
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 23 MARCH 2022

Present:

The Mayor, Councillor Houghton
The Sheriff, Councillor Rayment
Councillors J Baillie, P Baillie, Bell, Bogle, Bunday, Coombs, Cooper,
Denness (min no's 61-66 and 68-75) Fielker, Fitzhenry, Fuller, D Galton,
G Galton, S Galton (min no's 61-73(b)), Guest, Guthrie, Hammond,
Hannides, Kataria, Kaur, Laurent, Leggett, Magee, McEwing, Mitchell,
Moulton (min no's 61-73(b)), Noon, Dr Paffey, J Payne, W Payne, Prior,
Renyard, Savage, Shields, Spicer, Stead, Streets, Vaughan (min no's 61-
71), White and Windle

61. APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies had been received from Councillors Harwood, Vassiliou, B Harris, L Harris and Margetts.

62. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 17th November 2021, Special and Extraordinary meetings held 24th January 2022 and Budget Council held on 23rd February 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

63. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND LEADER

(i) Last meeting of the Municipal Year

Members this is the last meeting of the Municipal Year. I thank all members of the Council for their hard work and contributions made during this past year in sometimes unusual circumstances.

We are aware that Councillor Chaloner has resigned and there is currently a vacancy in the Shirley Ward and the by-election for this will form part of the May Local Elections. Some Councillors are not seeking re-election Councillors, Hammond and Beryl Harris, we thank them for their service to their communities and wish them well.

Goodbye to James Strachan, Stephanie Ramsey and welcome Adam Wilkinson. Members, some of you may be aware James Strachan is leaving the authority to take up the role of Chief Executive at Eastleigh Borough Council. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his contributions and wish him well in his new role.

In addition, Stephanie Ramsey is retiring from her role as Director of Quality and Integration representing both the CCG and City Council. Stephanie has been part of both organisations for a very long time, and I would like to take the opportunity to wish her a very happy retirement. In addition to the Mayor and other Members of the Council, the Sheriff, Councillor Rayment paid tribute to

Stephanie Ramsey and wished to place on record her thanks for Stephanie's contributions to the City and wished her a long and happy retirement.

Welcome to Adam Wilkinson who has taken up the role of Interim Executive Director Growth following the departure of Kate Martin.

(ii) Ukraine and Southampton Local Response

The Mayor paid tribute to all those in the Ukraine and Southampton's Local Response to the situation and noted there was a motion regarding this issue later in today's meeting.

(iii) City of Culture Final Four

The Leader announced that Southampton City of Culture 2025 bid had made the final four and the winner would be announced in May.

64. DEPUTATIONS, PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Council received and noted the following deputations:-

- (i) Mr and Mrs Black- Misuse of Fireworks and Impact on Animals
- (ii) Mr Hodge – E Scooters
- (iii) Pat Usher, Rebecca Ruddick and Claire Ballinger – Safer Bus Stops
- (iv) Katherine Barbour – Insulation in Homes
- (v) Lindsi Bluemel – High Rate of Cyclist Deaths in the City
- (vi) Christell Blunden – Southampton City National Parks Project

The Council received and debated the following Petition which under the Council's Procedure Rules was a qualifying petition which must be debated at Council having triggered the threshold of 1500 verified signatures.

- (i) Southampton City Council implement both the proposed anti-motorcycle installation in the 13 strategic "hot spots" as well as a commitment to tidy and repair the pathways that interconnect the Estates, allowing resident to enjoy the paths designed for walkers and active travel by both young and old.

Note: In responding to the Petition Councillor Moulton recommended that a Task and Finish Group be appointed immediately with representation from Community Safety Team, Police, Highways and Ward Councillors to look at the issues and potential funding opportunities from the Community Fund.

