
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
21ST JANUARY 2009

Present:

The Mayor, Councillor Parnell
The Sheriff, Councillor Mizon
Councillors Baillie, Ball (for items 78b onwards), Barnes–Andrews, Baston, Beckett, Mrs Blatchford, Bogle, Burke, Capozzoli, Cooke, Cunio, Mrs Damani, Daunt, Davis, Dean, Dick, Drake, Fitzgerald, Fitzhenry, Fuller, Galton, Hannides, Jones, Letts, McEwing, Marsh-Jenks, Matthews, Moulton, Norris, Odgers, Osmond, Payne, Samuels, Slade, Smith, Sollitt, Stevens, Thomas, Wells, White, Willacy, P. Williams and Dr R. Williams.

73. APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Holmes, Rayment and Walker.

74. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 19th November 2008 be approved and signed as a correct record.

75. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR

1. APSE Award for Fleet Transport

The Mayor informed the Council that twelve months after winning the prestigious 'Best Overall Performer' Award from the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE), the Council's Fleet Transport Service had won the 'Most Improved Performer' award, and that the Council's team had emerged top of the Performance Networks 250 member Council's for Vehicle Fleet Maintenance.

On behalf of the Council, he congratulated the service on delivering consistently high standards for many years and on maintaining nearly 800 vehicles and items of plant, the largest vehicle fleet on the south coast.

2. Royal Town Planning Institute Award for Mansel Park

The Mayor informed Members that the Council had won an award from the South East Region Royal Town Planning Institute under the category "City & metropolitan areas and town regeneration" for Mansel Park Improvements and Pavilion.

The judges were impressed at what the project had achieved, as well as the design of the pavilion and its sustainability. A range of work from across the region was considered, including a public art project in Folkestone to the Channel Tunnel Rail Link to the preparation of planning documents which work innovatively to advance the aims of spatial planning.

3. 3 Stars for Adult Social Care

The Mayor was pleased to announce that the Commission for Social Care Inspection had awarded the City Council's Adult Social Care Services 3 stars which is the highest level that can be awarded by them.

Adult Social Care Services had retained a 3 stars rating for 4 years. Only 16 authorities had held 3 stars for longer than Southampton, of which only 1 was a Unitary Council. Furthermore, the Service's future prospects had been classified as "excellent".

This score represented considerable and sustained hard work and all the staff in Adult Social Care were to be congratulated.

4. Townhill Junior School

The Mayor congratulated Townhill Junior School on being recognised by the Football Association as the best school in the country for football provision. Townhill Junior was the only school in the country to achieve the Charter Standard Award twice and were 2008 national winner for that category.

76. DEPUTATIONS, PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

It was noted that no requests for deputations, petitions or public questions had been received.

77. 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 Bogle to Councillor Smith.

What is the Cabinet Member's aspiration for Ocean Village, and what actions are in place to realise that vision?

Answer

My vision for Ocean Village is for it to be as good as it can be. The Council is looking to develop the ground and for a four star hotel to be built, together with the return of events such as Global Challenge.

However, it must be understood that the City Council does not have any land ownership in the area, so the direct action it can take is limited and the final outcome therefore, may not be what we would want, but that is the reality of the situation.

2. Question from Councillor Baston to Councillor Samuels.

Will the Leader of the Council clarify this Administration's position on the subject of City Regions?

Answer

This Administration recognises the vital role that cities play in securing the economic, social and environmental well being of their surrounding areas.

This is the reason why the Executive is actively engaged in the work of the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH), which has the renaissance of the twin cities of Southampton and Portsmouth and their surrounding areas, at the heart of its activities.

The voluntary co-operation of local authorities within this sub region has led to the development of one of the country's first Multi Area Agreements, which will drive economic growth and sustainable development in this area over the medium term.

The Executive is fully supportive of proposals which will enhance the coherence of the PUSH sub region and underpin the mutual co-operation that already exists between local authorities and their partners to secure the alignment of transport, planning, housing, regeneration, employment and economic development activities across the area for the benefit of all local residents and businesses.

3. Question from Councillor Cunio to Councillor Smith.

Is the Council happy with the quality of the German market?

Answer

It is not for me to be happy with the quality of the German market, but rather a matter for the people that use it. The feedback that has been received is favourable and that people are generally happy. However, as with everything it is about monitoring the situation and if the situation changes we can respond accordingly.

4. Question from Councillor Sollitt to Councillor Dean.

In light of the issues other local authorities have faced when new IKEA stores open in their areas around significant increases in both recyclables such as cardboard and non recyclables such as polystyrene can the Cabinet Member advise what plans are in place to deal with this situation?

Answer

IKEA have contracted the collection and treatment of waste and recyclables from their Southampton store to their national private sector provider. This includes provision for both residual and recyclable waste and builds upon their experience of operating sustainable waste management practices in the UK and beyond. The Council have been providing information and advice to IKEA's service provider, on local waste and recycling options.

Any recyclable waste, such as cardboard, produced by local residents as a result of purchasing goods from IKEA can be recycled via kerbside recyclable collections or alternatively delivered to any local household waste recycling centre.

