
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
21 NOVEMBER 2018

Present:

The Mayor, Councillor Barnes-Andrews
The Sheriff, Councillor P Baillie
Councillors J Baillie, Bell, Mrs Blatchford, Bogle, Chaloner, Coombs, Fielker, Fitzhenry, Fuller, Furnell, Galton, Guthrie, Hammond, Hannides, B Harris, L Harris, Harwood, Houghton, Jordan, Kataria, Kaur, Keogh, Laurent, Leggett, McEwing, Mintoff, Mitchell, Morrell (except 53 (part), 54-64), Murphy, Noon, Dr Paffey, Parnell (except 52 (part), 53-64), Payne, Pope (except 52 (part), 53-64), Rayment (except 62-64), Savage, Shields, Streets, Taggart, Vassiliou, Whitbread, White and Wilkinson

49. APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies had been received from Councillors Claisse, D Thomas and T Thomas.

50. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19th September, 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

51. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND LEADER

- (i) The Mayor announced the passing of former City Councillor Richard Bates who sadly passed away peacefully on 27th September, 2018 aged 92. He served as Leader of the Council from 1992-94. As a mark of respect Council stood for a minute's silence.
- (ii) The Mayor expressed his thanks and gratitude to all those involved with the arrangements for this year's commemorations on Remembrance Sunday. Thankfully the rain held off to enable respects to be paid at 11.00am. I have received messages of appreciation from many people who attended.
- (iii) The Mayor was pleased to announce that Southampton and Fareham Legal Services Partnership had been awarded the prestigious Local Government Legal Team of the Year for 2018.

I am very pleased to announce that Southampton and Fareham Legal Services Partnership have been awarded the prestigious Local Government Legal Team of the Year for 2018.

The judges stated that "the Legal Service Partnership takes a whole service approach to supporting clients, this approach was very evident from the additional evidence provided; particularly noted was the letter received from the Leader of Fareham Borough Council; also, the testimonials provided from colleagues in Trading Standards and the Southampton Port Health Authority.

The projects that particularly interested us and that we thought were very innovative were the Wellborne New Garden Village, the work that has taken place on the clean air zone and the secondary schools, SEND and school transport reviews. This is particularly interesting as it involved the delivery of new learning environments and the expansion of city centre schools to meet new community demand.

The testimonial provided by Rosie Zambra Transactions and Universal Services, relating to the seizure of a consignment of kratom mitragyna spciosa and its eventual destruction following two years of court process finally ending in the Court of Appeal was also particularly noteworthy as these proceedings were supported throughout by the internal legal service with some support from Counsel.

Conclusion

“The team takes a whole service approach to supporting clients amply evidenced by a range of testimonials. The team has worked on several very innovative and hugely beneficial community impact projects, together with significant case law proceedings. This team is hugely deserving of the LLG Local Government Legal Team of the Year 2018”

I would like to present the award to Richard Ivory, Director of Legal and Governance, Sarita Riley, Service Lead for the Partnership and the Legal Services Team Leaders if they can step forward please.

52. DEPUTATIONS, PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- (i) The Council received and noted a deputation from Mr Ian Loynes concerning Hate Crime.
- (ii) The Council received and noted a deputation from Mrs Sue Atkins concerning proposals on how the Council can set a budget to protect jobs and services in the City.
- (iii) The Council received and noted a deputation from Mr Harvey Morgan and Mr Donald Hedges concerning keeping the Rest Homes open.

The Council received the following Petition which under the Council’s Procedure Rules were qualifying petitions which must be debated at Council:

- (i) Save Council owned care homes: Glen Lee and Holcroft House containing 1520 signatures.

In accordance with the Council Procedure Rule 13.2 “Motions without Notice” the Mayor used his discretion to allow a motion in the name of Councillor Hammond and seconded by Councillor Rayment.

Motion to read:-

Having received the petition, listened to the petitioner’s deputation and debated the matter Council resolves to consider the petition as part of the budget consultation process.

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE MOTION WAS DECLARED CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the motion be approved.

