

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

at a meeting of the Council of the Borough of
Kettering held at the Municipal Offices,
Bowling Green Road, Kettering on 24th July
2019

Present:

Councillor Keli Watts (Mayor)
“ Linda Adams
“ Duncan Bain
“ Mike Brown
“ Lloyd Bunday
“ James Burton
“ John Currall
“ Ash Davies
“ Mark Dearing
“ Andrew Dutton
“ Scott Edwards
“ Ruth Groome
“ Jim Hakewill
“ Philip Hollobone
“ David Howes

Councillor Ian Jelley
“ Anne Lee
“ Paul Marks
“ Clark Mitchell
“ Cliff Moreton
“ Russell Roberts
“ Mark Rowley
“ Mick Scrimshaw
“ Jan Smith
“ Shirley Stanton
“ Karl Sumpter
“ Mike Tebbutt
“ Lesley Thurland
“ Jonathan West

*Prior to the commencement of the meeting it was announced
that the proceedings would be video recorded*

19.C.16 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cedwien Brown, Maggie Don, Jenny Henson, David Soans, Margaret Talbot and Greg Titcombe.

19.C.17 MINUTES

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of 15th May 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

19.C.18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

19.C.19 **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor made a number of announcements as follows:

- Councillors attending the Civic Service held on 23rd June were thanked as was Rev Helen Westfield-Carr for her involvement in the event
- The recent Jazz Night held at the art gallery had been a success and officers were thanked for having the foresight to allow the gallery to be used in this manner. It was hoped that this could be the first of many similar events held at the gallery.
- The Mayoral Charity Cricket Match had been cancelled due to a lack of participants
- Two additional diary dates for events were detailed:-
 - A Chocolate Tutorial event would be held in the Council Chamber on 26th September with tickets available soon.
 - The Civic Ball would be held on 15th November

19.C.20 **LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader echoed the positive comments regarding the Mayors' Jazz Evening.

It was reported that Kettering had yet again secured a Green Flag award for Rockingham Road Park with the Leader offering thanks to Cllr Greg Titcombe and the local community for their assistance in the reaccreditation process. In addition, KBC had been reaccredited with a Purple Flag for its Night Time Economy which reflected close working with partner agencies. The Purple Flag inspection team had been particularly impressed at the joint work between KBC wardens and the police.

A report from the Council's new auditors EY that was due to be tabled at the Monitoring and Audit Committee the following evening had provided KBC's Commercial Investment Strategy with a clean bill of health. This was a tribute to the work of officers involved and the external advice sought at the outset of the strategy.

19.C.21 **REPORT OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR**

None.

19.C.22 **RIGHT TO SPEAK**

One member of the public registered his intention to speak as part of the petition presentation in relation to a new swimming pool for the Borough. (Item 7)

Seventeen members of the public registered their intention to speak in relation to Item 11 – Motion (i) – Climate Emergency.

19.C.23 **THE MAYOR TO RECEIVE ANY PUBLIC DEPUTATION AND PETITIONS**

Swimming Pool

Mr Mike Annable attended the meeting and presented a petition containing approximately 1,250 signatures on behalf of Kettering Amateur Swimming Club and members of the public.

The petition called upon Kettering Borough Council to reconsider its investment priorities within the scope of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy to include a new swimming pool that met the demands of the Borough.

Mr Annable noted the Executive Committee decision to disband the Swimming Pool Task and Finish group after little progress and stated that the Borough had insufficient water space for its residents and would, he believed, require the equivalent of an additional eight-lane 25 metre pool to meet its future needs. Given that future priorities were already being decided for the new Unitary Authority it was imperative that a new pool for Kettering was included as part of any future infrastructure plan.

Cllr Scott Edwards thanked Mr Annable for his work in organising and attracting support for the petition. He noted that KBC would be publishing its Sports Facility Strategy later in the year and would be including swimming provision in the Borough within this document. This would also take into account the petition and requirements of the residents before being submitted to the Executive Committee.

Meadow Road – Resident Parking Scheme

Mr Rudy Reed attended the meeting and presented a petition signed by all nine occupants of New Buildings on Meadow Road requesting consideration of a resident parking scheme for the road.

He stated that there was currently a one-hour parking restriction on Meadow Road and there was nowhere else to park within a reasonable distance and residents regularly received parking tickets.

Councillor Mark Dearing responded to the petition by stating that there were other potential resident parking schemes on the waiting list, however this particular request could be added to the list for consideration.

