
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
15 JULY 2015

Present:

The Mayor, Councillor Norris
The Sheriff, Councillor McEwing
Councillors Barnes-Andrews, Bogle, Burke, Chaloner, Chamberlain, Claisse, Coombs, Daunt, Denness, Fitzhenry, Fuller, Furnell, Galton, Hammond, Hannides, B Harris, L Harris, Hecks, Houghton, Inglis, Jeffery, Jordan, Kaur, Keogh, Letts, Lewzey, Lloyd, Mintoff, Morrell, Moulton, Noon, O'Neill, Painton, Parnell, Payne, Pope, Rayment, Shields, Spicer, Thomas, Tucker, Vassiliou, Whitbread, White and Wilkinson

26. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Smith.

27. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting together with the minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 20th May, 2015, be approved and signed as correct records.

28. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND LEADER

(i) Combined Authority

The Leader updated Members on the ongoing discussions concerning the formation of a combined Hampshire and IOW Authority. He informed Members that a number of discussions had been held. The matter had been discussed at the last two Group Leaders' meetings and at a meeting with the Leader of Hampshire County Council on 17th June. At the meeting of the Hampshire and IOW Local Government Association held on 19th June, a motion, proposed by the Leader of Portsmouth City Council had been passed that a letter be sent to the Secretary of State indicating the Authorities' interest. The matter would now be submitted to the September Council meeting for debate.

(ii) July Budget

The Leader referred to the July Budget and the consequences that would result for the Council. Initiatives such as the living wage would have an impact on the cost of social care and the new right to buy initiatives would have an impact on the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. The Leader felt it important for Members to be aware that these changes together with impacts such as the 7% decrease in Public Health financing would have significant implications on the Council's budget.

29. DEPUTATIONS, PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

30. EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

The report of the Leader of the Council was submitted setting out the details of the business undertaken by the Executive.

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. Revenue Balances for Secondary School Academies

Question from Councillor Keogh to Councillor Jeffery

Can the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Social Care provide the revenue balances held by the Academy secondary schools in the City for the year end 31st August 2013, 2014 and the most up to date for 2015?

Answer

Unfortunately as academy schools are not maintained by the local authority, this information is not held routinely by the Council. Information on Academy balances could be sought by Council staff from accounts filed or through requesting this information directly from the Academies themselves. A link to a website that contains all of the accounts filed by Academies is available should it be desired.

However, it should be noted that the balances held by Academies are not public information save what has been shared within the accounts and therefore the schools themselves are under no obligation to provide this information. The nature of balances held by Academies is very different to those held by maintained schools. Academy balances could include provisions for future or past and as yet unpaid liabilities whilst this is not the case for Maintained Schools, thereby leaving a disparity in the data that would make comparison very difficult to reliably achieve.

In essence we could seek to obtain the information, but it is my view that it will be of restricted usefulness, particularly if used for comparison with maintained school balances. Therefore, I do not feel it would not be an effective use of officer time to undertake this task, at a time of competing demands.

2. Day and Respite Services

Question from Councillor White to Councillor Shields

As the changes to Day and Respite Services were initially proposed to be implemented on the 1st April can the Cabinet Member indicate the new time scales for implementation and what effect have the delays had on the Budget?

Answer

On 20 January 2015, Cabinet confirmed that no day or respite service would be closed or withdrawn until all assessments had been completed and individuals with eligible social care needs had been supported to move to suitable alternatives.

These comprehensive assessments are scheduled to be completed by 31 July 2015 and will be used to inform a new time scale for implementation, which will be considered by Cabinet on 15 September 2015.

On 11 June 2015, it was reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, that a review of the budget savings was necessary because additional time has been needed to ensure that clients' assessed needs can be satisfactorily met by suitable alternatives, in line with the commitments made by Cabinet, and some individuals have transferred to alternative services, while existing ones remain open.

I am now able to confirm that the impact on the budget is that the savings of £370,000 in 2015/16 originally associated with the restructure of day and respite services are no longer forecast to be achieved in the current financial year.

3. Consultation on changes to Day Services

Question from Councillor White to Councillor Shields

During the consultation re the changes to Day Services a system of co-production was undertaken. Can the Cabinet Member indicate any changes or new schemes/proposals that have evolved as a result of this approach?