65. PAY POLICY 2022-2023

Report of the Leader of the Council recommending approval of the Pay Policy 2022-2023.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Pay Policy statement for 2022-2023 be approved;
- (ii) That the continued implementation of the Living Wage Foundation increase as the minimum hourly rate for NJC evaluated posts from 1st April 2021 onwards be noted; and

- (iii) To note that the cost-of-living award for 2021 as part of the pay agreement for NJC evaluated roles and Chief Officer and Chief Executive pay have been agreed; implementation of this is delegated to the Service Director HR and OD to be applied. Negotiations for the 2022 pay award are underway; the budget proposals for 2022 included an indicative uplift of up to 2.5%, for indicative costings an average figure of 1.5% has been applied across all pay points.

66. UPDATE ON THE SOLENT FREEPORT BUSINESS CASE PROPOSALS AND ANY ASSOCIATED IMPLICATIONS FOR MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

Report of the Cabinet Member for Growth seeking decision on the Solent Freeport proposals, support for the submission of the full business case and implications for the Council's medium term financial plan.

Council noted the following updated figures to paragraph 16 and 17 of the report since it had been published:-

- Total UK jobs – **56,000** vs. *Revised*, draft FBC total UK jobs – **32,600**
- Solent jobs (OBC / Council Report) – **28,400** vs. *Revised*, draft FBC Solent jobs – **16,000**
- Solent GVA has been revised downwards from **£2 billion** (OBC / Council report) vs. **£1 billion** in the draft FBC.

In order to receive additional confidential information regarding the freeport debate the Mayor moved in accordance with Categories 3 (financial and business affairs), and 7A (obligation of confidentiality) of paragraph 10.4 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, as contained in the Council's Constitution, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this to be provided. It was not in the public interest to disclose this information as it contained confidential and commercially sensitive information.

Council noted that Appendix 1 of the report had been removed since publication as it was out of date.

RESOLVED

- (i) Council supports and endorses the strategic submission of the Full Business Case (FBC), in April 2022, as a Board Member and partner of Solent Freeport Consortium Limited, as part of National Freeport Programme Application process the final agreement of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in relation to retained Business Rates and membership on the proposed Freeport Investment Committee.
- (ii) To delegate authority to the Acting Chief Executive to make any minor amendments to the FBC, MOU and associated documents and submit as appropriate after consultation with the Leader of the Council, Executive Director for Finance and Commercialisation and Service Director Legal and Business Operations.

67. CONNECTED SOUTHAMPTON TRANSPORT STRATEGY (LTP4) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2022-2025

Report of the Cabinet Member for Growth seeking approval of the Connected Southampton Transport Strategy (LTP4) Implementation Plan 2022-2025.

RESOLVED: That the Connected Southampton Transport Strategy (LTP) Implementation Plan 2022 – 2025 be approved.

NOTE: Councillor Denness declared a personal and pecuniary interest and left the meeting for consideration of this item.

68. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S STRATEGY 2022-2027

Report of the Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care noting Cabinet approval of the Children and Young People's Strategy 2022-2027 and seeking approval from Council for the Youth Justice Strategic Plan which formed part of the overall strategy and required Council approval.

RESOLVED: that the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2022-2027 be approved.

69. ANNUAL CORPORATE PARENTING REPORT

Report of the Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care seeking approval of the Annual Corporate Parenting Report for September 2020 – August 2021.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Corporate Parenting report for September 2020 – August 2021 be adopted.

70. SAFE CITY STRATEGY 2022-27

Report of the Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture and Heritage seeking approval of the Safe City Strategy 2022-2027.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To adopt the Safe City Strategy 2022-2027; and
- (ii) To delegate authority to the Executive Director Communities, Culture and Homes, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture and Heritage, to make minor changes to the Safe City Strategy 2022-27 during its period of effect.

71. SIGN-UP TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY DECLARATION ON HEALTHY WEIGHT

Report of the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care seeking sign up to the Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That plans for Southampton City Council to sign-up to the Healthy Weight Declaration (HWD) be approved; and
- (ii) That opportunities for Council leaders to promote the HWD ambitions to leaders of other sectors and organisations in the wider system be identified.