19.C.24 DISPENSATION FOR NON-ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

Council received a report that sought approval to give a dispensation for non-attendance at meetings to Cllr David Soans in view of his continuing ill health.

It having been proposed by Cllr Thurland and seconded by Cllr Jelley, it was

RESOLVED

That:

- i) For the purposes of Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the reason as set out in the report for Cllr Soans' continued absence from meetings be approved; and
- ii) This approval lasts until the Annual Council meeting of 2020.

(Voting: Unanimous)

19.C.25 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW TIMETABLE

A report was submitted which asked members to consider and agree a timetable for the consultation on a Community Governance Review and the potential start date for any new Town Council for Kettering.

The Local Government Reform Advisory Committee had considered the same report at its June meeting and recommended to Council that the conclusions of the current review should now be implemented in April/May 2021, rather than 2020 as a result of the recent decision made by the Secretary of State in relation to Local Government Reform.

Councillors Scrimshaw and Hakewill spoke and stated that while they had no issue with the consultation timetable or the draft consultation documents, the implementation date of 2021 was one they could not support for reasons that included additional election costs and any future Kettering Town Council being absent from any discussions with the new Shadow Authority about the possible devolution of responsibilities.

Councillor Hakewill proposed and Councillor Scrimshaw seconded an amendment to the recommendation whereby the implementation date would be May 2020 instead of May 2021.

Following debate a vote was taken on the amendment as follows:-

(Voting: 7 For; 19 Against; 1 Abstention)

Therefore the amendment was lost.

It having been proposed by Cllr Lesley Thurland and seconded by Cllr Ian Jelley it was

RESOLVED That Council agreed the timetable set out in the report leading to implementation in May 2021, and endorsed the consultation process outlined in the report.

(Voting: 19 For; 6 Against; 2 Abstention)

19.C.26 MOTION – CLIMATE CHANGE

It was proposed by Cllr Jim Hakewill and seconded by Cllr Anne Lee:-

“This Council:

- recognises the strength of public opinion recently expressed in London and Northamptonshire, particularly by young people, on the issue of climate change and the need to achieve carbon reduction targets to protect the health and wellbeing of our future generations.*
- congratulates the UK parliament for declaring a Climate Emergency.*
- believes that all levels of government have a duty to limit the impacts of climate change along with our partners.*
- will place “Climate Change Implications” on all agendas immediately prior to the recommendations section, to demonstrate compliance with the spirit of this motion.*
- calls upon the shadow authority and its successor Unitary council to continue this work and place Climate Change policies at the heart of its future operations and services.*
- requests a half yearly report to be submitted to the Monitoring and Audit Committee and annually to Full Council (the first being at the 22nd April 2020 meeting), detailing the actions that have been taken towards achieving the objectives of this motion.*
- requests that a senior officer be nominated to be the Council's Climate Change champion.*
- by passing this motion formally declares a **Climate Emergency** in*

Kettering Borough and commits to a target of making the area covered by the Borough Council carbon neutral by 2030.”

Seventeen members of public addressed Council under the Right to Speak Policy and spoke strongly in support of the motion. Council heard that climate change affected everyone and was close to being irreversible. Kettering had the opportunity to be a role model among local authorities by declaring a climate emergency in the Borough and a number of suggestions were received to combat climate change locally including increased tree planting, increasing renewable energy sources, promotion of cycling to reduce car usage and encouraging a reduction in plastic usage locally.

Speakers also noted that passing the motion was just the beginning of the process and that meaningful action to follow-up on the commitment would be required.

The motion received strong cross-party support from all members who thanked the speakers for their attendance. Members noted the strong track record KBC had in relation to green issues, including the level of renewable energy sources in the Borough, tree planting schemes and the Homes for the Future project.

Following discussion it was unanimously

RESOLVED that this Council:

- recognises the strength of public opinion recently expressed in London and Northamptonshire, particularly by young people, on the issue of climate change and the need to achieve carbon reduction targets to protect the health and wellbeing of our future generations.
- congratulates the UK parliament for declaring a Climate Emergency.
- believes that all levels of government have a duty to limit the impacts of climate change along with our partners.
- will place “Climate Change Implications” on all agendas immediately prior to the recommendations section, to demonstrate compliance with the spirit of this motion.
- calls upon the shadow authority and its successor Unitary council to continue this work and place Climate Change policies at the heart of its future operations and services.
- requests a half yearly report to be submitted to the Monitoring and Audit Committee and annually to Full Council (the first being at the 22nd April 2020 meeting), detailing the actions that have been taken towards achieving the objectives of this motion.
- requests that a senior officer be nominated to be the Council’s Climate Change champion.

