
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
21ST NOVEMBER 2007

Present:

The Mayor, Councillor Barnes-Andrews
The Sheriff, Councillor Parnell
Councillors Baillie, Ball, Baston, Beckett, Mrs Blatchford, Bogle, Mrs Bridle, Burke, Cooke, Cunio, Mrs Damani, Davis, Dean, Dick, Drake, Galton, Hannides, Harryman, Jackson, Johnson, Ms Kelly, Letts, Marsh-Jenks, Matthews, McEwing, Mrs Milton, Moulton, Noon, Norris, Odgers, Payne, Rayment, Samuels, Slade, Smith, Sollitt, Stevens, Thomas, Vinson, Wells, White, P. Williams and Dr R. Williams.

60. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Goss, Halderthay and Mizon.

61. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Special Council and Council held on 19th September 2007 be approved and signed as correct records.

62. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor reported that Southampton was joining forces with 79 other local authorities in a project called Connect2 to bid for £50m in lottery funding.

It was noted that if Connect2 won the bid, which would be decided by a national vote, Southampton would win £1.5m of the lottery money to build a unique boardwalk that would reclaim for Southampton residents some of the waterfront and create a stunning circular river walk across two bridges, Cobden and Northam and back to Riverside Park. The bridge would connect St Deny's by train station to the Football stadium and link up the city's cycle network, all encouraging the city to be active and healthy. Three other schemes had been shortlisted and members were asked to raise the publicity of the scheme and encourage local people to start voting from the 26th November until 7 December.

63. DEPUTATIONS, PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- (i) The Council received a deputation together with a petition from Mr Simon White and Mr Richard Roberts, concerning parking in Rockstone

Place.

64. EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

The report of the Leader of the Council was submitted, setting out the details of the business undertaken by the Executive (copy of report circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

The Leader and the Cabinet made statements and responded to Questions. It was noted that the Executive Scheme of Delegation had been amended to transfer the responsibility for Communications from the Leader's Portfolio to the portfolio for the Cabinet Member for Resources.

The following questions were then submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.1:-

1. Question from Councillor Rayment to Councillor Dick

Given the current administration's strong opposition to the banning of the right turn from the bottom of London Road whilst in opposition, will this right turn be re-instated by this Executive?

Answer

When the current works to improve London Road are completed, it is not currently the intention of this Executive to make a compulsory left turn from London Road into Brunswick Place a permanent feature of the final scheme.

2. Question from Councillor Vinson to Councillor Matthews

Can the Cabinet Member for Workforce Planning tell Council how many and which proposals to advertise or make appointments since the last meeting of Council have been modified as a result of his intervention?

Answer

None of the proposals to fill vacant posts received since the last meeting of Council were modified by the Cabinet Member for Workforce Planning.

3. Question from Councillor Richard Williams to Councillor Phil Williams

Is the Cabinet Member satisfied with the performance of Southampton City Council in the area of Home Energy Conservation Act strategies and improvements when compared to the authorities in the rest of Hampshire and the rest of the South East Region?

Answer

Improving energy efficiency is a serious issue.

As local residents, we must all do more, to promote energy efficiency in our homes.

As Cabinet Member, I am working to boost energy efficiency. Council homes will, of course, meet the decent homes standard including the thermal efficiency requirements. Separate to the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA), the Administration is also strongly backing CHP in new developments.

This has won support from Greenpeace – a massive achievement.

I agree more needs to be done. I personally found it deeply shocking that when I started only 4% of vulnerable pensioners took up the Warm Front Scheme.

Over the coming year I will take the following additional action:

- Green Advocate – the Administration will be further promoting energy efficiency over the coming months. We will be targeting vulnerable people, students and other groups.
- HECA Representations to Government – I dislike performance statistics. I believe the current performance statistics are flawed. I have commissioned a Stock Condition Survey which will allow more detailed judgements on Energy Efficiency in Private Homes in Southampton.

On a personal note, I am always open to additional constructive and cost effective ideas which will improve energy efficiency.

4. Question from Councillor Jackson to Councillor Baillie

Is the Cabinet Member aware that users of Coxford, Lordshill and Weston adventure playgrounds are profoundly concerned that this vital community resource could be at risk in the light of the Administration's budget proposals?

Answer

Yes, as Cabinet Member I am aware of the concerns expressed by the users of these playgrounds, and have also heard from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and other groups concerned about the implications of the proposed play services budget reductions.

