

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

at a meeting of the Council of the Borough of
Kettering held at the Municipal Offices,
Bowling Green Road, Kettering on 16th
December 2015

Present:

Councillor	June Derbyshire (Mayor)	Councillor	Alan Mills
"	Scott Edwards (Deputy Mayor)	"	Clark Mitchell
"	Linda Adams	"	Cliff Moreton
"	Duncan Bain	"	Mark Rowley
"	Michael Brown	"	Mick Scrimshaw
"	Steve Bellamy	"	Jan Smith
"	Lloyd Bunday	"	David Soans
"	James Burton	"	Karl Sumpter
"	Ashley Davies	"	Margaret Talbot
"	Ruth Groome	"	Michael Tebbutt
"	James Hakewill	"	Lesley Thurland
"	Philip Hollobone	"	Keli Watts
"	David Howes	"	Jonathan West
"	Anne Lee	"	Derek Zanger
"	Shirley Lynch		

Prior to commencement of the meeting the Songbirds Choir performed festive songs

15.C.47 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dearing, Don, Freer, Henson, Malin, Roberts and Titcombe

15.C.48 MINUTES

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd September 2015 were approved as a correct and signed by the Mayor, subject to a minor amendment to note Cllr Hakewill departing subsequent to item 15.C.45.

15.C.49 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

15.C.50 **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The Mayor informed Council that Peter French, a council employee in the Street Cleansing team had died on 30th October. The Mayor also reminded Members of the appalling terrorist attack in Paris that had taken place on 13th November. Members stood for a minute's silence in memory of Peter French and the victims of the Parisian Terrorist Attacks.
- The Mayor invited all Members to the Mayor's Parlour for refreshments after the conclusion of the meeting.

15.C.51 **LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

In the absence of The Leader of the Council, The Deputy Leader addressed Council.

The meeting heard that Kettering Borough Council's Refuse and Recycling Service had received the "Best Performer in Refuse Collection" Award at the 2015 Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) Awards. In addition, the service was also a finalist in the "Most Improved Performer in Refuse Collection" category.

The Deputy Leader noted that a fund-raising event had been held at the Municipal Offices on 2nd December in aid of Accommodation Concern, with a hot-food sale raising a total of £465 for the organisation.

15.C.52 **REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chief Executive introduced two Long Service Awards for Martin Lewis and Alan Heels who had both served Kettering Borough Council for forty years since joining as apprentices in 1974. He stated that the length of service both had completed was an extraordinary achievement and thanked both for their efforts in serving their community over such a lengthy period of time, noting that there could be no better ambassadors for the organisation.

The Mayor was asked to present Martin and Alan with their awards which they duly accepted.

15.C.53 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT

A report was submitted which asked Council to consider the recommendations of the Executive Committee in respect of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme review and to make a decision about the future operation of the scheme.

Councillor Scrimshaw proposed and Councillor West seconded an amendment to the substantive motion as follows:-

“That the rate of Council Tax Support remains the same as it currently is, so the minimum people may have to pay stays at 25% of their council tax bill.”

In discussion on the amendment it was noted that the taper rate for Council Tax Support had increased incrementally from 8.5% of the Council Tax to the current level of 25%. Cllr Scrimshaw stated that he could not currently indicate how the proposed amendment, if carried, would impact the council’s budget for 2016/17 as the central government settlement, the Council’s draft budget and the Council Tax charge for 2016/17 all remained to be announced.

(A vote was then taken on the amendment:
10 For; 16 Against; 1 Abstain)

The Amendment therefore fell.

Councillor Brown proposed and Councillor Adams seconded another amendment to the substantive motion as follows:-

“That a decision on Council Tax Support be deferred until the budgetary details for 2016/17 were known”

During discussion of this amendment, those in favour suggested that being in possession of all the financial facts would make it easier to come to an informed decision and that deferring a decision on the matter would provide a sensible way forward.

(A vote was then taken on the amendment:
11 For; 15 Against; 1 Abstain)

The Amendment therefore fell.

The Finance Portfolio holder proposed and The Deputy Leader of the Council seconded the original recommendation and it was

RESOLVED that:-

- (i) That with effect from 1st April 2016, the following changes be made to ensure that the scheme remained current and where appropriate in line with the Housing Benefit Scheme;
 - a. Remove family premium
 - b. Reduce backdate from 6 months to 4 weeks
 - c. Ensure rules around earnings mirror the Housing Benefit scheme
 - d. Amend Universal Credit deductions
- (ii) Having considered the responses from the public consultation and the information contained within the officer report, Option 3b (a 45% taper) was agreed to be implemented with effect from 1st April 2016. This option adhered to the Council's budget guiding principles whilst providing some flexibility to deal with potential case load increases and vulnerability assistance.

15.C.54 **BIODIVERSITY SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT FOR ADOPTION**

A report was submitted which sought the adoption of the Biodiversity Planning Document (SPD) for Northamptonshire.