72. 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:-

1. Refugees

Question from Councillor Bogle to Councillor Fitzhenry

Can the Leader clarify how Southampton City Council is preparing to support refugees from the Ukraine war?

Answer

Settled Community Support – Our stronger communities team are working with local groups and settled communities to support them, as well as working with the police to monitor and respond to fears about increasing hate crime, Our Future Communities group brings together many of our community, voluntary and faith sector organisations to support information sharing and as we move forward, this group will also support the city's welcome for refugees who are housed under the sponsorship scheme announced by government last week.

Our education team is supporting the distribution of packs to schools to help them with the emotional welfare of children and reviewing school placement availability to be able to accommodate children swiftly when they arrive in the city.

An internal working group of officers from across the Council is meeting regularly and has extended this to key partners such as health and police. As far as we can, with limited information we are planning in partnership to support both host families and refugees to access the help they will need. We expect to have a role in ensuring the safeguarding of families who arrive, linking them to health and other agencies such as the DWP. We understand that we may also have a role in distributing the £350 per month payment that has been promised for host families, but the detail at the time of writing is very limited.

Donations for refugees – the Council opened up St Mary’s leisure centre to assist the Polish Social club manage their donations in the short term and have agreed with the owners of Toys R Us to undertake work to the site to allow the Polish Social Club to move their operation to this much larger more suitable site.

Refugee Support – the Government have announced two schemes and we await further detail on the sponsorship scheme to be able to plan effectively.

- Ukraine Family Scheme - The Ukraine Family Scheme allows family members of British nationals, UK settled persons and certain others to come to or stay in the UK. Ukraine Scheme Guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Local Sponsorship Scheme for Ukraine - This is for Ukrainian Nationals who do not have family in the UK. Homes for Ukraine – Homes for Ukraine – Local Sponsorship Scheme for Ukraine (campaign.gov.uk) and Homes for Ukraine scheme: frequently asked questions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

2. Police Numbers

Question from Councillor Shields to Councillor Vassiliou

What action has the Cabinet Member with responsibility for crime and city safety taken to ensure the 150 additional police officers for the city promised by the Police and Crime Commissioner last year are in place?

Answer

The Leader, Deputy Leader and I have met with the PCC on a number of occasions, both collectively and individually, to highlight the importance of getting more Police Officers in Southampton. At every opportunity we lobby her to ensure we get the highest numbers possible for our City and we will continue to do so.

I am pleased to see that Police numbers have already risen and new police stations are being provided for in the East and West of the City.

I have written to the PCC to clarify the latest position with respect to police numbers and the recruitment plan.

3. Crime

Question from Councillor Shields to Councillor Vassiliou

Can the Cabinet Member with responsibility for crime and city safety advise what explanation has been received from the Police and Crime Commissioner as to why last year Freemantle Ward experienced the highest reported crime rate in the City outside of the two city centre wards of Bargate and Bevois? What action has he taken and what does he propose to do to address this?

Answer

In January 2022 the Safe City partnership provided the annual strategic assessment to the over view and scrutiny committee, and the Safe City Partnership Strategy is here today for Council endorsement. Within both of these reports it is acknowledged that reported crime in 2020/21 – the last set of data that is available – was significantly skewed by the changes to how our society operated and was policed, due to repeated

coronavirus lockdowns as was discussed in some detail at the committee meeting in January.

I have had many discussions with the PCC about crime across Southampton and I am aware that issues such as increases in domestic abuse and domestic flagged crimes, up 35% in Freemantle, and hate crime reporting up 126% in Freemantle, these were also experienced elsewhere in the city, and therefore it is important to have a strategic as well as targeted response to enable change. And whilst at one level it is disappointing to see these increases, I am also encouraged that the victims of these crimes have felt able to come forward to report them as we want to enable the victims of hate crime and domestic abuse to feel safe and to access the support that is on offer, and both of these areas will continue to be features of our future Safe City work with the aim to make our city both objectively and subjectively safer.