Any non-recyclable waste, such as polystyrene, produced by local residents as a result of purchasing goods from IKEA can be disposed off via the weekly waste collection or alternatively delivered to any local household waste recycling centre, for disposal.

The recently produced A-Z guide of council services, delivered to all city residents, contains a detailed guide on waste and recycling and information on the appropriate management of different waste types.

5. Question from Councillor Cunio to Councillor Smith.

Will Council consider the celebration of religious festivals as currently implemented in Leicester?

Answer

The Council presently celebrates many religious festivals and has a calendar of such events. I have undertaken some research on Leicester and the City Council celebrates many of the same festivals. I am not aware of any particular festivals that are different to those that Leicester celebrates and therefore have no plans to change what we currently do.

6. Question from Councillor Beckett to Councillor Baillie.

In the light of the Ofsted review for children and young people in Southampton what is the Cabinet Member doing to improve the Council's performance, and how is the Council's underestimation of

important weaknesses going to be rectified.

Answer

The Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services by Ofsted is a review of children and young people's services provided by all agencies that impact upon children and young people, not just the Council's own services. The assessment highlighted many areas of strength but reduced the grade in 5 out of 6 outcome areas because of the rate of improvement in some important performance areas. The grade for how well children are kept safe was unchanged. We were already aware of the areas of concern highlighted; indeed, we have included them in our own submission to Ofsted prior to the assessment – our 'self assessment'.

Our new Children and Young People's Plan will address all the areas of weakness identified by Ofsted, as well as progress on other important aspirations we have for the city's children and young people. As the Chairman of the Children and Young People's Trust Board I will be working closely with everyone on the Trust, particularly the City Council's partners, to deliver the improvements needed. Partner agencies are demonstrating strong commitment to the priorities for improvement and we will increasingly be directing our collective resources to improve capacity and performance in these areas.

7. Question from Councillor Cunio to Councillor Hannides.

Does the Council have plans to re-carve the names on the Cenotaph of Southampton's fallen dead in the two world wars?

Answer

A range of options are being explored to identify the most appropriate way to ensure the future preservation of this historically important monument, and equally significantly, the personal information it contains. Active consideration is being given to the matter by officers and councillors and recommendations will be given and decisions made in due course.

8. Question from Councillor Mizon to Councillor Smith.

Safe City Partnership Joint Strategic Assessment has recognised the need for collective effort and resources in 3 areas in order to make Southampton a safer city. One of these areas is 'Neighbourhoods'. What action does the Cabinet Member intend to take to strengthen our Neighbourhoods in order to make these improvements?

Answer

We intend to continue working with all services, neighbourhoods and partner organisations to strengthen what we do and ensure we have a

system that makes people feel safe. We also want to develop the voluntary support and have presently seen an increase in neighbourhood watch schemes of 15% which equates to around 120 more people being involved. We are therefore working hard with other Partners in order to serve our communities better.

9. Question from Councillor Letts to Councillor Moulton.

What income would a married couple entitled to the 10% pensioner discount have to have before they were not entitled to Council Tax benefit greater than the proposed discount?

Answer

It is almost impossible to reflect the financial circumstances of all Council Tax benefit claimants when responding to this question, in particular to various levels of savings and returns on such including the holding of shares etc, so when answering this question the following assumption has been made:

‘That the Council Tax payer has no savings and relies solely on their weekly income or equivalent’.

The maximum level of weekly income required to receive Council Tax benefit equivalent to the proposed 10% council tax discount for households where all occupiers are 65 years of age or older is as follows, and is based on the 2008-09 council tax charges:

BAND	WEEKLY INCOME
A	294.00
B	307.00
C	320.00
D	333.00
E	359.00
F	386.00
G	412.00
H	451.00

10. Question from Councillor Mizon to Councillor Smith.

Given the City Council is intending to find space for 16,300 new houses in Southampton, how can it be that the Cabinet Member says the City has no space for 12 Gypsy and Traveller spaces.

Answer

It is for that reason that we are finding it hard to find space. We currently have 13,000 on our housing list and 400 homeless people with some form of priority need for housing. My priority is to find people a home. If the Council put more effort into finding gypsies and traveller sites it would be a dereliction of duty. A recent article in the Telegraph

referred to a £1 million gipsy camp that cost £30,000 each year to run and had stood virtually empty since its creation in 2001. Just three groups had stayed at the transit site in 2008, only five in 2007 and only 22 in 2006. The council running the site, however, said that the site was needed to combat the number of gypsies who camped illegally. If there is any space we will find it, but I think we have our priorities right.

78. MOTIONS

- (a) Councillor Payne moved and Councillor Letts seconded:-

Full Council recognises that the vast majority of City Council tenants in local authority housing want the City Council to remain as their landlord, which should be respected. It also notes with concern that affordable housing supply does not meet current demands, and that some local construction firms are struggling. Full Council recognises that consideration of establishing a local housing company is currently underway and is proposed as the means to deliver Southampton's estate regeneration programme. Full Council requests the Executive urgently investigates how a local housing company can best preserve local jobs and provide more affordable homes in the city.