It is precisely to get this type of feedback on the implications of the budget proposals that Cabinet decided to publish them so early. I would encourage Councillor Jackson to continue to ensure that users' concerns are formally recorded and submitted back to Cabinet as part of the budget consultation process.

5. Question from Councillor Richard Williams to Councillor Hannides

In light of the recent official announcement from Southampton City Council (Weekly Update from Southampton City Council 9/11/2007) can the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture explain what is meant by the term "less significant items from both arts and heritage collections" in terms of "dispersal and disposal?"

Answer

The Acquisitions and Disposals policy agreed by Council in October 2005 has a presumption that collection items will not be disposed of unless there are sound curatorial reasons to do so. This approach is consistent with the requirements of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Association (MLA), Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council in order to retain their support and enable access to potential funding opportunities.

In the next year or so, in consultation with the MLA and Museums Association, the Arts and Heritage curatorial team will be carrying out a strategic review of the collection stewardship to identify items which are considered to be highly significant, significant and less or not significant to the core collection.

Proposed criteria for what items should constitute the core collection will be brought forward for decision making in due course but will include items relevant to the City's local, national and international story, and the Art Gallery's founding role as a national collection of European art from Renaissance to the present day, with particular strengths in 20th Century British and contemporary art.

As part of this review, items which are identified as less or not significant to the core collection may then be considered for dispersal or disposal.

6. Question from Councillor Bogle to Councillor Samuels

Please can a breakdown be provided of our Local Authority Agreement targets, current performance against them, and what extra Government money would be possible to gain if these targets were hit (on a sliding scale if appropriate)?

Answer

Southampton's Local Area Agreement (LAA) sets out a number of agreed priorities between central government, the City Council and the Southampton Partnership to improve public sector service delivery in the city to secure better outcomes for local residents over a 3 year period.

Southampton's LAA commenced in April 2007 and has therefore been operational for almost 8 months. A full copy of this agreement can be found at: www.southampton-partnership.com/strategies/LAA which sets

out each of the improvement measures, their annual targets over the three year period, the 12 negotiated stretch target areas and the organisation responsible for securing their delivery to enable progress to be assessed on a yearly basis.

Of the total 202 performance measures included within the LAA. The City Council has sole responsibility for delivering 94 indicators (47%). These have been built into the 2007 Corporate Improvement Plan approved by Full Council in May and progress is being tracked through the Council's quarterly performance monitoring arrangements.

At the end of September good progress was reported against 59 of these 94 indicators, with 66% reported to be either meeting or exceeding their targets. Of the 35 indicators where progress was not reported at the end of the second quarter, the majority are annual indicators where information is not yet available or where new data collection systems are being put in train.

21 of the 202 performance measures included within the LAA relate to 12 Stretch Targets areas which have been separately negotiated with government departments and where a Performance Reward Grant will be received if the enhanced level of performance specified in the LAA is achieved by the end of the three year period.

The Council is responsible for delivering 12 of these stretch target performance measures. At the end of September, 7 of these indicators (58%) were reported to be on track to achieve their end of year target with the measure relating to the Enhanced Healthy Schools status currently having a significant variance but forecasting improved performance in the spring to achieve the stretch target by the end of the LAA period. The remaining 4 indicators require the completion of end of year surveys or new data collection systems to be established. If the enhanced level of performance is achieved for all of the stretch target performance measures where the Council is the lead partner, then a Performance Reward Grant of £3.8 Million will be received. However, this grant is payable on a sliding scale to reflect the degree of stretch achieved and no grant will therefore be received unless at least 60% of each stretch target is met by the end of the LAA period (31st March 2010).

7. Question from Councillor Stevens to Councillor Baillie

Can the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Learning tell the Council the current numbers of parents/children that have expressed first preferences for places at each of the City's secondary schools including the "new" academy/state funded independent schools, and how many have opted for schools out of the City?

Answer

Unfortunately, the figures outlining the numbers of first preferences for

Southampton schools are not yet available. There are a number of reasons for this:

- Some 'on time' forms are still being processed
- 'Late' forms, those submitted after the official closing date, will not be processed until all 'on time' forms have been dealt with
- 'Late' forms are still being submitted by parents
- Hampshire County Council has not yet sent in the numbers of Hampshire children applying to Southampton schools as their first preference

The current information that we have is by no means complete and is subject to regular changes, as 'late' forms are still arriving, and would therefore not give Members or schools an accurate and useful summary of this year's admissions process. The Admissions Team is currently working to a deadline in early December, by which time they will be able to offer both schools and council members more accurate information regarding first preferences.