The meeting noted that the updated version of the SPD brought the document into line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and would provide a powerful planning tool if adopted.

Councillor Tebbutt proposed and Councillor Bunday seconded and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document for Northamptonshire be adopted

15.C.55 **CHANGES TO THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

A report was submitted which sought Council approval for a change in the capital budget for social housing as recommended by the Executive Committee at its meeting held on 11th November.

Councillor Thurland proposed and Councillor Bellamy seconded and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the changes to the Council's Capital Programme as outlined in the officer report be approved.

15.C.56 **STATEMENT OF GAMBLING POLICY**

Council was presented with a report which sought adoption of the reviewed Gambling Act 2005 Policy Statement, a statutory three year review of the statement of principles as required by the Act.

Councillor Bunday proposed and Councillor Talbot seconded and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the Council adopted the Gambling Act 2005 Policy Statement set out in Appendix A to the officer report.

15.C.57 **HONORARY ALDERMEN AND FREEMEN OF THE BOROUGH**

The Chief Executive presented a report which requested that Council consider the introduction of the titles Honorary Aldermen and Freemen of the Borough of Kettering in recognition of eminent service to the Council or Borough.

Members were happy with the concept in principle but considered that a scrutiny committee should examine and set out in writing the recommendation process for Honorary Freemen

Councillor Hakewill proposed and Councillor Talbot seconded an amendment to the substantive motion as follows:-

"That subject to the approval of Recommendations 3 and 4 of the officer report, Recommendation 5 be facilitated through the Research and Development Committee"

(A vote was then taken on the amendment: 26 For; 1 Against)

The amendment was therefore passed and became the substantive motion.

It was therefore

RESOLVED

that

1. That the principal of appointing Honorary Aldermen be approved;
2. That the award of the title of Honorary Alderman be conferred on former members who have served as a Member of the Borough Council for at least 25 years and have rendered eminent services to the Council, or whose contribution during a shorter period of service was considered to be particularly distinguished or outstanding;
3. That the principal of appointing Honorary Freemen be approved;
4. That the title of Honorary Freeman be conferred on any person who has in the opinion of the Council given eminent service to the Borough.
5. Additional criteria should be developed for the appointment of Honorary Freemen: this would be facilitated through the Research and Development Committee.

(The voting was as follows: 25 For; 2 Against)

15.C.58 APPOINTMENT OF PARISH MEMBERS TO THE STANDARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A report was presented which sought Council approval for the appointment of two Parish Members to Kettering Borough Council's Standards Advisory Committee with immediate effect.

The meeting heard that following a recruitment exercise for the role, two applications had been received from Cllr Douglas Hodkinson (Geddington, Newton and Little Oakley PC) and Cllr Sally McKeown (Ashley PC).

Councillor Bunday proposed and Councillor Burton seconded and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that Councillors Douglas Hodkinson and Sally McKeown be appointed to the Standards Advisory Committee with immediate effect.

15.C.59 **PROTOCOL FOR USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND SOCIAL MEDIA BY MEMBERS**

A report was submitted seeking Council approval of the draft protocol for the use of electronic devices and social media by Members during public meetings of the council. If approved, the protocol would be added to Kettering Borough Council's Constitution.

Members discussed enforcement of the proposed protocol and whether using social media during council meetings was acceptable at any time.

Councillor Brown proposed and Councillor Scrimshaw seconded an amendment to the substantive motion as follows:-

- Paragraph 5.5 of the draft Protocol - Acceptable Uses – Third bullet point be amended to read "*Access to social media to report the outcome of an agenda item after the decision has been taken.*" Previously this bullet point continued "*...and the meeting has concluded*"
- Paragraph 5.5 of the draft Protocol – Uses to be Avoided – Third bullet point, first sentence be amended to read "*Direct contact or debate with a member of the public on social media during a council debate.*" The final word of the sentence had previously read "*meeting*"

(A vote was then taken on the amendment: 18 For; 9 Against)

The amendment was therefore passed and became the substantive motion.

It was then

RESOLVED that the draft Protocol for the Use of Electronic Devices and Social Media by Members During Public Meetings be adopted for inclusion in the Council's Constitution subject to the amendments outlined above

(The voting was as follows:
22 For; 3 Against; 2 Abstain)

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

15.C.60 CORNMARKET HALL TOILETS

Councillor Anne Lee asked the Portfolio Holder for Community and Culture the following question:-

“Can the portfolio holder concerned assure me that we are liaising with the relevant contractor to ensure that the toilets in the Cornmarket Hall in Kettering are kept in a sufficiently clean condition?”

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Culture responded as follows:-

“Yes, of course”

Councillor Lee asked the following supplementary question:-

“How do you know that the service that used to be done by Council employees will give us value for money? What benchmarks, inspections and criteria are used to show we get value for money?”

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Culture responded as follows:-

“These are operational matters that you would need to take up with the relevant officers”

15.C.61 MATTERS OF URGENCY

None

(The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 7.55 pm)

Signed

The Mayor

DJP