The Council agreed to bring forward the questions received on notice to the Executive item 5 on the Council agenda, in the name of Councillors Fitzhenry, Hannides, White, Fuller, P Baillie, J Baillie and Galton.

1. Care Homes – Removal of Budget Savings

Given the level of public and staff concern raised on the proposed closure of our care homes will the leader remove these savings proposals from their budget consultation immediately?

Answer

No. People are encouraged to respond to the public consultation, which closes on 16 January 2019. The results of the consultation will be used to inform the budget decision in February.

2. Care Homes – Third Party Organisation

Prior to these current savings proposals has a public or private third party organisation been approached in the last 3 months, to either take over or joint venture with the council on running our homes?

Answer

No.

3. Care Homes – Improve Financial Positions

Exactly what measures have been taken to improve the financial positions of Glen Lee and Holcroft House and when were they taken?

Answer

The measures that have been taken are: recruitment to vacant posts, including the Registered Manager post at Glen Lee; termination of the short-term Quality and Compliance post; robust application of sickness absence policy; review of staff required on each shift while maintaining quality standards; and the approval of a plan to employ extra care staff with the ability to work flexibly across both homes.

Regular financial monitoring and reporting is taking place, as it is with all services, to ensure that the current position is understood by the team and measures to avert unnecessary cost are being carried out wherever possible.

4. Care Homes – Projected in year overspends

What are the current projected in year overspends for each home and what measures have been taken to improve this situation?

Answer

The projected in year overspend for Holcroft House is £229,000 and for Glen Lee is £360,000, as at month 6.

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Regular financial monitoring and reporting is taking place, as it is with all services, to ensure that the current position is understood by the team and measures to avert unnecessary cost are being carried out wherever possible.

5. Care Homes – Alternative Options

Have you asked officers to explore and cost other options besides closure of the homes?

Answer

Yes. The consultation on the future of the homes sets out a number of alternative options. At my request, officers have responded to early consultation feedback by setting up a task and finish group to explore ideas that have been put forward.

6. Care Homes – Occupancy

What is the average occupancy of each home over the last two years?

Answer

The average occupancy for 2016-2017:

Glen Lee 85.8%
Holcroft House 92.4%

The average occupancy for 2017-2018:

Glen Lee 78.7%
Holcroft House 94.6%

The average occupancy for April 2018 – October 2018:

Glen Lee 49.4%
Holcroft House 94.8%

7. Care Homes – Level of occupancy at Glen Lee

The Levels of occupancy at Glen Lee have been low for some time. What actions have been taken to improve this?

Answer

Admissions to Glen Lee were suspended from 5 January 2018 to 25 April 2018 while quality improvements were carried out in response to a safeguarding investigation. Between April and August 2018, the home was limited to a maximum of one new admission per week to allow time for the quality improvements to become embedded.

Since then, until these proposals were brought forward, where a permanent residential placement has been considered necessary, the council's adult social work teams were instructed to consider a placement at Glen Lee (or Holcroft House) before other residential placements, taking into account family preferences.

The home has also been used to provide short stay placements and respite.

8. Care Homes – Glen Lee – External Consultancy Company

At Glen Lee following an inadequate rating SCC employed the services of an external consultancy company to run the home; how long did the contract run, what were the objectives and what was the increased costs?

Answer

An external consultancy company was not used to run the home.

An interim Registered Manager was employed via the council's contract with Hays from January to September 2018 in order to oversee the implementation of an improvement plan and to carry out the duties of a registered manager. The cost of this was £79,700 including the employment agency overheads. This was the market rate for the level of skills that were urgently required.

An external company was commissioned to carry out two mock CQC inspections, in order to provide assurance in advance of an external inspection. The cost of these was £1,590.

The objective was to ensure the home was providing a good standard of care to its residents, following a rating of 'requires improvement' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The objective was met and the scheme was rated 'good' by the CQC in September 2018.

9. Care Homes – Average cost of care

What is the average cost/person in the homes and how does that compare approximately with that currently commissioned for a similar service by SCC?

