Director - Adults Communities and Wellbeing
Sarah Reed, Executive Director - Corporate Services
Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director - Place and Economy

56. Apologies

Councillor Jonathan Nunn
Councillor Malcolm Longley

57. Declarations of Interest

There were none

58. Minutes

A councillor queried why the comments in the minutes were not attributed to individual members.

The Chair advised that the style of minutes used by the council was consistent and was deemed to be best practice.

59. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair announced that the traffic light system would be used for speech timing at the meeting.

60. **Urgent Business**

None

61. **Constitution Review**

At the Chair's invitation councillors made the following comments.

- It was felt that recommendation B should not be included.
- With regard to point 26.1 of the Council Procedure Rules (priority opposition motions) it was suggested that the leader of the largest opposition group should have discretion to nominate another member to move the priority motion. Also, there was also no mention of a vote.
- At point 28.5 of the Council Procedure Rules regarding motions, it was queried whether these should be dealt with in a random order and not in order received.
- Point 10.1 of the Council Procedure Rules stated that the ending of the meeting would be at 9:30pm, it was suggested that due to motions this might not be realistic and a 10:00pm finish could be better.
- Regarding the protocol for speaking at Planning Committees, concern was raised about how point 8.6 noted that there would be a limit to the number of speakers.
- The document itself was a living one, so there was always room for improvement.
- Concern was raised that it seemed as though officers would receive an increase in the amount of money they could spend without confirmation from councillors.
- The document seemed to suggest that parties would have a more limited number of motions in the future.
- It was felt that meetings and the council should be more accessible to the public.

The Chair advised that the cross-party working group that had worked on the constitution had met several times before the report had been presented to Cabinet.

Councillor Mike Hallam stated that the opposition had had a large amount of input at the working group and advised that any amendments be put forward to the working group. It was agreed that accessibility was important, and the council would always look at ways to do this within the scope of the law. The committee and those present were reminded that members of the public were always welcome to come to the meeting.

62. **Cottesbrooke Conservation Area**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Rebecca Breese presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. Cabinet were advised that the report would now go to the Planning Policy Group and had only been brought to Cabinet for permission to go out for consultation.

The Chair advised that much work had been done previously by Daventry District Council.

No questions were asked.

63. **Harmonisation of the Garden Waste Collection Service Across West Northamptonshire**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Phil Larratt presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. The committee was advised it was a responsibility and a requirement to harmonise services under West Northants Council and this report had provided a review of the charges. Currently garden waste was collected on a fortnightly basis with Northampton and Daventry residents paying a yearly fee, whereas no fee was charged in South Northamptonshire. Approval of the proposal would ensure a fair system for all residents with the understanding that there are many people who live in flats and as such garden waste collections would not be required. Residents would be encouraged to compost, bins would be provided for this, it was agreed that it was important to keep residents informed of this.

Councillors made the following comments.

- It was felt that the proposed fees were not required, that the residents already paid for this service through their council tax payments.
- It was asked if there would be a reduction in the council tax to offset this extra payment.
- It was queried whether this charge would cover the cost of opening the household waste and recycling centres 7 days a week.
- It was felt that this was an unreliable income stream as not all residents would sign up for the scheme.
- A full consultation on this issue across the whole area should take place.
- It was noted that a cost neutral option had not been mentioned in the report.
- The report had not mentioned Christmas Tree collection, would this still take place?
- WNC was now 8 months old, it was queried why this had not been implemented earlier on.
- It was queried whether there would be an increase in residents placing their garden waste in their black bins.
- It was noted that some residents may not be able to pay the fee in one go, could there be an option added to pay weekly or to add it to the council tax.
- The DEFRA report that is expected should arrive before Christmas, would it be prudent to introduce a charge now that might be overturned in a few months' time.

- The report did not mention any investigation that had happened with regards to residents not being able to pay.
- It was advised that the options mentioned in Appendix A didn't seem to add up.

Councillor Phil Larratt made the following points.

- There had been complaints made to the ombudsman regarding this issue.
- 63% of Councils now charge for Garden Waste collection with the national average £43.
- As far as he was aware Christmas Tree collection would remain in place.
- There had been no significant increase in the amount of garden waste placed in black bins.
- To begin with there was a budget provision in place for 3000 compost bins.
- This fee was to ensure that every resident would be paying the same amount, this making the process fair.
- It was advised that it was not a statutory responsibility of the council to provide garden waste collection, as such there is a charge to process the waste.
- The dates given by DEFRA had consistently changed, if the amount charged should change DEFRA would compensate the council accordingly.
- There were some possible discounts, the council would keep them under review.

Councillor David Smith noted that there would always be concerns but many residents are prepared to pay for the service.

The Chair noted that it was not helpful to re-draw boundaries, the council was now West Northants Council.

64. **Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Rebecca Breese presented the report copies of which had been previously circulated. This had formerly been an NBC project, a draft had been prepared and section 1.2 summarised the mitigation that would be used. The report would be out to consultation during November and December 2021.

65. **Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022-2023**

The Chair presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. The committee was informed that much focus had been placed on how to support care leavers and presented the recommendations to Cabinet.

Councillors made the following comments.

- It was noted that many care leavers had various social problems when leaving care, this scheme went some way to help them.
- It was felt that the forms they were required to complete were very complex and daunting to many of them.
- Cabinet was asked to consider a three year no tax for care leavers.

Councillor Fiona Baker agreed that the forms were difficult, there had been some work carried out on this and amendments had been made.

66. **Grant of Long Lease to the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire of Barnes Meadows Nature Reserve, Northampton**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Larratt presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. It was advised that The Wildlife Trust was experienced and they could access the necessary funding. The recommendations were put to Cabinet.

No questions were asked.

67. **Decisions taken by the Leader of the Council under urgency procedures: Northampton Partnership Homes - Westbridge lease and development, Planning Policy Committee and Appointment to West Midlands Rail Ltd**

The Chair presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated the three decisions were presented individually to Cabinet.

A councillor queried whether the planning policy committee was a sub-committee of Cabinet and as such Cabinet would have voting power, this was then confirmed.

The meeting closed at 7.10 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____