

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

at a meeting of the Council of the Borough of Kettering held at the Municipal Offices, Bowling Green Road, Kettering on 26th February 2020

Present:

Councillor	Keli Watts (Mayor)	Councillor	Ian Jelley
"	Linda Adams	"	Anne Lee
"	Duncan Bain	"	Paul Marks
"	Mike Brown	"	Clark Mitchell
"	Lloyd Bunday	"	Jan O'Hara
"	James Burton	"	Russell Roberts
"	John Currall	"	Mark Rowley
"	Ash Davies	"	Mick Scrimshaw
"	June Derbyshire	"	Shirley Stanton
"	Maggie Don	"	Karl Sumpter
"	Andrew Dutton	"	Margaret Talbot
"	Jim French	"	Mike Tebbutt
"	Ruth Groome	"	Mike Tebbutt
"	Jim Hakewill	"	Greg Titcombe
"	Philip Hollobone	"	Jonathan West
"	David Howes		

19.C.83 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cedwien Brown, Mark Dearing, Scott Edwards, Jenny Henson and Lesley Thurland

19.C.84 MINUTES

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of 13th January 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

19.C.85 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Ruth Groome declared an interest in any related item as an employee of Northamptonshire County Council

19.C.86 **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor made announcements as follows:

- The Mayor thanked members for their attendance at the recent Borough of Kettering Quiz
- The following forthcoming Mayoral events were announced and members invited to attend:-
 - International Women's Day – 6th March
 - Farewell Concert – 30th April

The Deputy Mayor made a donation to the Mayor's Charities of £125 raised at the Felons' Dinner held on 31st January.

19.C.87 **LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader addressed the meeting and offered his thanks and appreciation to all Kettering Borough Council staff for their hard work in undertaking their daily roles alongside their efforts as part of local government reorganisation in the county.

19.C.88 **REPORT OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR**

The Managing Director advised the meeting that the Structural Change Order (SCO) that would facilitate local government reorganisation in the county had passed on 14th February and would result in the creation of two new unitary authorities in the county from 1st April 2021 and the dissolution of the existing district councils and county council.

A Member Information Session would be held in March to explain the implications of the SCO in the short and medium term and outline plans relating to elections for the shadow authority.

Members were reminded that this meeting was a historic occasion, being the final opportunity to set the Council's budget and Council Tax levels, although should a Town Council for Kettering be approved its initial precept would require setting in February 2021.

19.C.89 **RIGHT TO SPEAK**

One member of the public registered their intention to speak in relation to Items 9 and 13.

19.C.90 **NOMINATION OF DEPUTY MAYOR 2020/21**

Councillor Lloyd Bunday nominated and Councillor Mick Scrimshaw seconded the nomination of Councillor Duncan Bain as Deputy Mayor for 2020/21.

19.C.91 **APPOINTMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT MEMBER TO THE STANDARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

A report was submitted which sought Council approval to extend the appointment of Mr Mike Sawford as Independent Person to the Standards Advisory Committee until 31st March 2021.

It was noted that at the Council meeting on 22nd January 2013, the Council had appointed Mr Sawford as its Independent Person for the purposes of the Localism Act 2011. Delegated authority had been given to the then Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Standards Advisory Committee, to extend the appointment for a further three years. The appointment was subsequently extended twice by Council, in 2016 and 2018, until 25th April 2020 when the current term of office was set to expire.

Cllr West addressed the meeting as the Chair of the Standards Advisory Committee and confirmed his support for the re-appointment of Mr Sawford as the Council's Independent Person.

RESOLVED That Mr Mike Sawford be appointed as the Council's Independent Person until 31st March 2021

(Voting: Unanimous)

19.C.92 **BUDGET PROPOSALS 2020/21: GENERAL FUND, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT**

A report was submitted which reported to Council the recommendations from the Executive Committee to enable the Council to make a formal decision in relation to each of the following:-

- The Revised General Fund budget 2019/20;
- The General Fund budget 2020/21;
- The Capital Programme 2019 – 2025;
- The Council Tax level for 2019/20;
- The Revised Housing Revenue Account budget 2019/20;
- The Housing Revenue Account budget 2020/21

Mr Ian Watts addressed Council and queried what he perceived to be large variances between original and revised budgets for staffing costs during 2019/20. In response it was heard that the budget was a living

document, especially in relation to employment and there would always be differences between original and revised budgets due to staffing vacancies occurring throughout the financial year.