Answer

The average cost per person for 2017/18 was £1,116 per week, as reported as part of the Adult Social Care Financial return. This is calculated by taking into account the total cost of the homes in 2017/18 divided by the number of client weeks.

The average cost of a similar service commissioned by the council is £547 per week. This exact cost depends on individual assessed need. The weekly cost for residential care for people without challenging behaviour are based on two tiers (tier one and tier

two). These tiers apply to Glen Lee and Holcroft House. Tier one average contract rate is £474.18 and tier two at mid point average cost is £562.09. The top tier two cost is £650.

10. Care Homes – Staffing Budgets

Can you explain how the staffing budgets for Glen Lee and Holcroft House are almost identical given one is half full and the other at near capacity?

Answer

The staffing budgets are calculated based on the maximum number of residents that each home is registered with the Care Quality Commission to support (34 at Holcroft House and 33 at Glen Lee).

11. Care Homes – ‘Top Up’ care packages

It has been indicated that should closure take place then SCC would 'Top Up' care packages for those displaced; what is the maximum figure expected?

Answer

This will depend on individual assessments and preferences.

People whose costs are currently funded by the council following a financial assessment, would continue to have their cost of care funded by the council.

Where people contribute to the cost of their care, or are self funders, they will not have to pay any more unless their financial circumstances change.

The weekly costs for residential care for people without challenging behaviour are based on two tiers (tier one and tier two). These tiers apply to the current residents at Glen Lee and Holcroft House. The current top of tier two contract rate is £650.

12. Care Homes – Medicine Management

Is the Cabinet Member satisfied with the level of medicine management in Homes?

Answer

Yes, the council meets its requirements as confirmed by the Care Quality Commission during its latest inspections and audited by the Integrated Commissioning Unit.

13. Care Homes – Contingency Plans

What contingency plans exist should other providers close after Glen Lee & Holcroft House have closed?

Answer

We have a comprehensive protocol and procedures to manage situations relating to provider failures and other issues. It is reviewed regularly taking into account market conditions and changes to providers.

14. Care Homes – Policy – Long Term Admissions

Has not your policy of stopping new long term admissions to Glen Lee & Holcroft House not made their closure more likely?

Answer

No. Short stay and respite placements continue to be offered at Glen Lee and Holcroft House.

It is not considered to be in people's best interests to offer permanent placements while the future of the homes is under review.

This policy does not make the closure of the homes more likely, but will help avoid unnecessary concern should the decision be made to close in February. When considering the future of the homes, this will be on the assumption of 95% occupancy rather than current or past occupancy levels.

15. Care Homes – Reason for Closure

When you shut Woodside Lodge you initially stated it was due to low occupancy, then because it wasn't modern enough and then we discovered you had planned to redevelop the site all along – what is the real reason for your plans to close the last 2 Council owned care homes now?

Answer

The proposal is under consideration for a number of reasons, including:

- Demand for residential care is decreasing as many people want to continue living at home for as long as possible, or to access alternatives like Housing with Care or Shared Lives schemes. As a result, there is an over provision of residential care placements in the local area.
- Both Glen Lee and Holcroft House are dated buildings, and whilst the quality of the care by staff is good, the facilities no longer meet modern standards.
- Bringing Glen Lee and Holcroft House up to this standard, or remodelling them to provide more intensive support for people with more complex needs, would mean fewer people could be supported in those homes. Therefore, some people currently living there would have to move into alternative accommodation, and others would experience disruption whilst the works were being completed. It would also require significant investment.
- There are other providers who are able to support people who need residential care, in high quality and modern environments. This would allow the council to focus on housing with care and community-based services.
- This would enable the council to make savings. As a result of reductions in funding from central government, the council has had to make £136.4 million savings over the last seven years and we need to make another £15.05 million savings by

2020/21. Closing these homes would save the council £1.3 million a year, which would help us to deliver a balanced budget.

53. EXECUTIVE BUSINESS REPORT

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 submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.1.

16. Itchen Bridge Fees

What is the justification for raising the fees on the Itchen Bridge?