- by passing this motion formally declares a Climate Emergency in Kettering Borough and commits to a target of making the area covered by the Borough Council carbon neutral by 2030.”

19.C.27 RESOLUTION TO CONTINUE

During the debate on the previous item (19.C.26), with the meeting closing on the two-hour guillotine, it was

RESOLVED that the meeting be extended to 9.30pm in order to conclude the remaining business on the agenda.

19.C.28 MOTION – ARMED FORCES DAY

It was proposed by Cllr Mick Scrimshaw and seconded by Cllr Anne Lee that:-

“This council agrees that from next year the date and time of the raising of the flag for Armed Forces Day will be announced in advance so councillors and any members of the public are able to attend and show their respect if they wish.”

Councillor Mick Scrimshaw reported some confusion in relation to the timing of the raising of the flag for the recent Armed Forces Day.

Councillor Edwards stated that members had been informed of the timings of the event and would be in the future.

Following discussion it was unanimously

RESOLVED that this council agrees that from next year the date and time of the raising of the flag for Armed Forces Day will be announced in advance so councillors and any members of the public are able to attend and show their respect if they wish.

19.C.29 MANAGING DIRECTOR CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

Council received a report that sought a decision regarding whether or not to extend the current fixed term contract for the post of Managing Director, and to determine the appropriate mechanism and duration if appropriate.

Questions were asked in relation to severance pay with the meeting noting that the Managing Director would be entitled to severance pay whether the position was made redundant now or in 2021.

It having been proposed by Cllr Lloyd Bunday and seconded by Cllr Ian Jelley it was

RESOLVED That the Council seek to extend the current arrangements with the current post holder for a period of up to April 2021 and that the matter be progressed (and concluded) through an Appointments Committee.

(The Managing Director left the meeting prior to the consideration of the above item)

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

19.C.30 TOWN CENTRE RETAIL VACANCY RATES

Councillor Mike Brown asked the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration the following question:-

“What are the current occupancy and vacancy rates of Kettering Town Centre?”

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration responded as follows:

“The occupancy and vacancy rates for the town centre are 86.05% and 13.95% respectively. These are based on a survey that was undertaken in July 2019.”

19.C.31 MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Councillor Mick Scrimshaw asked the Portfolio Holder for Community, Leisure and Youth the following question:-

“A year ago this council passed a resolution to take a “robust approach” in the prevention of modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT) and to provide extra training for our front line staff and empower them to report any instances they come across in their professional dealings with local businesses and the community that they become suspicious of, through a clear and easy to use reporting procedure.

Can I ask what training has taken place since then and how have the council’s procedures been updated to ensure easy reporting, and have there been any concerns about this issue reported by staff?”

The Portfolio Holder for Community, Leisure and Youth responded as follows:-

“Designated Safeguarding Officers have carried out briefings and interactive training sessions in service unit meetings where MSHT was mentioned as a safeguarding issue.

We are members of the countywide Modern Slavery Working Group which have developed and produced a MSHT film clip which will be available as a training package to be developed for general use. There is an aide memoire for front line officers being rolled out imminently.

All staff have a credit card sized list of safeguarding contacts to refer to when a potential case has been identified.

We have referred 2 cases to the Modern Slavery helpdesk: opwilberforce@northants.police.uk.”

19.C.32 TWINNING – FALMOUTH, JAMAICA

Councillor Mick Scrimshaw asked the Portfolio Holder for Community, Leisure and Youth the following question:-

“In April 2018 Kettering Council passed a motion calling on the Mayor to invite Falmouth, Jamaica to enter into a town twinning arrangement with the town of Kettering.

More than a year later nothing seems to have happened about this proposal so can we please have an update on the discussions?”

The Portfolio Holder for Community, Leisure and Youth responded as follows:-

“A letter was sent to the Mayor of Falmouth, Jamaica in June 2018 inviting the town to enter into a twinning agreement with Kettering to commemorate our shared heritage through the life and works of the Revd. William Knibb. A positive response was received on 22nd May 2019.

With the support of the Mayor and MP, work is now being undertaken to build links between the two towns through a Sister City Agreement.”