Answer

The co-production, which ran alongside the public consultation and was known as the "Working Together Group", has developed the following:

- Improved information and knowledge about Direct Payments, which has fed in to a separate review of Direct Payments being carried out by Adult Social Care, SPECTRUM CIL and its partners;
- Proposals for the involvement of service users, staff and others in quality audits of services delivered by independent and private providers – this is being implemented by the Integrated Commissioning Unit as part of its wider work on quality assurance;
- Proposals for how existing external organisations, such as Consult and Challenge and Healthwatch Southampton, can be involved in the development of new and alternative service provision;
- Feedback from working together groups about transport into the wider review of transport across the City; and
- Support and catalyst for a number of local providers and staff groups to explore the potential of expanding and developing social enterprise opportunities
- Developing a community based carer assessment service in response to carers' requests for this to happen.

In addition to the above, Adult Social Care, Southampton Mencap and Choices Advocacy have supported a Review Oversight Group, which has helped to ensure that individuals' views are recognised and has led to a successful event where providers showcased various alternative day services currently on offer across the city.

4. Driver Monitoring Software

Question from Councillor Galton to Councillor Rayment

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on where we are with the use of driver monitoring software on Council vehicles to provide increased fuel efficiency within the fleet?

Answer

The use of driver monitoring software may form part of fleet savings proposals to be delivered over the next 3 years. This would be subject to there being a business case and following consultation with staff and trade unions.

5. Domestic Waste Collection Performance Targets

Question from Councillor Moulton to Councillor Rayment

How many complaints has the Council had relating to domestic waste collection this year and how does this compare to the Council's performance targets?

Answer

As of 9 July 2015, there had been 57 complaints about the Waste and Recycling Collection Service with an annual performance target of no more than 120 first stage service complaints.

The service also measures service failure in terms of missed collections per 100,000 population (a benchmark that is used by other authorities). Between 1 April - 30 June 2015, an average of 37 missed collections per 100,000 population has been reported against a target is 30.

6. Domestic Waste Collection Budget

Question from Councillor Moulton to Councillor Rayment

Can the Cabinet Member explain why the Council's domestic waste collection budget has been going over budget in recent times and what is being done to address the issue?

Answer

There have been overspends in the waste collection budgets over the last few years due to two main factors:

- There has been a significant overspend in the cost of agency staff recruited to cover sickness absences. The original budget was set a number of years ago with an assumption that a 5% sickness rate could be achieved across the Council. The actual sickness rate for the service at the time was around 12%. Sickness levels have since been reduced and are currently around 8 - 9 %, the national average for the waste industry. Service managers are actively working with HR to further reduce levels of sickness and the dependency on agency cover.
- The budget also includes income from collected recycling. There have been significant reductions in income from recyclable materials over the last few years as commodity prices have dropped. This has been further exacerbated by the closure of a number of large reprocessing facilities in the UK. It is hoped that the continued economic recovery will lead to an increase in commodity prices and therefore recyclables and allow the Council to secure more income. We are continuing to actively encourage residents to recycle more as this also reduces the cost of disposal.

7. Letter to Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government 24 June 2015

Question from Councillor Pope to Councillor Letts

What authority was the Leader acting upon when he gave his support to devolution in the letter that went to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 24 June 2015, which claims to have "the full agreement of each Leader"?

The same letter claims that "local authorities committed to put to their Councils a resolution to this effect". When is it intended to allow Members of this Council to debate and vote on any devolution and, when making this further commitment, what authority was the Leader acting on?

Answer

As mentioned earlier in my Leader's announcement, there have been ongoing discussions concerning the formation of a combined Hampshire and IOW Authority. The matter will be now be submitted to the September Council meeting for consideration and debate.

8. Agreements with Conservative authorities in Hampshire

Question from Councillor Pope to Councillor Letts

When did the Leader receive permission from the Labour Group or the Cabinet to make agreements with Conservative authorities, as is stated in the letter to the Secretary of State from the leaders of all Hampshire authorities?

Answer

In May, I was voted the Leader of the Council.

9. Future of Southampton's Libraries

Question from Councillor Pope to Councillor Kaur

After so many delays over several Cabinet members and several years, why has there been a further delay and no statement yet on the future of Southampton's libraries, when the consultation was due to go to Full Council in July 2015?

Answer

The Cabinet is due to make a decision on the future of Southampton's libraries on August 18th. The forward plan item was published on 8th July. The future of the library service and the outcome of the consultation is a matter of significant interest, and it is right that it is given appropriate consideration.

10. Children's and Adults Safeguarding

Question from Councillor Pope to Councillors Jeffery and Shields

What length of time would you feel is appropriate for safeguarding questions from elected members to be answered by officers, when it is alleged that children's or adults' lives may be at risk?