With the consent of the Mayor, Councillor Phil Williams altered and moved an amendment and Councillor Moulton seconded:

In the second line after the word 'want' delete:

"the City Council to remain as their landlord, which should be respected. It also notes with concern that affordable housing supply does not meet current demands, and that some local construction firms are struggling."

And insert the words:

"a better standard of living at a rent they can afford. Full Council supports the Executive's commitment to developing new affordable homes and securing local jobs. It also backs the Executive's plans to redevelop the City's housing estates, which could include forming a local housing company which has the potential to be extended if successful.

Delete in line five after the words 'Full Council recognises', "that consideration of establishing a local housing company is currently underway and is proposed as the means to deliver Southampton's estate regeneration programme."

and insert:

"that in the present state of the housing market significant investment will be needed from the Government and its agencies to support these objectives."

Delete in line eight after 'Full Council', "requests the Executive urgently investigates how a local housing company can best preserve local jobs and provide more affordable homes in the city".

And insert the words:

"requests the Executive to call upon the Government to reinvest the £5.8m it will be taking from Council tenants' rents next year to support the estate regeneration programme".

AMENDED MOTION TO READ:

"Full Council recognises that the vast majority of City Council tenants in local authority housing want a better standard of living at a rent they can afford. Full Council supports the Executive's commitment to developing new affordable homes and securing local jobs. It also backs the Executive's plans to redevelop the City's housing estates, which could include forming a local housing company which has the potential to be extended if successful. Full Council recognises that in the present state of the housing market significant investment will be needed from the Government and its agencies to support these objectives. Full Council requests the Executive to call upon the Government to reinvest the £5.8m it will be taking from Council tenants' rents next year to support the estate regeneration programme.

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) Councillor R Williams moved and Councillor Barnes-Andrews seconded:-

Council welcomes the new Planning Bill 2007 - 08 for introducing a new system for approving major infrastructure of national importance, such as ports and harbours and notes the importance of the new Bill in the potential development of Dibden Bay. Council calls on the Executive to work with all stakeholders in the public and private sectors to promote the use of Dibden Bay as a strategic port development and report back on the activities it is undertaking on the promotion of Dibden Bay to Full Council within six months.

Amendment moved by Councillor Samuels and seconded by Councillor Osmond:

In the fifth line insert "continue to" after the word "to".

In the sixth line delete everything in the rest of the motion after word “development”.

AMENDED MOTION TO READ:

“Council welcomes the new Planning Bill 2007 - 08 for introducing a new system for approving major infrastructure of national importance, such as ports and harbours and notes the importance of the new Bill in the potential development of Dibden Bay. Council calls on the Executive to work with all stakeholders in the public and private sectors to continue to promote the use of Dibden Bay as a strategic port development.”

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.

NOTE: Councillor Burke declared a personal interest in the above matter, as an employee of the Port Authority, and left the meeting during the consideration of the matter.

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

It was noted that no questions had been received.

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

It was noted that the following changes to the appointments had been made:

Councillor Damani to replace Councillor Burke on Economic Well-Being Scrutiny Panel; and

Councillor Cunio to replace Councillor Payne on Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel

81. MARCHWOOD ENERGY RECOVERY FACILITY (ERF) CONCILIATOR'S REPORT ON PASS-THROUGH COSTS

The report of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport was submitted seeking approval for an addition of £4,000,000 to the Environment and Transport Capital Programme for the ‘Waste Disposal Contract – Pass-through Costs’ scheme (copy of report circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

RESOLVED that in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules, the addition of £4,000,000 to the Environment and Transport Capital Programme for the 'Waste Disposal Contract – Pass through Costs' scheme, funded by unsupported borrowing, be approved.

82. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC – CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS INCLUDED IN ITEM 83

RESOLVED that in accordance with the Council's Constitution, specifically the Access to Information Procedure Rules contained within the Constitution, the press and public be excluded from the meeting in respect of item 83 by virtue of Category 3 of paragraph 10.4 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

It is not in the public interest to disclose this information because it comprises financial information that if made public would prejudice the Council's ability to operate in a commercial environment and obtain best value during the acquisition negotiations.

83. THE ACQUISITION OF 3663 FOOD WAREHOUSE, ASHLEY CRESCENT, SHOLING, SOUTHAMPTON

The confidential report of the Cabinet Member for Resources and Workforce Planning in association with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services was submitted seeking approval of the acquisition of a freehold interest (copy of report circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

RESOLVED that the acquisition sum set out in the report for the purchase of 3663 Food Warehouse, Ashley Crescent (includes maximum purchase price, Stamp Duty Land Tax and fees) be added to the Capital Programme, to be funded from unsupported borrowing.

84. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY: SUMMARY OF CALL-IN ACTIVITY

The report of the Head of Corporate Policy and Performance was noted, summarising the use of the Call-In procedure over the last three months (copy of report circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).