The council will be contacting schools with more accurate figures in early December once the data has been validated. Members wishing to receive this information at that time should let me know and I will arrange for it to be sent to them.

8. Question from Councillor Vinson to Councillor Smith

As the Council's newly appointed Design Champion, what does the Cabinet Member believe are the criteria for good design?

Answer

Good design is about 'place-making' – creating attractive, distinct and economically successful places where people want to live or work. Good design is about the articulation of scale, height, massing, alignment, proportion, light and materials to create 'delight' and lasting value.

9. Question from Councillor Bogle to Councillor Baillie

What are the implications for Southampton City Council of Bellemoor's decision to become a Foundation Trust school? What would be the consequences if other secondary schools followed suit?

Answer

The governing body of Bellemoor School has decided to acquire Foundation status.

The effect of this is that the school will become its own admissions authority, although it will still be subject to the statutory admissions code of practice.

The school will be the employer of its own staff, but terms and conditions will not change. Teachers will still be part of the arrangements agreed annually by the School Teachers Pay Review Body.

The governing body will own the school's site and buildings, although it may only use these for the purposes of being a school. If the school were to close the assets would revert to the Council.

The composition of the governing body may change, although the local authority will still be represented.

The school would still be "maintained" by the local authority, and would be funded on the same basis as at present.

Foundation status has been an option for schools since the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. It has been given added impetus as a consequence of the Government's aim of seeing greater diversity in school provision, which is being promoted by the Schools' Commissioner. The Government and the Commissioner believe Foundation status gives schools greater autonomy and helps to lead to school improvement.

Belle Moor will be changing its name to "Upper Shirley High", and admitting both boys and girls to Year 7 from next September. Belle Moor believes that these changes will assist it in raising standards and being more popular with parents. Early indications are that demand for places next year is strong.

Both the school and Southampton City Council expect to continue to work together in very close partnership, and we do not regard foundation status as jeopardising that in any way.

It is for every school to make up its own mind about foundation status, or the similar option of trust status. The consequences for the city would be that there would be greater diversity of school provision, and that schools could use their more autonomous status to help in the drive to improve standards.

10. Question from Councillor Sollitt to Councillor Hannides

Is the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture aware of any impact from external funding sources to key projects in the City in the light of the Executive's budget proposals which include cuts in funding and grants?

Answer

The Executive's budget proposals have been issued for consultation and feedback received from individuals and organisations will be used to subsequently shape the Executive's final budget position. The consultation period is open until 21st December 2007, any information

received during this period including any possible impact on key projects for the City, will be taken into account in final decision making. To date, no such feedback has been received.

11. Question from Councillor Stevens to Councillor Baillie

Is the Cabinet Member and his administration going to encourage more City schools to opt out of local authority control and/or ownership?

Answer

It is not the view of the Government that local authorities should necessarily be seen either as controlling or owning schools. The local authority's main role in relation to schools is to promote higher standards and take strategic decisions about the overall shape of educational provision.

It is a matter for schools and their Governing bodies whether they choose to use the options available to them as a result of legislation to seek foundation or trust status which give them greater autonomy. The Southampton Education Trust enjoyed significant support from schools and others during the recent schools competition in relation to the role that it might play in supporting local schools. Their ongoing commitment to the children of the City is welcomed and encouraged by this administration. They would like to explore the possibility of supporting a number of existing schools in the City. This could include enabling them to acquire trust status.

Whatever status a school may have, Southampton City Council will continue to work with them closely, in a spirit of partnership and collaboration. This includes providing services and support on the same basis as currently to community, voluntary aided or voluntary controlled schools.

The most important question is not who controls or owns the schools, but the outcomes they can deliver for their pupils. This administration will continue to work with schools to develop where this can benefit local children and families.

12. Question from Councillor Cunio to Councillor Dick

Can the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport explain why the approach to the enforcement of 20 mph limits outside schools chosen by the Executive is only advisory?

Answer

Council policy is to introduce 20mph speed limits outside all schools in the City. However, there are very specific rules laid down by the Department for Transport (DfT) that differentiate between 20mph limits (which rely on the use of signing alone) and 20mph Zones (which

require physical measures to reinforce the limit). 20mph limits can only be introduced where it can be demonstrated that existing vehicle speeds are already of this order – if they are not, then a zone has to be implemented.