Answer

Councillor Shields – Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care:

In the event that a Member identifies that a vulnerable adult's life may be at risk, I would expect an initial response to be made on the same day that the query was raised. I am confident that officers will respond immediately to concerns of this nature and to keep Members informed, as appropriate. I am sure that Cllr Pope will appreciate that some cases will inevitably take longer to resolve and to ensure that the vulnerable adult is safe.

If there is a particular case which the elected member is concerned about then I encourage him to draw that case to my attention or that of the Acting Director so that matters can be expedited.

Councillor Jeffery – Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Social Care:

Nothing further to add. If any Member is concerned and not getting a response, they should raise the matter with the Cabinet Member.

11. Road Repair Programme

Question from Councillor Hecks to Councillor Letts

Back in September, as Leader, you asked Members to put forward up to five residential roads for inclusion in the Executive's Road Repair Programme for the next period. I put forward two suggestions but have heard nothing as to the outcome of those suggestions. At that time you said suggested that, and I quote 'the use of local knowledge and circumstance not to say a little common sense' would assist in drawing up the programme. Would you please update Council on the progress, if any, of your initiative and whether 'local knowledge

and common sense' has had any effect on the outcome – if indeed there is an outcome?

Answer

We are keen to use local knowledge from members to help us form our roads investment programmes. All of the suggestions made by Members and residents were added to the detailed technical and observed information we already had. This played a significant part in forming this year's road re-surfacing programme and the Executive's intended 3 year programme, which was published at Cabinet in March. The roads put forward by members were given extra weighting in the selection process. 27 out of the 60 unclassified (residential) roads programmed for resurfacing in our three year programme were nominated by Members and residents through our consultation exercise.

Our programme is based on a commitment that 50% of the money available will be spent on the worst 'red' roads and 10% will be spent on improving poor quality concrete based roads in residential areas. The rest will be spent on preventing roads from declining further and thus preventing far more expensive repairs in the future.

This initiative has been so successful that we are intending to further develop and re-run it this year and I would be grateful if Members would take the time to contribute again.

12. Road Surface Kathleen Road

Question from Councillor Hecks to Councillor Rayment

Is the Cabinet Member aware of the appalling state of the road surface at the Bursledon Road end of Kathleen Road? There have been a number of minor pothole infills done but the surface continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate.

If the Cabinet Member is not aware, why not and, if she is, then what is she going to do to carry out substantial, meaningful and long lasting resurfacing of this disgracefully bad stretch of highway?

Answer

We are aware of the issues raised and it is being closely monitored and. Engineering advice is that it is reasonably structurally sound.

The state of the surface and drainage issues mean that this stretch of road is, however, earmarked for a major resurfacing and drainage scheme. It is currently envisaged that this work will take place in the 2018-19 year and in the meantime we will repair any potholes which develop. The Executive has committed to significantly increasing spending on residential roads to £2.5m per annum for the next 3 years but we are dealing with a major backlog of repairs which has built up over many years and this road is part of that backlog.

13. Cyclists riding on pavements

Question from Councillor O'Neill to Councillor Rayment

Increasing numbers of people are being seen riding bicycles on the pavements around Southampton. Recently an 87 year old woman was knocked down and injured by a cyclist riding their bicycle on the pavement in Portswood. What is the Council's policy regarding cyclists riding on pavements?

Answer

Cycling on the pavements is only permitted where there is a sign showing that the route is shared with pedestrians or segregated from pedestrians. In short, it is illegal to cycle on a pavement alongside a road, unless it has been marked as a cycle track.

The Police do target hot spots and use PCSO's to issue penalty tickets where appropriate. The maximum court fine is £500 or the police can issue a £50 fixed penalty notice (FPN).

In addition to this we (as a Highway Authority) monitor accidents and work with other agencies including the police, and fire service representatives as well as Balfour Beatty our highways maintenance partner.

14. HMO Licensing

Question from Councillor O'Neill to Councillor Payne

Numerous visitors returning to Southampton have commented on the decline in the appearance of the City particularly in those areas where there are high concentrations of HMOs. Has the Council considered the use of HMO licensing to improve the accountability and responsibility of tenants and landlords to their neighbouring residents?