19.C.33 EAST KETTERING DEVELOPMENT – HEALTH FACILITY PROVISION

Councillor Anne Lee asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance the following question:-

“Can the portfolio holder advise when we can expect to see health facilities provided within the east Kettering development, and what has to happen to ensure its delivery?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance responded as follows:-

“The developer is required to provide land and finance towards the provision of health facilities. A serviced site (so with roads, drainage etc. in) of 0.25 hectares within the District Centre must be provided by the occupation of 1500 houses. We would expect that, given projected rates of housebuilding, this to be reached in about 2023. The S106 identifies that £0.5m can be put towards the health facility. The S106 does not describe what specific health facilities should be provided and it does not follow, for example, that a GP surgery is the facility which will be provided.

The NHS – through the clinical commissioning group in the first instance – need to identify what exactly they wish to see on site in east Kettering. There has been a dialogue with them for some years on this subject, but no clear specification has been arrived at and we continue to press them to come to a view on what is needed, especially as the developer is now at the early stage of master-planning the district centre layout.”

Councillor Lee asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance the following supplementary question:-

“Can we trust Portfolio Holder to monitor this to ensure residents of Kettering East have access to health services?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance responded as follows:-

“S106 monies will be paid to the NHS and it is down to them to decide what they want to do with it. We can ask but cannot do any more. Councillor Lee has asked this question on numerous occasions and the answer has not changed.”

19.C.34 HISTORICAL ARTEFACTS, PAPERS AND MEMORABILIA

Councillor Jim Hakewill asked the Portfolio Holder for Community, Leisure and Youth the following question:-

“There are many historical and not so old artefacts, papers and memorabilia of the current Borough Council and possibly the Town and Rural council predecessors (prior to the 1974 reorganisation).

What will the leadership of the Borough Council do to log all such items and ensure they are preserved for current, and future generations, to have access to?"

The Portfolio Holder for Community, Leisure and Youth responded as follows:-

"This will no doubt form part of the programme for the transition to Unitary Authority."

Councillor Hakewill asked the Portfolio Holder for Community, Leisure and Youth the following supplementary question:-

"Could you remove the two words "no doubt"?"

The Portfolio Holder for Community, Leisure and Youth replied as follows:-

"Yes"

19.C.35 CANCELLED COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Councillor Jim Hakewill asked The Leader the following question:-

"Scrutiny is crucial for colleagues and community to question the decisions taken by their elected representatives on the Borough Council.

Why, in an unprecedented time of change and decision-making for our future governance, have meetings of Research and Development (one), the Executive Committee (two) and Full Council (one) been cancelled in the last months?"

The Leader responded as follows:-

"They were cancelled because there was no business for those specific meetings. However, I can assure Council that plenty of other work is happening in other meetings both internally and across the county and North Northamptonshire."

Councillor Hakewill asked The Leader the following supplementary question:-

"How can you say there was no business?"

The Leader replied as follows

"Cllr Hakewill will understand more than most, there is extra work to do across the authority because of Local Government Reform, the

workflow through to meetings has been affected. By end of this year there is likely to be a lot more meetings than we have had before.”

19.C.36 **ROTHWELL NORTH STRATEGIC LINK ROAD**

Councillor Jim Hakewill asked The Leader the following question:-

“What benefits can the Leader see in getting all the stakeholders involved in the planning and delivery of Rothwell North “sustainable” urban extension, before any work starts on site, to revisit the strategy of placing the strategic link road through the new homes and allowing houses to be built that require construction traffic to use the roads through Desborough and Rothwell?”

The Leader responded as follows:-

“There is a planning consent in place, it cannot be revisited. However, the Council’s aim is to facilitate construction which minimises the impact on local people.”

Councillor Jim Hakewill asked The Leader the following supplementary question:-

“What do you mean by “minimises”, in whose opinion?”

The Leader replied as follows:-

“ Councillor Hakewill had a full response from the Planning Team, they’re the experts, they mean what they say.”

19.C.37 **PLANNING COMMITTEE – RIGHT TO SPEAK**

Councillor Jim Hakewill asked the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Delivery & The Environment the following question:-

“What influence can the Portfolio Holder bring to bear on the Chairman of Planning to extend the “right to speak” on major and or contentious planning applications to 15 minutes for representations to the planning committee, for and against, in line with the Task and Finish Group recommendations, chaired by Cllr Hollobone, but not yet embedded in the council’s constitution?”

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Delivery & The Environment responded as follows:-

“This was before my time, so I will be looking into the details of the original Task and Finish Group report. I also plan to talk with the Chair of Planning and report back at a later date.”

(The meeting started at 7.00pm and ended at 9.15pm)

Signed

The Mayor

DJP

DRAFT