A balanced draft budget was presented to Council. The Portfolio Holder for Finance noted the level of work that had gone into producing a balanced budget and that savings totalling over £14.3m had been achieved since 2010, which was a testament to the hard work of the officers of the Council.

The Portfolio Holder stated that the budget before members remained robust in the face of a number of pressures and the Council had a duty to set a budget that would lay positive foundations for the new unitary authority from April 2021.

It was heard that in relation to the Housing Revenue Account, a 2.7% rent increase was being proposed, although it was anticipated that it would take until 2022/23 to return to rent levels charged prior to government mandated rent reductions that had been in force since 2016.

The meeting heard that provisional New Homes Bonus and government grant settlements had been announced on 20th December, later than in previous years due to the General Election. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy had been updated to reflect these provisional settlements.

Members had considered the professional advice of officers when reaching a decision in regard to Council Tax levels, which the Executive had recommended remain frozen for the eleventh year in succession.

The Leader of the Opposition proposed an amendment to the draft budget as follows:-

- Introduction of two hours free car parking (Monday-Saturday)

It was proposed that the estimated reduction in income of £310,000 be balanced by utilising the same amount from the Economic Regeneration Reserve.

Cllr Scrimshaw noted that the Executive Committee decision taken on 19th February to provide free parking Monday-Thursday after 3.00pm was a positive step but did not go far enough. It was considered that the proposed amendment, if approved, would attract more people into using the town centre. Cllr Andrew Dutton seconded the amendment.

During debate members noted the decline of footfall within the High Street as well as parking rates in neighbouring authorities and the positive impact the proposal could have on traders and residents.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance noted that the Executive Committee decision referred to above went further than the recommendation of the Town Centre Task and Finish Group to make parking free after 4.00pm.

(Voting on the Amendment: For 9, Against 18, Abstain 1)

Therefore, the amendment was lost.

Councillor Andrew Dutton then proposed an amendment as follows:

- Introduction of one hour free car parking (Monday-Saturday),
(Voting on the Amendment: For 9, Against 18, Abstain 1)

Therefore, the amendment was lost.

The Leader of the Opposition proposed a further amendment to the draft budget as follows:-

- £63,000 - Additional revenue generated from changing the Council Tax Support Scheme from 25% to 45% to be allocated to a Hardship Fund
- £60,000 for additional street cleaning in high density residential areas
- £40,000 for a fly-tipping amnesty
- £25,000 dedicated warden enforcement for fly-tipping

The Leader of the Opposition stated that the above proposals could be funded by returns on the Council's commercial investments and would address issues of local concern that were a regular source of complaint from residents.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance stated the Council had a statutory duty to provide a hardship fund and referenced the joint Street Cleaning Service with Corby Borough Council, with the meeting noting that new in-cab technology allowed improved street cleaning and reporting of fly-tipped refuse.

(Voting on the Amendment: For 9, Against 19, Abstain 0)

Therefore, the amendment was lost.

*At this point (7.40pm) the meeting was adjourned by the Mayor.
The meeting reconvened at 7.53pm. Cllrs Shirley Stanton, Mike Tebbutt,
Jan O'Hara and Jonathan West were absent from the remainder of the
meeting.*

During debate, consideration was given to the proposal to freeze Council Tax for an eleventh successive year despite there being no government

incentive to do so and the possible impact this position might have on the future unitary authority.

It having been proposed by Councillor Bunday and seconded by Councillor Jelley, that the budget as presented be approved by Council, a named vote was taken as follows.