Answer

The toll fee has not been increased since 1997. One of the key reasons for the toll (as outlined in Section 22 of the Hampshire Act 1983) is to manage congestion using this route.

The toll would not be effective at managing congestion if it was not increased in line with inflation at appropriate intervals.

We are protecting city residents from the increase in the toll by maintaining the discount that is obtained through use of the Smart Cities card.

17. Charges on Citizens and Businesses

Does the Cabinet Member not accept that the Labour group have increased and have proposed to introduce practically every charge they can on the residents and businesses of this city and it is unfair to continue in this way?

Answer

Fees and charges are kept under review. For statutory services the fees are often set and cannot be varied. However, a range of non-statutory services are provided in a competitive environment which regulates the charges as well as driving efficiencies and customer service. Non statutory services are expected to at least cover their costs.

18. Itchen Bridge – Effect of Charges

What will be the effect, of the increased charges on the Itchen Bridge, to the air quality along the existing AQMA in Bitterne Road West?

Answer

It is proposed that only non-residents will be required to pay the increase in the toll fee and they may opt to use an alternative route. However, no significant or lasting impact on vehicle numbers or air quality along Bitterne Road West is anticipated. The toll may

discourage private vehicle use and encouraging the use of public transport and sustainable travel which would help to improve air quality.

Measures to reduce pollution levels in our Air Quality Management Areas and other sensitive locations have been successful in recent years and we continue to see declining levels air pollution. It is not anticipated that the proposed Itchen toll increase will have any negative impact on this.

19. Itchen Bridge – Impact of extra charges

How much longer will it take people to find the extra coin to pay your proposed Itchen Bridge toll increase and what impact will this have on bridge queues and therefore air quality in the vicinity of the Itchen Bridge?

Answer

The proposed increase in toll fees will be advertised in advance of implementation.

It is also anticipated an increase in residents up taking the Smart Cities card to obtain the discount offered thus reducing coins being needed.

The Service Manager for the Itchen Bridge does not anticipate significant additional time being taken by drivers to find the correct toll fee especially once it has been embedded and therefore no concern in relation to queues or impact on Air Quality.

A project team is currently investigating options for alternative payment methods on the Bridge.

20. Itchen Bridge – Overpayments

How many people already over pay to cross the Itchen Bridge?

Answer

The Council does not collect data on overpayments made at the Bridge. The Council has introduced a Smart Cities Card to allow people to make the exact payment from their Itchen Bridge account. This Smart Cities card is available for both residents and non-residents to use to pay the correct amount whilst crossing the bridge.

We plan to do a take up campaign to ensure more people take up the benefit of the Smart Cities Card.

21. Itchen Bridge – Upgrading Payment System

Will the council be upgrading the payment system on the Itchen Bridge to take contactless payments?

Answer

The Council are in the process of reviewing options to modernise the available methods of payment for the Itchen Bridge. An options paper is being drafted and the introduction of contactless payments is being considered as part of this review process.

If after considering the options and we want to introduce contactless there will possibly be an administration cost to the Council.

In order to find the best solution the review will assess each option against a number of criteria including impact on traffic flow.

54. MOTIONS

(a) Councillor McEwing moved and Councillor Fuller seconded.

This Council notes:

1. The obligations its owes to the Armed Forces community within Southampton City Council as enshrined in the Armed Forces Covenant; that the Armed Forces community should not face disadvantage in the provision of services and that special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given the most.
2. The absence of definitive and comprehensive statistics on the size or demographics of the Armed Forces community within Southampton City Council. This includes serving Regular and Reserve personnel, veterans, and their families.
3. That the availability of such data would greatly assist the Council, local partner agencies, the voluntary sector, and national Government in the planning and provision of services to address the unique needs of the Armed Forces community within Southampton City Council.

In light of the above, this Council moves to support and promote The Royal British Legion's call to include a new topic in the 2021 census that concerns military service and membership of the Armed Forces community. We further call upon the UK Parliament, which will approve the final census questionnaire through legislation in 2019, to ensure that the 2021 census includes questions concerning our Armed Forces community.

