
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
15 MARCH 2023

Present:

The Mayor, Councillor Rayment
The Sheriff, Councillor Laurent
Councillors J Baillie, P Baillie, Blackman, Mrs Blatchford, Bogle, M Bunday, T Bunday, Coombs, Cooper, Denness, Fielker, Fitzhenry, Frampton, Fuller, D Galton, G Galton, Guthrie, Hannides, Houghton, Keogh, Kataria, Kaur, Leggett, Magee, Professor Margetts, McEwing, Mitchell, Noon, Dr Paffey, J Payne, W Payne, Prior, Renyard, Savage, Shields, Goodfellow, Stead, Vassiliou, Vaughan, White and Winning

54. APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies had been received from Councillors Furnell, Guest, Harris, Moulton and Windle.

55. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Council meetings held on 16th November 2022 and 22nd February 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

56. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LORD 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 challenging circumstances.

Some Councillors are not seeking re-election Councillors Coombes, Furnell, Mitchell, Margetts, Guthrie, Harris, Prior and J Payne. We thanks them for their service to their communities and wish them well. Would Group Leaders/Members like to say a few words?

57. DEPUTATIONS, PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Council received and noted the following deputation:-

- (i) Sophie Cooper, Oliver James and Aislynn Bushell from Bitterne Park Primary School – Safer Crossing on Manor Farm Road.

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) Say No to Southampton City Council's proposal to close part of Portswood Broadway to through traffic.

58. PAY POLICY 2023 - 2024

Report of the Leader of the Council recommending approval of the Pay Policy 2023- 2024.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Pay Policy statement for 2023-2024 be approved;
- (ii) To note the continued implementation of the Foundation Living Wage increase as the minimum hourly rate for National Joint Council (NJC) evaluated posts from 1st April 2023; and
- (iii) To note that negotiations for a cost of living award for 2023 as part of the pay agreement for NJC evaluated roles and Chief Officer and Chief Executive pay are ongoing and that implementation of this, once agreed, is delegated to the Head of HR and OD to be applied for 2023-2024.

59. CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT 2021 - 2022

Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Learning detailing the Annual Corporate Parenting Report 2021-2022.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the September 2021 – August 2022 annual corporate parenting report be adopted;
- (ii) That all Councillors recommit to our collective responsibility as Corporate Parents, to ensure we champion children and young people in our care, demonstrate aspiration for them, and provide safer and better opportunities for them;
- (iii) That all Councillors consider opportunities for care leavers to be able to train and work in the city; and
- (iv) That all Councillors promote fostering within the city in support of our fostering recruitment challenges.

60. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND APRIL 2023-MARCH 2024

Report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Customer Engagement detailing the Household Support Fund April 2023 – March 2024.

RESOLVED: that the Household Support Fund for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 be approved and accepted.

61. 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. Children's Services Savings

Councillor P Baillie to Councillor Paffey

QUESTION: A major part of balancing the recent budget was the inclusion of £7M of savings /reduced spending from CS. I think the expectation from all councillors was that the route to achieving these savings had been mapped out.

Please would you tell me how these savings are to be achieved, when they will be achieved, and how successful savings' /reduced spending targets have been over the last five years for CS.

ANSWER: Councillors will all recognise the fact that Children's Services in the UK face extreme financial challenges: LGA figures show that placement costs have risen almost 60% in recent years, and £1.6billion of investment is needed just to maintain current service levels – even before recent soaring levels of inflation.

In this financial context, with high levels of demand in the city and with significant impacts from the Covid-19 pandemic, the Labour administration and the Children's Services Leadership Team set in motion the Destination 22 improvement programme which is showing encouraging signs: this year we achieved a reduction of £1.7 million on spending for CLA services and placements, and a £500k reduction of on agency staff costs as we build a stable, permanent workforce.

This work to achieve financial stability and, crucially, better outcomes for children will continue through the transformative "Building Brilliance 23" programme including measures such as reductions to agency staff numbers, demand for residential placements, accommodation costs for care leavers, better commissioning and work with Housing, and redesigning how we deliver services most effectively.

