
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
16TH JANUARY 2008

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, Goss, Hannides, Harryman, Jackson, Johnson, Ms Kelly, Letts, Marsh-Jenks, Matthews, McEwing, Mrs Milton, Mizon, Moulton, Noon, Norris, Odgers, Payne, Rayment, Samuels, Slade, Smith, Sollitt, Stevens, Thomas, Vinson, Wells, White, P. Williams and Dr R. Williams.

71. APOLOGIES

It was noted that no apologies for absence had been received.

72. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21st November 2007 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Arising from the minutes, it was agreed that the following statement, made by the Leader in relation to an article that had appeared in the Echo, should be added to the minutes of the last meeting:

“I wish to make a statement relating to comments in the Echo. I deplore personal abuse, and it is completely unacceptable. I have spoken to Councillor Dick and he tells me he has been misrepresented. This has been confirmed by a colleague who overheard the interview. The statement made by Councillor Dick did not contain any suggestion, nor did he intend it to contain any suggestion, that Councillor Williams has used his position for personal gain. Councillor Williams’ integrity is beyond reproach. My understanding is that Councillor Dick said that Councillor Williams was pursuing the matter for his own political gain and personal ego. Councillor Dick has been misrepresented. Personal ego is, perhaps, something that all politicians suffer from and have to live with and accept.

However, it is clear that Councillor Dick has been misrepresented in the Echo.

I may find Councillor Williams' politics repellent, but his personal integrity is beyond reproach".

73. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR

Connect2

The Mayor announced the successful outcome of the Connect2 project and congratulated all those involved on the City's achievement.

74. DEPUTATIONS, PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- (i) The Council received a deputation from Dr T Khan, Alison Liu and Jaina Patel, concerning the Community Language Service.
- (ii) The Council received a deputation from Mr. Don Harper, concerning the Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007.
- (iii) The Council received a petition from Councillor Mizon on behalf of residents, concerning the possibility of a pre-school being erected on land adjacent to Hollybrook School.

75. 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.

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

1. 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

Very little recruitment activity traditionally takes place from mid-November to early January. However, four requests to advertise positions were returned to the originators for further justification and consultation. These requests were received at the beginning of January 2008.

2. Question from Councillor Richard Williams to Councillor Phil Williams

It was noted that the question from Councillor Richard Williams had been withdrawn.

3. Question from Councillor Vinson to Councillor White

Is the Cabinet Member satisfied with the average response time for delivery of adaptations to people with disabilities in the City?

Answer

No. Since taking control of the administration I, with my Housing Colleague, have introduced measures and allocated monies to reduce the waiting times. The administration is not complacent with the actions so far and is continuing to strive to reduce these times.

4. Question from Councillor Bridle to Councillor Dick

Following the allocation of £60K in last year's Liberal Democrat budget and the additional £60K approved by the Conservative Executive for road improvements to Middle Road in Sholing, could the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport please indicate when and if he is going to listen to the local residents about the real issue that concerns them, namely the parking around Itchen College?

Answer

As two of the junctions in Middle Road have a history of accident problems, there is a need to carry out improvements to improve safety and reduce the vehicle and pedestrian conflict.

Consultation on the junction improvements, incorporating zebra crossings, took place with local residents and schools in September 2007. Although several other items were discussed during the consultation, the main issue was the need for speed reduction measures. Parking issues were raised by some of the residents but these related more to providing yellow lines on both sides of Middle Road to reduce congestion at certain times of day. The proposed works address the higher priority road safety issues.

It is the Administration's policy to introduce residents' parking where appropriate.

5. Question from Councillor Vinson to Councillor Baillie

In view of the substantial number of vacancies for school crossing patrol persons across the City, what steps has the Cabinet Member authorised or is he considering to redress the situation?

Answer

I am aware of the long standing problem in relation to a high number of vacancies for school crossing patrols. Getting children safely to school is an issue of concern to me and my Cabinet colleagues. Through the Director of Children's Services and Learning, I have asked officers to work more closely with schools directly to enlist their help in filling persistently hard to recruit vacancies. We have made some significant progress in filling vacant posts and have been active during Headteachers conferences in raising this topic. One of the reasons for the high level of vacancies is the high level of departures from those in post due to changes in health or career. The Schools Crossing Patrol has compared our pay and conditions with similar staff in other authorities, and we will be considering re-evaluation of the rate of remuneration for staff in this role if that is a significant issue. One further initiative we have put in place has been the planned introduction of "20 is Plenty" signs around all schools not yet covered by school zones. Whilst the signs are advisory (until a school zone is put in place), we feel that this signage will help to remind drivers around schools of the need to keep their speed down. This will be in addition to the continued roll-out of 20 mph "School Zones".

6. Question from Councillor Mizon to Councillor Dick

Given the likely increase in periods of very heavy rain what action is the Council taking to minimise possible flood risk?

Answer

The Street Maintenance Service and Cleansing Services are working together to ensure the routine inspection and maintenance of highway systems is undertaken. An action plan to assess and prioritise the risk from flooding has been completed to identify which roads and drainage systems require more frequent maintenance and where additional drainage work is desirable. Given the relative predictability of areas susceptible to the risk of flooding, it is possible to identify the location, scale and nature of such situations and to include them in the operational plan.

