NORWICH City Council

MINUTES

Council

14:00 to 14:10 **1 December 2021**

Present: Councillors Maguire (Lord Mayor), Davis, Galvin, Giles, Grahame, Harris, Hampton, Huntley, Kendrick, Maxwell, Osborn, Schmierer, and Waters

Apologies: Councillors Ackroyd, Bogelein, Button, Brociek-Coulton, Champion, Carlo, Driver, Everett, Fulton-McAlister (M) , Fulton-McAlister (E), Haynes, Jones, Lubbock, Manning, Oliver, Packer, Peek, Price, Sands (M), Sands (S), Stonard, Stutely, Thomas (Va), Thomas (Vi) Wright and Youssef.

1. Lord Mayor's Announcement

The Lord Mayor explained the procedures for this formal meeting of the council, convened to confirm the votes cast at the informal meeting of the council on 30 November 2021; and confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

2. Public questions / petitions

Public questions and petitions had been heard at the informal meeting on 30 November 2021.

3. Declarations of interests

Councillors Kendrick and Waters declared a non

4. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings held on 28 and 29 September 2021.

5. Health and safety compliance in council homes

RESOLVED, unanimously, to

1) Approve that the HRA capital programme is adjusted by £1m in 2021/22 and £1m in 2022/23 to support delivery of capital upgrade works relating to the Compliance Improvement Plan as set out in paragraph 48 of the 12 November cabinet report; and

2) note that quarterly progress reports against the Compliance Improvement Plan will be presented to cabinet.

6. Licensing Act 2003 – Statement of Licensing Policy

RESOLVED, unanimously, to adopt the Statement of Licensing Policy.

7. Polling district and polling places review 2021

RESOLVED, unanimously, to approve:-

1) the polling scheme as recommended by the polling district and place working; and

2) the polling district boundaries changes in Crome, Mancroft and University wards

8. Constitutional amendments

The Lord Mayor explained that as he had received a request for the votes to be taken in parts, with recommendation 1(a) taken first, then recommendations 1(b) and 2 would be taken together.

RESOLVED*,* with 4 voting against and 9 voting in favour to adopt the proposed changes to the Questions by Councillor Procedure in the Procedure Rules by amending paragraph 51 so that questions at Council may only be asked to the Leader or Cabinet members.

It was then,

RESOLVED, unanimously, to:

1) (b) amend paragraph 56 to read:

   "Written replies will be given to questions by the relevant Cabinet member or committee chair or their nominee but shall not be the subject of any further debate. *Answers should provide a full response to questions in a succinct way.* If the reply cannot be given at the council meeting, a written answer will be provided to the questioner within 10 working days of the meeting."

2) Adopt the proposed changes to the Motions on Notice Procedure in the Procedure Rules as suggested in Appendix 1

9. Motions

(Notice of the following motions, 9(a) to 9(f), below, as set out on the agenda, had been received in accordance with the council's constitution.)

(With two hours having passed since the beginning of the meeting, the Lord Mayor asked if the remaining business could be taken as unopposed. Councillor Waters opposed item 9(e) and Councillor Jones opposed item 9(f).)

9 (a) Motion: Veterans

(Proposer Councillor Mike Sands, seconder Councillor Davis. Unopposed business)

"This council supports our Armed Forces, forces families and veterans living in city. We are proud that British Forces are respected worldwide for their professionalism and excellence. Over the last year our Armed Forces have shown just how indispensable they are to the Nation's security, from recently airlifting British nationals out of Afghanistan to driving NHS ambulances and delivering vital fuel. Just as our Armed Forces work to keep us all safe and our country secure, so we must do all we can to support them both in our city and beyond.

Council **RESOLVES** to:

1) note that;

a) The Armed Forces Bill, which will soon return to the Commons from the Lords, provides an important opportunity to tangibly improve the lives of our service personnel, veterans, and their families. The current Armed Forces Covenant is not currently enshrined in law allowing for wide variations in its interpretation at local level. When this is combined with years of government austerity it results in many local authorities being forced to concentrate ever more on their basic, statutory services.

b) That following their service, commonwealth veterans can be left with steep financial costs to remain in the UK. Whilst their applications are ongoing, commonwealth veterans are unable to seek employment or claim social security, with many facing NHS bills of tens of thousands of pounds for life saving treatment following service that placed their own lives at risk for the benefit of us all.