Answer

The Council shares concerns about the impact of HMOs on neighbourhoods in the City especially in areas where there are concentrations of this type of accommodation. The principal aim of HMO licensing is to ensure that properties are safe, meet required standards and are well managed. Each licence that is issued sets out the Council's expectations and any improvements that are needed; good progress is being made in the existing designation and where enforcement work has been completed on a street by street basis there are early signs that the areas are improving. This now needs to be sustained and we need to work across the whole area, dealing robustly with those who fail to licence or breach their licence conditions. Key to success to date has been the work of the HMO wardens whose role is to improve the street scene and reduce nuisance for example ensuring the removal of surplus/extended stay letting boards and waste in gardens/front yards. Enforcement action when appropriate is important; we have had 4 successful convictions to date. Effective partnership working is essential; we have a successful landlord forum with local landlord associations and work closely with both universities and a range of Council services.

15. Above Bar Street

Question from Councillor O'Neill to Councillor Rayment

The road outside the new cultural quarter development is in a terrible state and I have had reports that it has become treacherous for bicycles and road vehicles alike. When is this piece of road due to be repaired?

Answer

Work to repair Above Bar Street will begin on the 16 August and is expected to take 6 weeks.

16. Steering Group – Millbrook and Maybush Regeneration Project

Question from Councillor Pope to Councillor Payne

Is the Steering Group for the Millbrook and Maybush Regeneration Project a decision-making body under the Local Government Act 1972?

Answer

The primary function of the Steering Group is to represent the interests of Millbrook and Maybush residents in the development of a Framework for Estate Regeneration for the area. It is not a decision making body as defined under the 1972 act listed above. The group acts as sounding board for design ideas, providing feedback and positive suggestions for regenerating the estate. Meetings are not open to members of the public, though the group is considering whether to hold one or two sessions in public each year to report back to the community. There is representation on the group of local ward members, the Maybush Triangle and Area Tenants and Residents Association along with local residents and traders.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.9 Questions 17 – 22 were unable to be submitted due to the timeframe allotted for this item.

31. MOTIONS

(a) Estate Regeneration

Councillor Payne moved and Councillor Furnell seconded:

“This Council recognises that the Government's drive to extend right to buy to housing associations may leave those associations struggling to replace sold stock, impacting on their future budgets. As a consequence, affordable housing supply in Southampton may suffer with the loss of existing homes, and housing associations being less inclined to borrow more money to create new ones.

Council notes that this outcome makes it less likely that housing associations would be able to take on properties in the City created by estate regeneration projects, placing a greater onus on the Council being a direct housing provider itself.

On the subject of estate regeneration, Council pledges its support and thanks to members of the Townhill Park stakeholder group. It also pledges full backing for the newly formed stakeholder group in Millbrook chaired by Cllr Cathie McEwing and

welcomes that residents and other local stakeholders will take a leading role in shaping the estate's future”.

With the consent of the Mayor, Honorary Alderman Baillie addressed the Council on concerns regarding the estate regeneration programme.

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE MOTION WAS DECLARED CARRIED
RESOLVED that the motion be approved.

(b) Southampton’s Heritage

Councillor Bogle moved and Councillor Tucker seconded:

This Council notes that Southampton benefits from a rich and varied history, and that there is a strong interest in heritage in the City, illustrated by the many groups and initiatives that already exist.

The Council seeks to build on these strengths to ensure Southampton makes the most of its heritage to the benefit of the local economy, civic pride and as a means of attracting visitors and investment.

The Council will work together with its partners to incorporate the promotion of Southampton’s heritage into the following areas:

- Economic development
- Tourism and the visitor economy
- Boosting civic pride
- Events and cultural developments
- City branding

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE MOTION WAS DECLARED CARRIED
RESOLVED that the motion be approved.

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

It was noted that no questions to the Chairs of the Committees or the Mayor had been received.

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

It was noted that the following changes to the appointments to Committees, Sub-Committees and other bodies had been made:

Councillor Thomas had been appointed to the Licensing Committee;

Councillor Morrell had been appointed to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee;

Councillor Parnell had replaced Councillor B Harris on South East Employers; and

Mr David Basson had been re-appointed as the Council's Designated Independent Person for the period July 2015 - July 2018.

34. GENERAL FUND REVENUE OUTTURN 2014/15

The Council agreed to debate the business under minutes 34 – 38 together and therefore agreed to suspend Council procedure Rules 14.2, 14.5, 14.6, 14.7, 14.8, 14.9 and 16.2 to allow any amendments to be debated together and to allow maximum procedural flexibility within the debate for items 34 – 38.

The report of the Cabinet Member for Finance was submitted seeking approval of the General Fund Revenue Outturn 2014/15.