Those Voting For the Motion

Councillors Bain, Brown M, Bunday, Burton, Currall, Davies, Derbyshire, French, Hollobone, Howes, Jelley, Marks, Roberts, Rowley, Sumpter, Talbot and Titcombe

Those Voting Against the Motion

Councillor Adams, Don, Dutton, Groome, Hakewill, Lee, Mitchell, Scrimshaw and Watts

Those Not Voting

None

RESOLVED

That Council approved:

- i) The General Fund Revised Budget (2019/20) and the General Fund Budget (2020/21) (as detailed at Appendix A Section 1 of the report);
- ii) The HRA budget for 2020/21 (as detailed at Appendix A Section 2 of the report);
- iii) The Capital Programme for 2019 – 2025 (as detailed at Appendix A Section 3 of the report);
- iv) The Council Tax Resolution for 2020/21 (as detailed Appendix D of the report);
- v) That the Leader of the Council and the Managing Director represent the Council on the Business Rates Pilot Board, and be given authority, in consultation with the S151 Officer, to determine proposals for the allocation of business rates, in line with the specified projects approved by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.
- vi) That responsibility be delegated to the Managing Director (in consultation with the leader and the S151 Officer) to contribute up to £2.4m in total to the Future Northants Programme in order for the Local Government Reorganisation project to proceed in line with legislative requirements.

That Council received:

- vii) The Medium-Term Financial Forecast (as detailed in Table 2 of the report)
- viii) The report of the Statutory Officer (as detailed at Appendix C of the report).

The Council Tax resolution itself is attached to these minutes as **Appendix A**.

Councillor Mike Brown left the meeting at the conclusion of this item

19.C.93 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2020/21

A report was submitted which:-

- (a) Reported the Council's Prudential Indicators for approval (in accordance with statute and the Council's Constitution); and
- (b) Reported the Council's updated Treasury Management policy and Strategy for 2020/21 to full Council as background to the consideration of the Prudential Indicators – the Policy and Strategy were formally approved by the council's Executive Committee at its meeting of 19th February 2020.

It was noted that approval of the Prudential Indicators was a statutory requirement.

RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Prudential Indicators (as detailed in Appendix A to the report) be approved; and
- (ii) the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy (as detailed in Appendix B to the report) be noted.

(Voting: Unanimous)

19.C.94 CAPITAL STRATEGY 2020/21

Council received a report that sought approval of the Capital Strategy 2020/21.

It was noted that the Council was required to consider and approve a Capital Strategy relating to the forthcoming financial year (2020/21) to comply with the requirement of the prudential code. The code required

authorities to outline the Council's approach to Non-Treasury investment decisions where non-financial assets were held primarily for financial benefit rather than service outcomes.

Cllr Anne Lee proposed the following amendment to the Capital Strategy document:

Procurement section (Appendix A - page 12) add the following wording to the second bullet point "...considering giving priority to local businesses where appropriate to boost the local economy and combat climate change"

Following clarification by the Monitoring Officer regarding the impact such an amendment would have compared to an amendment to the Procurement Strategy, Cllr Lee withdrew the motion.

RESOLVED that Council approved the Capital Strategy as detailed in Appendix A to the report

(Voting: Unanimous)

19.C.95 LOCALISM ACT 2011 – PAY POLICY STATEMENT

A report was submitted which sought approval for the Pay Policy Statement 2020/21.

It was noted that approval of the statement was a statutory requirement under the Localism Act 2011.

RESOLVED that the Pay Policy Statement (2020/21) be approved.

(Voting: Unanimous)

19.C.96 MOTION – RESIDENTIAL PARKING PERMIT PURCHASING ARRANGEMENTS

It was proposed by Cllr Mick Scrimshaw and seconded by Cllr Maggie Don that:-

"Following concerns about difficulties, this council calls for an immediate review of recent changes to the system forcing residents buying permits and scratch cards in residential only parking only areas to apply for a licence, and then only being allowed to buy them through the County Council's website. We believe while this provides efficiencies and saves time and effort for council staff, it creates difficulties for some of our residents and we would wish therefore for the change to be reconsidered."

Mr Ian Watts addressed the meeting as a resident living in a resident parking area and stated that the implementation of the new changes had

suffered from a lack of communication and information and did not benefit all residents.