2) ask the Leader to write to: -

a) The Minister of State for Immigration, The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence People and Veterans, and our two local MPs to pledge support for the incredible service of men and women from the Commonwealth and Nepal who have served and do serve in the UK Armed Forces, and the unconscionable way so many of them and their families are being treated. In particular we agree with veterans who believe their right to stay in the UK should be awarded automatically on account of their service and note that the recent government public consultation was insufficient in scope; with the only proposal being to offer a visa fee waiver after 12 years' service – an unduly high threshold that will alleviate costs for only a fraction of service personnel. Council believes that only meaningful reform will deliver justice, and that means introducing a free and equitable route to citizenship that incorporates families, and – as we as nation do not know how many have been affected by

this injustice – believe that the government should establish a dedicated unit to assist veterans, similar to the Windrush Taskforce.

b) The minister of state for immigration and minister for veterans to pledge our support for all commonwealth veterans who have served a minimum of 4 years to be granted automatic and free of charge right to remain in the UK and that any veteran who completes 12 years of service to be automatically given British Citizenship without charge.

c) The defence secretary to request that a £35m fund to support British veterans and Afghan interpreters is delivered (through funding recovered from cancelled MoD interpreter contracts) for grants to charities and Local Authorities in England to provide mental health support services for veterans and support for those Afghan nationals who have relocated to the UK through the ARAP scheme.

3) develop, working with the veteran's champion and cabinet member for social inclusion an enhanced Norwich Armed Forces Community Covenant, to complement the Armed Forces Covenant. "

9(b) Motion: Local energy business campaign

(Proposer Councillor Hampton, seconder Councillor Stutely. Unopposed business)

The following amendment was received from Councillor Osborn:-

Inserting the words "**to become a licensed supplier**" after "**running costs**" in resolution 2a).

Inserting the words "**and the risks of traded power market volatility**" after "**local customers**" in resolution 2a).

Replacing the word "**impossible**" with the words "**very difficult**" in resolution 2a).

Removing the word "**financial**" in resolution 2b).

Inserting the words "**and recognising the benefit their investments would bring locally**" after "**electricity supplier's operation**" in resolution 2b).

Inserting the words "**also support emissions reduction locally**" after "**if they wished, and**" in resolution 2b).

Inserting the words "**go towards creating a resilient, smart local energy system, benefitting energy security**" after "**local services and facilities,**" in resolution 2c).

Inserting the words "**used**" before the words "**to reduce local**" in resolution 2c).

As no other member objected, the amendment became part of the substantive motion.

Norwich City Council **RESOLVES** to; -

1) Acknowledge the efforts that this Council has made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy including such programmes as ROAR power, COSY City, Solar Together and Big Switch and Save in recent years.

2) Further recognise:

a) that very large financial setup and running costs to become a licensed supplier involved in selling locally generated renewable electricity to local customers and the risks of traded power market volatility result in it being very difficult for local renewable electricity generators to do so,

b) that making these costs proportionate to the scale of a renewable electricity supplier's operation and recognising the benefit their investments would bring locally would create significant opportunities for local companies and community groups to be providers of locally generated renewable electricity directly to local people, businesses, and organisations, if they wished, and also support emissions reduction locally and

c) that revenues received by such local companies or community groups that chose to become local renewable electricity providers could be used to help improve the local economy, local services and facilities, go towards creating a resilient, smart local energy system, benefitting energy security and used to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions;

d) Notes that the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee, as a result of its 2021 Technological Innovations and Climate Change inquiry, recommended that a Right to Local Supply for local energy suppliers be established to address this;

e) Accordingly resolves to support the Local Electricity Bill, currently supported by a cross-party group of 266 MPs and which, if made law, would establish a Right to Local Supply which would promote local renewable electricity supply by making the setup and running costs of selling renewable electricity to local customers proportionate to the size of the supply company; and

3) Further resolves to

a) inform the local media of this decision,

b) write to local MPs, asking them to support the Bill, and

c) write to the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, Power for People, (at Camden Collective, 5-7 Buck Street, London NW1 8NJ or info@powerforpeople.org.uk) expressing its support.

9(c) Motion: Fireworks

(Proposer Councillor Stutely, seconder Councillor Button. Unopposed business)

RESOLVED that:

This Council **RESOLVES** to:

a) call on the relevant licensing authorities to require all public firework displays within the city boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people.

b) actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks.

c) write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays; and

d) encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display."