The difficulty is that the cost of introducing a zone is much greater than for a limit (because of the measures needed) and budgetary constraints have restricted the number that can be implemented in any one year. Surveys have been undertaken at all sites to establish where 20mph limits that meet the relevant criteria can be introduced, and it is proposed that the bulk of the 2008/09 investment programme will be concentrated on those locations. However, this will still leave over half of the schools in the City without a 20mph limit in place and it is for these locations that it is proposed to introduce the advisory '20's plenty' signs. Even though they are not enforceable, it is believed that the awareness-raising value of the message makes this an effective initiative.

It should be stressed that where there is a limit in place, then this is fully enforceable – it is only the '20's plenty' signs that are advisory, and as further sites then have an enforceable limit introduced, the advisory signs will be removed.

13. Question from Councillor Stevens to Councillor Baillie

How will the Cabinet Member in conjunction with the City's partners ensure a more vigorous promotion of the City's anti bullying strategy in the City's schools?

Answer

It is appropriate to have received this question during the middle of what I hope is proving an effective anti bullying week both nationally and locally. Bullying is a horrible activity that blights the enjoyment and progress of too many children, both in their school life and in the community. I am eager to see the active promotion of the City's anti-bullying strategy, together with any other activity that reduces the number of young people adversely affected by bullying. Whilst of course I support this I am pleased to report that City schools and partner agencies have a number of events planned for this week and beyond. Activity to promote the effectiveness of our anti-bullying strategy includes;

- Support for a multi agency anti bullying strategy group which meets regularly. The agencies represented provide advice, guidance and support to schools on an ongoing basis.
- The local anti bullying strategy is currently being revised to include the newly published materials from the Department for Children, Schools and Families. The "Safe to Learn" materials going into the strategy will be publicised to schools this week. We will continually update the strategy to take account of good practice to ensure that it remains relevant to the challenges

around bullying.

- We are tasking a member of staff with supporting the partnership between the council and schools in vigorously promoting the anti bullying agenda and the work needed in schools. The person will be jointly funded by schools and the council to ensure that anti bullying is rooted in school practice.
- A local **anti bullying conference** is being planned for the Spring term 2008. The conference will
 - Embed the Safe to Learn materials
 - Ensure all schools sign the anti bullying charter
 - Relaunch the city anti bullying policy
 - Publicise and share the expertise of the voluntary sector
 - We are also developing ways of closer monitoring of the extent of bullying and the ways schools follow up.

65. MOTIONS

(a) Post Offices

Councillor Milton moved and Councillor Vinson seconded:-

“Council deplores the decision, subject to nominal consultation, of Post Offices Ltd to close a further 5 Post Offices in Southampton.

Council therefore requests the Leaders of all three political groups to write to Post Offices Ltd expressing their profound concern for the impact of sustainable communities and neighbourhoods, and especially for elderly and disabled people.

Council welcomes the recommendations in the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 to give Local Councils greater powers to protect local post offices services, including the power to co-locate post office services in Council-owned buildings, or even to apply to the Secretary of State for consent to take over responsibility for postal services.

Council welcomes the acceptance by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee of this issue as a subject for a Scrutiny Review and urges that priority be given to considering how this Council might make use of these and other powers to preserve post office services as a vital element in sustainable communities and neighbourhoods, including co-location of post office services in Council owned facilities such as Housing Offices, Leisure Centres and Libraries, and/or the possibility of a mobile post office service.”

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE MOTION WAS DECLARED CARRIED

RESOLVED that the motion as submitted be approved.

(b) Community Involvement

Councillor Drake moved and Councillor Jackson seconded:-

“This Council is strongly committed to the principle of community involvement. Council also recognises that area-bases working within local authorities is specifically encouraged in recent legislation.

Council therefore confirms that its five Neighbourhood Partnerships are a key vehicle for community consultation and participation. Council also notes that the Neighbourhood Partnerships areas have been adopted by key partner agencies including the Police and Health.

Council therefore resolves that the retention of Neighbourhood Partnerships, together with funding for Neighbourhood Co-ordinators and an annual grant for community initiatives to be determined by the Partnerships, shall form an addendum to the Council’s Policy Framework, i.e. an addendum to the City Improvement Plan.

Council nonetheless recognises that there is scope for improvement in the working of Neighbourhood Partnerships and in their role in facilitating co-ordinated service delivery and meeting local priorities especially in the Priority Neighbourhoods.

Council therefore resolves to establish a time-limited cross-party officer-Member working group to consider how best to enhance the roles and Working of the Neighbourhoods Partnerships and to report back through the Housing and Communities Scrutiny Panel within 6 months with recommendations to be submitted to the Executive/Full Council (as appropriate).”