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOITE THE MOTION WAS DECLARED CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the motion be approved.

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

It was noted that no requests for Questions from Members to the Chairs of Committees or the Mayor had been received.

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

It was noted that there were no appointments to Committees, Sub-Committees or Other Bodies.

57. APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

The Leader of the Council reported to Council that the Chief Officer Employment Panel met on the 15th November, 2018. Shortlisting for the permanent role of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service was completed and interviews held for the role. Following interview the Panel selected Sandy Hopkins, as a suitable candidate for the position.

In accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 the recommendation was confirmed by Council that Sandy Hopkins be appointed as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service effective from 1st January, 2019.

58. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME

The report of the Director of Legal and Governance was submitted seeking a review of Members' Allowances, having regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To consider, but not accept, the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel as set out in the Panel's report, save in respect of an annual uplift in the Living Wage.
- (ii) To adopt the draft LGA Maternity and Paternity policy and resolve that members of either sex taking advantage of the policy are not compulsorily required to attend meetings as required by Section 85 Local Government Act 1972 ie the "6 month" rule.
- (iii) To thank the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel for their work in reviewing the Members' Allowance Scheme.

59. ADOPTION OF GAMBLING ACT 2005 LICENSING PRINCIPLES

The report of the Service Manager for Licensing was submitted seeking approval to the adoption of the Gambling Act 2005 Licensing Principles.

RESOLVED to consider the revised Gambling Act SLP attached to the report as appendix 1 and adopt the revised Gambling Act SLP with effect from 31st January 2019 and for a period of three years.

60. ADDITION OF FUNDS TO HIGHWAYS CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The report of the Cabinet Member for Transport and Public Realm was submitted seeking approval for the addition of £2.98m, with approval to spend, to the Highways Capital Programme in 2018/19.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To approve an increase to the Highways Capital Programme totalling £2.9m in 2018/19.
- (ii) To grant approval to spend of the additional £2.98m in 2018/19.

61. PURCHASE OF NEW REFUSE COLLECTION VEHICLES

Report of the Cabinet Member for Transport and Public Realm was submitted seeking approval for £2.9m capital funding to enable the purchase of 17 Refuse Collection Vehicles.

RESOLVED to allocate £2.9m capital funding to enable the purchase of 17 Refuse Collection Vehicles.

62. TOWNHILL PARK INFRASTRUCTURE FUND AND FUTURE PROGRAMME

Report of the Cabinet Member for Homes and Culture was submitted detailing the Housing Infrastructure Fund Offer and commitment to future delivery of the regeneration scheme.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To approve the acceptance of the £3.75m offer of grant from Homes England Housing Infrastructure Fund subject to the satisfactory agreement of conditions with Homes England in recommendation (i) to Cabinet.
- (ii) To note, subject to match funding being confirmed, approval will be sought as part of the Capital Programme update to Council in February 2019, to add (and spend) £3.75m to the Transport and Public Realm Capital Programme. This would be phased 2018-19 £70,000, 2019-20 £2,210,000 and 2020-21 £1,470,000, to be funded from the Homes England Grant.

63. REVIEW OF PRUDENTIAL LIMITS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT MIDYEAR REVIEW 2018/19

Report of the Director of Finance and Commercialisation was submitted providing an overview of the Treasury Management activities and performance for 2018/19 against the approved Prudential Indicators for External Debt and Treasury Management.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To note the current and forecast position with regards to these indicators and approve any changes.
- (ii) To note that the continued proactive approach to Treasury Management has led to reductions in borrowing costs and safeguarded investment income during the year.
- (iii) To note the cost implications of the capital programme on the Council as detailed in table 4 of the report. These have been taken into account in the revenue budget.
- (iv) To continue to delegate authority to the S151 Officer to make any future changes which benefit the authority and to report back at the meeting of Full Council on 20th February, 2019.

64. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - SUMMARY OF CALL-IN ACTIVITY

Council noted that there had been no use of the Call-in procedure since last report to Council.