4. Outdoor Sports Centre

Question from Councillor Renyard to Councillor Hannides

Can the cabinet member confirm that safety concerns will be addressed in the redevelopment of the Outdoor Sports Centre?

Answer

The improvement plan for the Outdoor Sports Centre will lead to a significant increase in participation across the centre, both during the day and in the evenings. This increase in numbers across the site will result in an increased level of supervision not only by staff but also members of the public. There will also be an increase in lighting and the route to new car parking will be well lit. There is also an increase in the number of facilities, that will also be lit, generally lifting the lighting levels during opening hours. The design of the buildings has given consideration to guidance and advice available from Secure by Design. There is also CCTV on site.

The management contractor will be encouraged to continue to work in partnership with the police to seek to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

5. Rent Arrears

Question from Councillor Mitchell to Councillor Vassiliou

Does the Cabinet Member anticipate a potential uptick in housing rent arrears in the coming months?

Answer

In 2020 following the first lockdown, a decision was taken by the Council to pause all debt collection activity across the council, which unfortunately did result in an increase in rent arrears. I am pleased to say that housing rent arrears decreased between December 2021 and February 2022 and we now have several initiatives that are being put into place to continue this trend over the coming months. This includes offering another day for monthly direct debit payers, a campaign to increase payment by standing orders and assessing whether we can increase payments via APAs (alternative payment arrangements) and aligning resources within the team to create extra capacity to support tenants and negotiate sustainable payment plans to prevent future debt. Clearly the impact of rising costs for all will be kept under review, however, the decision to freeze council rents and service charges, will help mitigate this.

I am confident that with this range of initiatives in place we will continue to be able to support our residents to prioritise their rent payments in the coming months.

6. Post 16 Education

Question from Councillor Paffey to Councillor J Baillie

Could the Cabinet Member please update Council on plans for the sustainability of post-16 education in the city?

Answer

The key factor impacting on the long term plans for post-16 education in Southampton is the report commissioned by the ESFA/DfE by Deloitte which has looked at a range of options including merging City College with one or more other FE institutions along with a rationalisation of sixth form college provision in the City. The report is seriously delayed, but is anticipated to be made public by Easter, although there is no guarantee of this. It is anticipated that any recommendations coming from the report will be fully funded, as currently two of the three colleges are in receipt of emergency government funding.

In the meantime, while the evidence for the report was being gathered, both Itchen and Richard Taunton Colleges have been inspected by Ofsted and graded as Good. This might have an impact on some of the recommendations in the report.

7. Bedford Place

Question from Councillor Noon to Councillor Moulton

Following the considerable and wide support from residents in and around the Polygon area as well as the many visitors to Bedford Place, will the Cabinet member honour public opinion by including a question regarding pedestrianisation of Bedford Place in the upcoming public consultation about the future of this area?

Answer

The Administration are seeking consensus and common ground. The Bedford Place Working Group has worked hard to come forward with proposals which achieve broad support rather than divide opinion. The Bedford Place working group proposals have been unanimously put forward – representing residents, day time businesses and night time businesses. There is no consensus for closing Bedford Place to traffic. More than 50% of businesses object to it. The latest consultation run last summer was the same as the one run prior to May (the results of which have been sent to Cllr Noon) and broadly returned the same results from businesses but with a larger turn out. Whilst a minority of business favoured permanent closure of Bedford Place, the majority did not.

Representatives from residents of Canton Street do not support the closure of Bedford Place. Closure of Bedford Place (day time or evening) therefore will not form part of the proposals for consultation. Instead the proposals include measures to slow traffic, supporting the new 20mph limit, include greening, pavement widening and improvements to the public realm and additional space for outdoor dining. The proposals are to permanently pedestrianise Carlton Place and Lower Banister St, including a new square which might be used for small markets.

I think the proposals are superb and tremendously exciting. The Administration has made a substantial financial commitment of £1.2M in last month's budget. Initial

feedback I have received has been extremely supportive. I hope all councillors will back proposals which the community have brought forward and support the common ground consensus scheme which they have worked very hard to draw up.