Amendment moved by Councillor Bridle and seconded by Councillor Letts:

In the first paragraph, change “area-bases” to read “area-based”.

In the second paragraph, first line, add the word “currently” after “Partnerships are”.

Move the third paragraph to become the final paragraph and in the first line after “resolves that” add “until alternative plans are approved by Council’.

In the second line after “together with” add the word “adequate” and delete the words “and an annual grant for community initiatives to be determined by the Partnerships”.

In the original fourth paragraph, last line, remove the word “the” preceding “Priority Neighbourhoods”.

In the original last paragraph, in the third line remove the capital “w” in

Working. In the fourth line, replace the words “within 6 months” with “on 30th April 2008”.

Amended motion to read: -

This Council is strongly committed to the principle of community involvement. Council also recognises that area-based working within local authorities is specifically encouraged in recent legislation.

Council therefore confirms that its five Neighbourhoods Partnerships are currently a key vehicle for community consultation and participation. Council also notes that the Neighbourhoods Partnerships areas have been adopted by key partner agencies including the Police and Health.

Council nonetheless recognises that there is scope for improvement in the working of Neighbourhoods Partnerships and in their role in facilitating co-ordinated service delivery and meeting local priorities especially in Priority Neighbourhoods.

Council therefore resolves to establish a time-limited cross-party officer-member working group to consider how best to enhance the roles and working of the Neighbourhood Partnerships and to report back through the Housing and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel on 30th April 2008 with recommendations to be submitted to the Executive/Full Council (as appropriate).

Council therefore resolves that until alternative plans are approved by Council, the retention of Neighbourhoods Partnerships, together with adequate funding for Neighbourhoods Co-ordinators, shall form an addendum to the Council's Policy Framework i.e. an addendum to the City Improvement Plan.

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE AMENDMENT WAS
DECLARED CARRIED

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RESOLVED that the motion as amended be approved.

(c) Footway Repairs

Councillor Baston moved and Councillor Drake seconded:-

“This Council recognises the importance of encouraging healthy, independent living for older citizens. This Council therefore resolves to prioritise footway repairs in areas where large numbers of elderly people are known to live, in order to enable safer, easier access on foot to local facilities.”

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE MOTION WAS DECLARED CARRIED

RESOLVED that the motion as submitted be approved.

- (d) Southampton City Concessionary Fares Scheme

With the consent of the Mayor, Councillor Baston withdrew her motion.

- (e) Proposed Bus Service Reduction Plans

Councillor Richard Williams moved and Councillor Baston seconded:-

“This Council condemns the proposed bus service reduction plans published last month by the Conservative administration. They adversely impact disproportionately on less well off senior citizens needing to access hospital appointments in the mornings, particularly those on the eastern side of the City. They also impact significantly on the young people who travel to school by bus.

Council calls on the administration to remove the proposals at once.”

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE MOTION WAS DECLARED CARRIED

RESOLVED that the motion as submitted be approved.

66. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES OR THE MAYOR

Question from Councillor Blatchford to Councillor Slade

Why is it that the general public and Councillors are unable to access and view planning application details effectively on the 'public access for planning' site due to the poor quality of the planning IT portal?

Answer

Due to an initial problem with the conversion of data in the new electronic system the access to planning applications is not being provided to the desired standard. This has been brought to the attention of the system provider and the resolution of the problem is in the process of being addressed.

67. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES

It was noted that there had been no changes to Council appointments to Committees, Sub-Committees and other Bodies.

68. 2007 CORPORATE ASSESSMENT AND JOINT AREA REVIEW RESULTS

The report of the Leader of the Council was submitted detailing the outcomes of the Corporate Assessment and the parallel Joint Area Review / Youth Services Inspection (copy of report circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Audit Commission's 2007 Corporate Assessment Report, the Joint Area Review report and the Youth Service Inspection report be formally received;
- (ii) That the appendices to the report be referred to the Standards and Governance Committee; and
- (iii) That all of the Council's partners, stakeholders and staff, be thanked for their participation in these processes.

69. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

The report of the Electoral Registration Officer was submitted detailing a review of Polling Districts and Polling Places in accordance with the obligations under the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (copy of report circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

RESOLVED that the recommendations in respect of the polling districts and polling places as set out in Appendix 3 to the report be approved.

70. LICENSING ACT 2003 – STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

The report of the Solicitor to the Council was submitted reviewing the Statement of Licensing Policy in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003 (copy of report circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

RESOLVED that the revised Statement of Licensing Policy as set out in appendix one to the report be approved and adopted.