RESOLVED

- (i) That it be noted the final outturn for 2014/15 detailed in Appendix 1 of the report is an under-spend of £13.9M which after allocations to reserves provides a net contribution to general fund balances of £5.7M;
- (ii) That it be noted that including the £5.7M in resolution 1 above, the level of General Fund balances at 31 March 2015 was £19.9M, reducing to £12.8M by 31 March 2016;
- (iii) That the transfer of £6.2M to the Medium Term Financial Risk Reserve and £2.0M to the Taxation Reserve as detailed in paragraph 20 of the report be noted and is in line with the reserves prioritisation as detailed in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) approved by Council in February 2015;
- (iv) That the performance of individual Portfolios in managing their budgets as set out in paragraph 8 of the report be noted together with the major variances in Appendix 2 to the report;
- (v) That the carry forward requests totalling £0.3M as outlined in paragraph 15 and set out in Appendix 3 to the report be approved and funded from reserves; and
- (vi) That the creation of a Revenue Grants Reserve as detailed in paragraph 16 of the report be noted.

35. GENERAL FUND CAPITAL OUTTURN 2014/15

The report of the Cabinet Member for Finance was submitted seeking approval of the General Fund Capital Outturn 2014/15.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the actual capital spending in 2014/15 as shown in paragraphs 4 and 5 of the report be noted together with the major variances detailed in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 to the report;
- (ii) That the revised estimates for 2015/16, adjusted for slippage and re-phasing as shown in Appendix 3 to the report be noted;

- (iii) That the proposed capital financing in 2014/15 as shown in paragraph 12 of the report be approved;
- (iv) That it be noted that the capital programme remains fully funded up to 2017/18 based on the latest forecast of available resources although the forecast could be subject to change; most notably with regard to the value and timing of anticipated capital receipts; and
- (v) That the addition and spend of £3.0M to the Environment and Transport portfolio capital programme in 2014/15 to fund the purchase of 10 refuse collection vehicles and 65 other vehicles to be funded by council resources be approved.

36. COLLECTION FUND OUTTURN 2014/15

The report of the Chief Financial Officer was submitted concerning the actual payments made to and from the collection fund during the 2014/15 financial year.

RESOLVED that the accounts for the Collection Fund in 2014/15 as shown in Appendix 1 to the report be noted.

37. REVIEW OF PRUDENTIAL LIMITS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2014/15

The report of the Chief Financial Officer was submitted concerning the treasury management activities for 2014/15.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Treasury Management (TM) activities for 2014/15 and the outturn on the Prudential Indicators be noted;
- (ii) That it be noted the continued proactive approach to TM had led to reductions in borrowing costs and safeguarded investment income during the year; and
- (iii) That the revised Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy as detailed in Appendix 4 of the report be approved and delegated authority be granted to the Chief Financial Officer to make any future changes which benefit the authority and to report back at the next Treasury update.

38. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN 2014/15

The report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainability was submitted detailing the level of spend on the Housing Revenue Account for the financial year 2014/15.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the HRA revenue outturn for the financial year 2014/15, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, and the working balance at the end of the year of £2,000,000 be noted;
- (ii) that the HRA capital outturn for the financial year 2014/15, as summarised in paragraph 12 of the report be noted;
- (iii) that the amendments to schemes in the HRA Capital Programme for 2015/16, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report to take account of the slippage and re-phasing in 2014/15 be approved; and
- (iv) that the 2014/15 capital financing, as set out in paragraph 17 of the report, be noted and further that the use of available resources would be reviewed as part of the next full update of the HRA Business Plan later in 2015.

39. NEW ARTS COMPLEX PROJECT

The report of the Leader of the Council was submitted seeking additional funding to ensure the delivery of the project.

RESOLVED

- (i) that in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules, an additional sum of £1,959,000 be added to the Leader's Capital Programme for delivery of the New Arts Complex Project and that this be funded from Council resources;
- (ii) that the Chief Financial Officer be granted delegated authority, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to determine the most appropriate way of financing this sum;
- (iii) that it be noted that the scheme value changes from £23,150,000 to £25,109,000, with a revised phasing of £9,458,000 in prior years, £10,457,000 in 2015/16, £5,016,000 in 2016/17 and £178,000 in 2017/18; and
- (iv) that delegated authority be granted to the Head of Leisure, Culture, Planning and Transport to complete all operational matters including the granting of leases.

NOTE: Councillor Pope abstained from voting on the above matter.