2. Housing Improvements

Councillor P Baillie to Councillor Mitchell

QUESTION: According to the recent HRA budget which you passed, some £50M has been removed from the housing improvement pot to pay for homes in Meggeson Avenue. Do you feel it is fair to delay for years improvements to homes, for thousands of people, just because of your ideology?

ANSWER: The Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme that was approved at Council in February 2023 represents a significant increase in funding forecast to be spent on "Improving Quality of Homes" and "Making Homes Energy Efficient" when compared with historic expenditure.

Given the growing need for affordable housing in our city and an increasingly unaffordable private rental market we will continue to explore all options for providing our residents with high quality affordable homes.

3. Mini Budget Post Election

Councillor Fitzhenry to Councillor Kaur

QUESTION: Can the Leader of the Council confirm if her administration will be bringing forward a mini budget in the summer of 2023 if they are successful in winning a majority May's Local Election?

ANSWER – Verbal response provided at the meeting.

“That is not the current intention”.

4. Housing Waiting Lists

Councillor Margetts to Councillor Mitchell

QUESTION: How many families are currently on the waiting list for a three bedroom council house? At the current rate of building, how long will it take to reduce to zero the waiting list? Given the collapse of the buy to let market has the council considered options to buy such properties to reduce waiting lists for Southampton People.

ANSWER: We currently have 1536 households on the waiting list with a three bedroom need.

Based on current levels of new build properties and relets, it would take 16 years to bring the waiting list to zero. However need is growing at an alarming rate due to the current national housing crisis and we are also losing homes to right to buy which is soon to affect housing association homes as well.

We will look at all options to reduce this list and provide people with high quality and affordable homes from building our own council homes to working with other affordable housing providers through the affordable housing framework which will allow us nomination rights for residents on our waiting list.

5. Holiday Voucher Scheme

Councillor Margetts to Councillor Paffey

QUESTION: Given that ¼ children are now food insecure and that during the school holidays, nearly 40% of children in poverty are not eligible for food vouchers, can the council confirm that it will extend the holiday voucher scheme to cover all school children. This will ensure that, given the commitment to the Right to Food City status, all children will have access to meals throughout the year not just in term time.

ANSWER: This administration is committed to ensuring that Southampton is a city where people facing food insecurity have a right to food. This commitment drives our current efforts to provide families with support during this Cost of Living crisis. That begins with making sure that we get Free School Meals to those who are entitled to them but are not currently claiming this support.

In addition we have been able to extend the Holiday Activities and Food programme to include the recent half-term holiday, providing hot meals and enriching activities and education to children, as well as over 30,000 hours of childcare, warm spaces for parents, food pantries and access for parents and carers to get free online training to help them take steps towards new employment opportunities.

We will continue to explore opportunities to fulfil our commitment as a Right-to-Food city.

6. High Fat/Salt Sugar (HFSS) Advertising

Councillor Margetts to Councillor Fielker

QUESTION: Will the council follow the example set by Barnsley Council and Transport for London's Healthier Advertising Policy, to restrict all advertising of high fat, salt, and/or sugar (HFSS) on council owned or leased advertising sites?.

ANSWER: The council's outdoor advertising estate is managed by third parties under Licence Agreements and the contracts we have with those providers include a requirement for them to adhere to our advertising guidance which prohibits advertising products, such as alcohol and tobacco, or others deemed significantly harmful to health and/or communities.

All of our suppliers are signed up to the Outsmart Schools Policy which prevents them from advertising HFSS foods within 100m of a school boundary.

We are keen to follow the example set by TfL and Barnsley and Public Health colleagues have met with Barnsley to understand more about how their restrictions have been implemented.

Whilst as a Council we can control advertising on our own estate, we have no legal power to restrict advertising on other sites. The most effective way to ensure HFSS advertising is removed from public view is through legislation

7. Southern Water

Councillor Blackman to Councillor Kaur

QUESTION: What action does the Council intend to take against Southern Water in the light of the recent supply failures in Southampton and their persistent polluting of our rivers and coastline?