9(d) Motion: Anti-social behaviour and residents' feeling of safety

(Proposer Councillor Bogelein, seconder Councillor Osborn. Unopposed business)

The following amendment from Councillor Jones was received:

Inserting the words "**the government and other statutory agencies**" after "**to lobby**" in resolution 2a).

Replacing the words "**for and implementing**" with the words "**to implement**" in resolution 2a).

Inserting the words "**as planned**" after "**introducing**" and the words "**through the developing community safety strategy**" after "**feelings of safety**" in resolution 2b).

Replacing the words "**bringing forward the underspend of the estate aesthetics programme in the coming financial year**" with the words "**giving consideration to taking forward any underspend of the estate aesthetics programme at the end of the financial year**" in resolution 2c).

Replacing the words "**looking at**" with the words "**continuing to look at**" in resolution 2d).

Replacing the words "**using**" with the words "**continuing to work with the police and supporting the use of**" in resolution 2d).

Inserting the words "**giving consideration to, through the review of the HRA Business Plan,**" before the word "**providing**" in resolution 2f).

Replacing the word "**increasing**" with the words "**continuing, increasing and developing**" in resolution 2g).

Inserting the words "**including as part of the Safer Neighbourhood Initiative**" after "**together with officers**" in resolution 2g).

Inserting the words "**alongside those existing**" after the words "**producing a strategy**" in resolution 2i).

So that the revised motion becomes:-

"The level of anti-social behaviour recorded in Norwich varies greatly in different parts of the city. The percentage of residents who feel safe in their communities also varies and it is largely the case that council tenants feel less safe than residents in other forms of housing.

RESOLVED that:

1) Council notes:

   a) Residents' feelings of safety and anti-social behaviour can be linked to the state of cleanliness and upkeep of an area.

   b) Anti-social behaviour is the one category that has been marked as red on the council's risk register since the introduction of the new risk register.

   c) The council has recently changed its approach to responding to anti-social behaviour in order to improve the experience of those who report anti-social behaviour to the council.

2) Council resolves to ask cabinet to consider:

   a) continuing to lobby the government and other statutory agencies to implement measures which address the structural drivers behind anti-social behaviour;

   b) introducing, as planned, a separate theme in the covid recovery plan to look at actions that reduce anti-social behaviour and increase feelings of safety, through the developing community safety strategy;

   c) giving consideration to taking forward any underspend of the estate aesthetics programme at the end of the financial year to address issues of cleanliness and upkeep on council estates, which can influence anti-social behaviour and feelings of safety;

   d) continuing to opportunities to increase CCTV coverage, where the evidence indicates a demand and to increase the monitoring of CCTV in line with requests from the public, councillors and the police;

e) continuing to work with the police and supporting use of partial premises closure orders for public spaces such as staircases which suffer from frequent use of drug dealing and drug use;

f) giving consideration to, through the review of the HRA Business Plan, providing the budget to increase the number of safer neighbourhood coordinators;

g) continuing, increasing and developing resident engagement around anti-social behaviour through regular resident audits together with officers;

h) communicating with residents the option of a community trigger as a way to escalate situations around anti-social behaviour, where action by the council and partner agencies has not resulted in any improvement;

i) producing a strategy, alongside those existing, for designing out crime in council-owned parks and public spaces."

9(e) Motion: Housing safety compliance

(Proposer Councillor Lubbock, seconder Councillor Ackroyd.)

"In October 2021 the council wrote to 17,000 tenants and leaseholders to inform them of its failure to carry out legal safety checks on properties that it has responsibility for.

The verdict of the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) is that 'Norwich City Council has failed to meet statutory health and safety requirements in relation to fire, electrical and water safety....and as a consequence there was the potential for serious detriment to tenants.'

New governance arrangements, comprehensive plans and proposals are being developed to return NCC homes to full compliance, including the creating of a Health and Safety Compliance Board to oversee the process of implementing a 'Compliance Improvement Plan'.

Council **RESOLVES** to increase the membership of the Health and Safety Compliance Board to include members who are external to the administration in order to improve scrutiny, openness and transparency. This increase will include representatives of tenants and leaseholders - the voice of those who receive the services - and members of the opposition parties, for at least 2 years or the duration of the Health and Safety Compliance Board."

With four voting in favour and nine voting against, the motion was lost.

(As the meeting the previous evening had last more than three hours, motion 10 (f) on the agenda would be taken at the next meeting of full council.)

The meeting was closed.

LORD MAYOR