8. Devolution Deal

Question from Councillor Shields to Councillor Fitzhenry

When might the citizens of Southampton and elected members expect to be consulted on potentially far-reaching plans currently being drawn up by Hampshire County Council for a number of devolution 'asks' of Central Government as part of a Hampshire County Council-brokered pan Hampshire 'county deal'?

Answer

The City Council has engaged positively with the process initiated by Hampshire County Council and was disappointed that the Government chose not to progress a devolution deal for our area as one of the first 'county deals'. However, we remain positive about the potential of devolution to boost the city's economy and expand local democratic control. While we do not think a Government devolution deal for Hampshire or the Solent is imminent, we continue to work with partners, including also Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, on ideas for a range of options and will back the best deal for Southampton. As there is currently no deal on the table for our area, a consultation with residents would be premature, but consultation is a core part of the devolution process and any deal and associated governance changes will be subject to a full public consultation in the city. Any deal will require to be approved by Full Council and therefore, when we have some indication from Government of what a deal for our area might look like, there will be a series of Member briefings prior to the Council vote. Our best estimate is that this is unlikely before early 2023. In the meantime, officers will periodically brief Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet on the latest discussions

73. MOTIONS

(a) Councillor S Galton moved and Councillor Mitchell seconded

Southampton National Park City Project

"The Southampton National Park City Project (SNCP) is a grassroots community initiative that seeks to create more spaces that are safe to play in and where nature can flourish – a city where people, culture and nature work together.

It is affiliated to the National Park City Foundation, a global movement that aims to create 25 National Park Cities (NPCs) by 2025.

Council fully supports the Southampton National Park City Project and its aim of achieving National Park City status for Southampton by 2025 and endorses Cabinet signing the Charter on behalf of Southampton City Council. Additionally, where practical and feasible, the Council will assist SNCP as they pursue their objectives."

UPON BEING PUT TO THE VOTE THE MOTION WAS DECLARED CARRIED

(b) Councillor Fielker moved and Councillor Mitchell seconded

Cost of Living Crisis

“This council recognises that Southampton residents are in the midst of one of the highest cost of living crisis in 60 years, exacerbated by rising fuel costs made worse by a global oil and gas crisis.

This Council acknowledges that freezing council tax and rents for one year provides a small measure of relief to eligible households but will not themselves prevent people from having to make stark choices.

This Council notes that the SO: Linked contract has made it easier for people to get the support they need, but also notes that there remains a squeeze on many people’s incomes while energy, food, and housing costs continue to rise.

Council therefore resolves to:

1. continue to use available resources to support Southampton residents in times of hardship.
2. call on government to commit to immediate action beyond the proposed £150 advance (for some council taxpayers) whilst considering the longer-term consequences.
3. write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer requesting that the Government takes further steps, including to:
 - a) Cut VAT on gas and electric to 0%
 - b) Scrap the proposed National Insurance increase
 - c) Restore the £20 Universal Credit uplift
 - d) Properly fund Council to continue payments from the Household Support Fund beyond the 31st March to support those most in need
 - e) Implement a one-off windfall tax on energy companies’ record profits to reduce the burden on bill payers.”

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

(c) Councillor Fitzhenry moved and Councillor Paffey seconded.

Ukraine Refugees

“This council deplores the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine, accompanied by the terrible loss of life and horrendous destruction of Ukraine’s infrastructure.

Council commends the work of voluntary organisations and individuals in Southampton who are collecting and sending vital relief materials to support Ukrainian refugees.

Council resolves to follow the government's lead by refusing to engage with any individual, organisation or activity that might support or fund Putin's war.

Southampton City Council stands with the people of Ukraine and as a City of Sanctuary we will work with government to support refugees and their family members in the city."

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

NOTE: The Mayor also agreed to write to the Mayor of Mariupol indicating the City of Southampton stands with them and invite opportunity to work with them when peace reigns.

74. 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.

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

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