Cllr Scrimshaw noted that the changes outlined in the motion had led to many complaints and were inconvenient for certain residents. Cllr Scrimshaw stated he would be prepared to withdraw the motion should the Portfolio Holder for Finance provide assurances that residents could continue to purchase permits and tickets as they had previously done so.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance confirmed that he would ensure that no residents were disenfranchised as a result of the changes and that a mechanism would be put in place to allow for the purchasing of permits and scratch cards akin to the previous arrangements, where a resident would otherwise be unable to receive a service. .

Cllr Scrimshaw therefore withdrew the motion.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

19.C.97 VE DAY - SUPPORT

Councillor Linda Adams asked the Portfolio Holder for Community, Leisure and Youth the following question:

“Could the portfolio holder advise me as to are we communicating with the Royal British Legion and any other agencies to ensure that Kettering Borough Council is a lead support for any commemorative events to take place for VE Day 75 on Friday 8th May 2020 and that the council will consider being proactive to initiating the use of the Market Square?”

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

“We welcome any organisation using the Market Square for VE Day events and will ensure it is available if required. Members will no doubt be aware that due to the date of the re-arranged bank holiday clashing with local elections – it is unlikely that the council will be able to offer any staff support for events that take place on the 8th May.

The Council is not currently in communication with the Royal British Legion or other agencies in relation to commemorative events for VE Day 75.

However, the council has always been happy to provide advice and appropriate support should the RBL wish to organise a commemorative event for the 8th May.”

Cllr Adams asked the following supplementary question:

“Can we at least do some advertising and communication with other bodies that may wish to be involved?”

19.C.98 PLANNING COMMITTEE AGENDA RUNNING ORDER

Councillor Jim Hakewill asked the Chair of Planning the following question:

“What is the formal procedure and person responsible for changing the sequence, on the night, (from the published agenda) in which the planning committee debate applications?”

The Chair of Planning Responded as follows:

“It is in the gift of the Chair of the meeting”

19.C.99 PLANNING CONDITION BREACH EVIDENCE

Councillor Jim Hakewill asked the Chair of Planning the following question:

“How can it be fair or reasonable to place the onus (and potential risks) for collecting evidence of breaches of planning conditions on members of the public, rather than having trained enforcement officers to ensure that developers adhere to conditions and S106 agreements?”

The Chair of Planning responded as follows:

“It is not and we do not ask people to do that.”

19.C.100 NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE UNITARY AUTHORITY MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Jim Hakewill asked the Leader the following question:

“When and by whom was the decision made to have 78 councillors (three per existing County Division) on the North Northamptonshire Unitary Council rather than the 45 recommended by Inspector Caller in his report, which logically would have been two per Division (52 Councillors)?”

The Leader responded as follows:

“The decision was made by Government when the Structural Change Order (SCO) recently went through the parliamentary approval process – and became law on 14th February 2020.

Previously, all principal local authorities in the county agreed through their own meetings of full council that it was their preference to have three members elected per existing county ward for the first set of unitary

elections – and that the Boundary Commission should subsequently undertake a review before the second set of unitary elections. This council held an additional council meeting on 6th March 2019 in relation to such issues.”

Cllr Hakewill asked the following supplementary question:

“Was the number of 78 in the first draft of the SCO?”

The Leader replied as follows:

“Yes. I think the most important thing about this question is that the decision on the SCO was a government decision.”

19.C.101 FLYTIPPING IN THE BOROUGH

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

“How many incidents of fly tipping have been cleared up by the Borough Council, within its boundaries, in each year over the last five years?”

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

“The relevant Head of Service will provide an answer directly to Cllr Hakewill.”

19.C.102 FLYTIPPING CLEARANCE COSTS

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

“What is the total cost per year of clearing up fly tipping in the Borough over the last five years?”

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

“The relevant Head of Service will provide an answer directly to Cllr Hakewill.”

19.C.103 FLYTIPPING PROSECUTIONS

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

“How many prosecutions have been pursued and how many have been successful in each of the last five years?”

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

“The relevant Head of Service will provide an answer directly to Cllr Hakewill.”