ANSWER: Verbal response provided at the meeting.

"The City Council acknowledges that the residents of Southampton have hugely been affected by the failures of Southern Water, trust and confidence in Southern Water has been completely eroded and the City Council will hold Southern Water to account for their actions.

Significant contributions were made on behalf of Southampton City Council with officers providing community water stations, provision of water to those most vulnerable in the City and the Council clearly filling the void in the City which was the responsibility of Southern Water to provide.

A letter has been sent to the Chief Executive of Southern Water expressing their less than satisfactory response to the situation alongside other Leaders who have also written with the Chief Executive of Southern Water accepting to meet with Leaders.

Pollution of waters was regulated by the Environment Agency, the current Scrutiny Inquiry has been looking at this and their recommendations were awaited.

The response from Southern Water would be made available to all Members".

8. Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls

Councillor Vaughan to Councillor Renyard

QUESTION: Can you honestly still confirm Southampton City Council believe they want to Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls?

ANSWER: We have:

- led the Domestic Abuse (DA) and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategic Partnership Board in overseeing a strategy (published January 2023) which commits to tackling VAWG.
- led on embedding a Coordinated Community Response to DA across the partnership.
- increased funding for perpetrator intervention and victim support.
- improved access to support and safe accommodation for victims.
- an accredited service for predominantly female high-risk victims of DA.
- a “Safe Places” network supporting victims to report any type of abuse including VAWG, day or night.
- provided sexual harassment training for those working in the night-time economy
- 3 male engagement workers supporting perpetrators of DA to change their behaviour.
- introduced specialist advocacy services for marginalised communities.
- commissioned refuge for women including those with children and those with multiple vulnerabilities.
- introduced the ‘Safe and Together’ model to promote children’s welfare by training practitioners to support the non-abusive parent and support the perpetrator change their behaviour.
- recruited a specialist training lead to increase professional’s awareness and build confidence to support victims of DA and VAWG.
- built a data dashboard to inform the Strategic Partnership.
- collaborated to deliver a preventative programme for schools and colleges exploring issues around VAWG, gender roles and healthy relationships.

9. Street Lighting

Councillor Vaughan to Councillor Renyard

QUESTION: Safer Streets Funding was introduced for the increased roll out of CCTV and improvements to street lighting as this will help change the attitudes and behaviours which will prevent crimes happening in the first place.

ANSWER:

Neighbouring Local Authorities have already implemented the turning off of street lights and 67% of our consultation respondents were in support of Southampton adopting the same approach. Some national studies have shown that certain crimes reduce in residential areas where streetlights are turned off.

As a result of ongoing work, we have identified a series of ‘exemption’ areas, which will have the lights left on for the entirety of the night. To summarise, the following areas have been identified as exempt from this initiative:

- The City Centre;
- District and local Shopping Centres including those in Bitterne, Woolston, Portswood and Shirley;
- The Classified Road network;
- Main roads across the city (typically the roads in and out of residential areas and/or key bus routes);

- Key CCTV monitoring locations;
- Areas of high public patronage such as hospitals and community hubs;
- Known anti-social behaviour hotspots;
- Certain streets due to traffic calming measures;
- Roads on which there are high risks of traffic accidents;
- Parks (where highway lighting extends to these areas);
- Safe routes home as identified by educational establishments; and
- Lighting which is not on the public highway such as Council Housing and Leisure land.

Change to 5 redeploy able 4G CCTV cameras. This would give us the opportunity to deploy CCTV quickly and easily to ASB/crime hotspot areas and respond to public concerns far more effectively than we do at the moment. The cameras are solar powered and lightweight, which means they can be put on street furniture without the need for changing lamp columns etc. We can also, for low light/frequent activation locations, put in hardwiring to the columns power supply.

This will be kept under constant review, and if any concerns are raised we will act accordingly.