In planning for the increased risk of flooding from overloaded drainage systems, work will continue to undertake risk assessments to identify sections of highway at greatest risk and to understand the consequences. Where the capacity of the local Public Utility's drainage system is a factor, the City Council will work closely to with Southern Water to ensure any improvements are effectively targeted.

7. Question from Councillor Vinson to Councillor Phil Williams

Can the Cabinet Member inform Council as to the current status and timetable for the Millbrook Combined Heat and Power scheme?

Answer

This is a challenging project and, as Members will know, it has been in development for a number of years, spanning a number of administrations. I think it is important to place on record the achievements since May.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed. This enables the Council to receive information about the potential CHP partner's business model.

We now have until May 2008 to make the project work.

We have agreed with a proposal from the potential partner that they should pay the Council's future development costs to enable the project to go forward.

The next key step is to award preferred bidder status.

I hope that a deal can be reached. I would just re-emphasise that this is a challenging project with extremely tight timescales.

8. Question from Councillor Mizon to Councillor Samuels

Has the Leader bought a copy of "Southampton Cooks"?

Answer

No.

76. MOTIONS

(a) Contribution to Targeted Recruitment and Training.

Councillor Noon moved and Councillor Stevens seconded:-

'Southampton City Council resolves to incorporate within the emerging Core Strategy appropriate policies to include for major developments an obligation for developers to make a contribution to Targeted Recruitment and Training.'

Amendment moved by Councillor Vinson and seconded by Councillor Baston:

Add to second line after major developments "with a significant employment element ".

Add to the end of the Motion “to enhance the employment prospects of local people, especially the long-term unemployed and economically inactive.”

Amended motion to read:

Southampton City Council resolves to incorporate within the emerging Core Strategy appropriate policies to include for major developments with a significant employment element an obligation for developers to make a contribution to Targeted Recruitment and Training to enhance the employment prospects of local people, especially the long-term unemployed and economically inactive.

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE AMENDMENT WAS DECLARED CARRIED

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE MOTION AS AMENDED WAS DECLARED CARRIED

RESOLVED that the motion as amended be approved.

(b) Electronic Card Reader Technology

Councillor Richard Williams moved and Councillor Bridle seconded:-

“The Council strongly welcomes the Government’s Local Transport Bill, to become law in the near future, as an important extra tool to ensure proper partnership working between local authorities and private sector bus companies.

Council calls on the Executive to use all of its currently available powers and influence to ensure that electronic card reader technology is installed in all buses running local Southampton services by 4th April 2008.

Council requests that if the Executive is unable to facilitate the delivery of the necessary card reader by the beginning of the 2008 – 09 financial year, that the Executive should escalate the matter with the owners of any such bus companies and emphasize the new powers of the forthcoming Local Transport Act.”

Amendment moved by Councillor Dick and seconded by Councillor Moulton:

In the first paragraph replace “the Council strongly welcomes” to “the Council notes”.

Replace the third paragraph in total with:

The Council believes public transport should be properly funded and

fully supports partnership working. The Council notes:

- It is regrettable that the new ticket machines for ITSO cards cannot be used by 4th April 2008 due to Wayfarer Transit Systems.
- The introduction of the English National Concession in ITSO format has led to difficulties with the implementation.
- At the same time it calls on Government to fund concessionary fares and calls for a fair distribution of money to all TCA's.

Council resolves to continue to push for implementation as quickly as possible. In particular, the Council should continue the previous administration's discussions with the DfT and ITSO to get dispensation for a period of time until ITSO can be fully implemented.

Amended motion to read:

The Council notes the Government's Local Transport Bill, to become law in the near future, as an important extra tool to ensure proper partnership working between local authorities and private sector bus companies.

Council calls on the Executive to use all of its currently available powers and influence to ensure that electronic card reader technology is installed in all buses running local Southampton services by 4th April 2008.

The Council believes public transport should be properly funded and fully supports partnership working. The Council notes:

- It is regrettable that the new ticket machines for ITSO cards cannot be used by 4th April 2008 due to Wayfarer Transit Systems.
- The introduction of the English National Concession in ITSO format has led to difficulties with the implementation.
- At the same time it calls on Government to fund concessionary fares and calls for a fair distribution of money to all TCA's.

Council resolves to continue to push for implementation as quickly as possible. In particular, the Council should continue the previous administration's discussions with the Department of Transport and ITSO to get dispensation for a period of time until ITSO can be fully implemented.

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE AMENDMENT WAS DECLARED LOST

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE MOTION WAS DECLARED CARRIED

RESOLVED that the motion as submitted be approved.

(c) Council Expenditure

Councillor Sollitt moved and Councillor Beckett seconded:-

“This Council deplores the decision of the Executive to agree expenditure of £100k of Council Tax payers' money on data collection and other preparatory activities for the possible introduction of the Conservative Administration's proposed 'Pensioner Discount' in advance of any decision by Council as to whether or not this should form part of the Council's Budget for 2008-9.”