19.C.104 TOWN CENTRE CONFERENCES – A6 TOWNS

Councillor Jim Hakewill asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance the following question:

“When will there be Town Centre Conferences for the Town Centres of Rothwell, Desborough and Burton Latimer based on the model currently running for Kettering Town Centre?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance responded as follows:

“There are no plans for conferences in the A6 Towns.”

Cllr Hakewill asked the following supplementary question:

“Why is it always about Kettering town and not the other three towns?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance responded as follows:

“We have set up a model for town centre conferences, this is a model for the whole of the borough, not just Kettering town.”

19.C.105 REGENERATION FUNDING – A6 TOWNS

Councillor Jim Hakewill asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance the following question:

“Given the £2.4 million committed to the Kettering Town Centre regeneration, how will similar funding be equitably distributed between Rothwell, Desborough, Burton Latimer and the Borough’s Villages?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance responded as follows:

“As reported to the last meeting of full council, the council has been successful in attracting large amounts of external funding through the Heritage Action Zone programme – this required the £2.4m contribution from the council to lever in the significant external funding that was available. Should similar external funding opportunities present themselves for consideration over the coming year, the council will of course consider applying.”

Cllr Hakewill asked the following supplementary question:

“Why aren’t there plans to spend remaining £1.14m across the towns and villages?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance responded as follows:

“If we actually consider the suggestions made in the past about spending certain reserves, we would not have had Heritage Action Zone match funding we have now.”

19.C.106 BUDGET EFFICIENCIES

Councillor Jim Hakewill asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance the following question:

“How can annual budget efficiencies achieved over the last ten years be more than the Council’s entire revenue budget?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance responded as follows:

“They aren’t. I can only assume that Cllr Hakewill has misunderstood the difference between the gross revenue budget and the net revenue budget – this is very worrying given he was previously a finance portfolio holder.”

Cllr Hakewill asked the following supplementary question:

“What was the gross budget which savings have been drawn from over the last ten years?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance responded as follows:

“I will write to Councillor Hakewill with an answer.”

19.C.107 RURAL BUS SERVICE FUNDING

Councillor Jim Hakewill asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance the following question:

“What human and financial funding resources are there available within the 2020-21 budget supporting innovative new bus services for the Borough’s Towns and Villages?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance responded as follows:

“There is a £20,000 annual budget for bus subsidies for services which contribute to the economic development of the Borough, and it is likely that there may be some headroom in next year’s allocation.”

Cllr Hakewill asked the following supplementary question:

"Define "headroom"?"

The Portfolio Holder for Finance responded as follows:

"It is the difference between two levels. I will write to Councillor Hakewill with an answer."

19.C.108 CLIMATE EMERGENCY - BUDGET ELEMENT

Councillor Jim Hakewill asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance the following question:

"What would you identify as the biggest single element of the 20-21 budget that meets the objectives of the Climate Emergency declared by the Borough Council?"

The Portfolio Holder for Finance responded as follows:

"Climate change will not be tackled by having a single budget; it is a part of what we do, and in the report approved by Executive Committee in October, we set out a range of measures which could be met within existing budgets, revenue and capital. I hope Cllr Hakewill agrees that the real key to this is acting as sustainably as possibly in everything we do."

Cllr Hakewill asked the following supplementary question:

"What is the biggest single element? The answer here does not answer that."

The Portfolio Holder for Finance responded as follows:

"The decision we took at Executive Committee regarding renewable energy, but that is not the whole picture."

19.C.109 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Council Jim Hakewill asked the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Delivery & the Environment the following question:

"When will the first electric car be able to pull up and charge at one of the public charging points being facilitated by the Borough Council within its car parks?"

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

“The Council have now signed a contract for installation of EV charging points. Provided that no issues are identified during the works, the first charger should be available to use in May 2020 in London Road car park.”

Cllr Hakewill asked the following supplementary question:

“What is likely to push that date back?”

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

“The possibilities of contactor timescales and the availability of electricity resources in the area.”

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 8.36pm)

Signed

The Mayor

DJP