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

Councillor Baston moved and Councillor Richard Williams seconded:-

“This Council resolves that the Southampton City concessionary fares scheme for 2008/9 should continue to be available for holders of passes issued by Southampton City Council from 9.00am to midnight, Monday to Friday, and at any time at weekends and on bank holidays. A local pass for travel within the City will continue to be available to those in receipt of Disability Living Allowance at the lower level. Southampton City Council will continue to issue companion passes for those unable to travel alone for journeys within the City. Holders of passes for registered blind will continue to be able to travel at any time as at present.

Council therefore resolves that the above terms 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 MOTION WAS DECLARED CARRIED

RESOLVED that the motion as submitted be approved.

Councillor Parnell in the Chair

(e) Supermarkets

Councillor Baston moved and Councillor Drake seconded:-

“Council calls on the Executive to adopt schedule 4 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005) and to investigate means, including voluntary agreements and possible use of powers of wellbeing or powers to

introduce bye-laws under the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act, of:

(a) requiring supermarkets operating within the City to introduce owner identity marking on shopping trolleys together with coin or token operated systems for their shopping trolleys, and to enable the Council to recover the cost associated with removing such trolleys from areas of the City outside their precincts,

(b) reducing use of non-recyclable packaging, for example by:

1. Requiring supermarkets to provide waste points in store, allowing customers to remove and deposit unwanted packaging before leaving the store;
2. Securing commitments from supermarkets to participate in a deposit scheme for plastic carrier bags, charging consumers for bags and refunding them when bags are returned;
3. Encouraging a moratorium by local retailers on plastic bags, in favour of re-usable or re-cyclable bags as introduced in the town of Modbury and planned by 70+ UK districts and all London boroughs.
4. Improving enforcement of excess packaging regulations by Trading Standards Offices."

Amendment moved by Councillor Phil Williams and seconded by Councillor Dick:

Delete first line after "Council" upto "adopt schedule 4" and replace with "requests the relevant Overview and Scrutiny panel to consider whether or not the Council should".

Add to the end of the motion:

"...and to make recommendations to the Executive accordingly."

AMENDED MOTION TO READ:

Council requests the relevant Overview and Scrutiny panel to consider whether or not the Council should adopt schedule 4 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005) and to investigate means, including voluntary agreements and possible use of powers of wellbeing or powers to introduce bye-laws under the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act, of:

(a) requiring supermarkets operating within the City to introduce owner identity marking on shopping trolleys together with coin or token operated systems for their shopping trolleys, and to enable the Council to recover the cost associated with removing such

trolleys from areas of the City outside their precincts,

(b) reducing use of non-recyclable packaging, for example by:

1. Requiring supermarkets to provide waste points in store, allowing customers to remove and deposit unwanted packaging before leaving the store;
2. Securing commitments from supermarkets to participate in a deposit scheme for plastic carrier bags, charging consumers for bags and refunding them when bags are returned;
3. Encouraging a moratorium by local retailers on plastic bags, in favour of re-usable or re-cyclable bags as introduced in the town of Modbury and planned by 70+ UK districts and all London boroughs.
4. Improving enforcement of excess packaging regulations by Trading Standards Offices.

...and to make recommendations to the Executive accordingly

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE AMENDMENT WAS
DECLARED LOST

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE MOTION WAS DECLARED
CARRIED

RESOLVED that the motion as submitted be approved.

N.B Councillors Barnes-Andrews, Galton and Wells declared prejudicial interests in the above matter, in view of their employment within the retail sector and left the meeting during the consideration of the matter.

Councillor Barnes-Andrews back in the Chair

(f) 101 Non-Emergency Service

Councillor Mizon moved and Councillor Jackson seconded:-

This Council profoundly regrets the recent announcement by the Home Office of its intention to cease direct funding for the national non-emergency 101 number.

Council believes that the 101 number has been of significant benefit to local citizens through improving co-ordination between the police and City Council, enabling each to focus scarce resources more efficiently on maximising their respective contributions to addressing crime and anti-social behaviour in Southampton.

Council therefore calls on the Home Office to reconsider urgently its decision on future funding of the 101 service.

Council strongly supports dialogue between City Safety, neighbouring authorities and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Police Authority to explore viable and cost-effective local options for maintaining the benefits which the 101 service has brought, and asks for a report to be brought forward for consideration by Cabinet and Scrutiny as soon as practicable.

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE MOTION WAS DECLARED CARRIED

RESOLVED that the motion as submitted be approved.

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

It was noted that no questions had been received.

78. 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.

79. CHANGES TO FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

The report of Executive Director of Resources was submitted seeking approval to the proposed changes to the Financial Procedure Rules (copy of report circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

RESOLVED that the changes to the Financial Procedure Rules as set out in the report be approved.

80. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY: SUMMARY OF THE USE OF THE CALL-IN PROCEDURE AND INITIAL RESPONSE TO THE SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION IN THE CORPORATE ASSESSMENT REPORT

The report of the Head of Corporate Policy Performance was noted summarising the use of the Call-in procedure over the last three months and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee's initial discussion on the Audit Commission's conclusion that the Council should enhance the support provided for its scrutiny function (copy of report circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).