10. Safer Streets Fund

Councillor Vaughan to Councillor Renyard

QUESTION: Will Southampton City Council ensure the effective and efficient deployment of the Safer Streets Fund for preventing neighbourhood crime, crime in public spaces and violence against women and girls?

ANSWER: Yes

62. MOTIONS

(a) Councillor Blackman moved and Councillor Fielker seconded

Southampton Young Carers

“The Southampton Young Carer Strategy 2021 to 2026 has a vision that Southampton is a city where children and young carers have the same opportunities as other children to get a good start in life, so they can fulfil their potential and become successful adults.

The Southampton Young Carer Strategy notes that in 20/21 some 420 young people in Southampton were in touch with the Young Carer Service with 80 receiving regular support.

Caring for someone can be very isolating, worrying, and stressful. For young and young adult carers, this can negatively impact on their experiences and outcomes in education, having a lasting effect on their life chances.

Each year Carers Trust organises Young Carers Action Day (YCAD) to raise public awareness of the challenges faced by young people because of their caring role, and to campaign for greater support for young and young adult carers to meet their needs. Young Carers Action Day is 15 March 2023 and this year’s theme is ‘Make Time for Young Carers’.

Council resolves that we commend the young and young adult carers across Southampton and that we promote YCAD on an annual basis. We also continue in the context of the Southampton Young Carer Strategy to promote and work with local care organisations.

Council resolves that the Leader of the Council writes to the Government calling on them to ensure that young carers are actively identified and provided with the support they need. In addition, the Leader writes to our three local Members of Parliament and ask them to join the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers.”

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

(b) Councillor Keogh moved and Councillor Leggett seconded

Financial Pressures

“Councils up and down the country are facing unprecedented financial pressures which are not of their own making but due to national policy; Southampton is no exception.

Government measures to reduce public sector spending in the previous decade have seen a significant reduction in local government funding, with the Council’s settlement funding assessment reducing by almost a half.

What is clearly needed is a long-term plan from national government to change their direction and offer fairer, long-term funding to local authorities.

Southampton City Council alongside other councils has been let down by this Government failing to properly fund and protect public services, so this Council joins other Councils of all political backgrounds, in calling for clear action to improve the financial outlook for local authorities.

This morning the Chancellor will have delivered his budget statement to Parliament. For the good of the residents of Southampton, should the Chancellor’s statement fail to deliver a funding step change that offers long-term financial stability to councils that Southampton communities deserve, Council resolves that the Leader of the Council writes immediately to the Prime Minister highlighting the injustices, the shortfalls contained within impact on the city’s residents and requests fair and sustainable funding for local government.”

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

(c) Councillor Winning moved and Councillor Paffey seconded.

Care Experienced People

“Southampton City Council believes that care experienced people face significant barriers that impact them throughout their lives. Despite the resilience of many care experienced people, society too often does not take their needs into account. Care experienced people often face barriers and stigma across housing, health, education,

relationships, employment and in the criminal justice system. As corporate parents, councillors have a collective responsibility for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by us as an authority. All corporate parents should commit to acting as mentors, hearing the voices of looked after children and young people and to consider their needs in any aspect of council work. Councillors should be champions of our looked after children and challenge the negative attitudes and prejudice that exists in all aspects of society. Southampton City Council therefore resolves that when making any decisions in relation to its policies or formulating its Council Plan it recognises that care experienced people are a vulnerable group who face barriers to access to services and opportunities. That in the delivery of Council services the Council includes consideration of the elimination of barriers to and promotion of opportunities for care experience and this be included alongside reporting of the Council's compliance with its Public Sector Equality Duty. That this Council will treat care experience in a similar manner to a Protected Characteristic so that future services and policies made and adopted by the Council should be assessed through equality impact assessments updated to include consideration of care experienced to determine the impact of changes on people with care experience, alongside those who share a Protected Characteristic. To formally call upon all other bodies to treat care experience in a similar manner and to actively remove barriers and promote opportunities for them until such time as it may be introduced by legislation as a protected group. For the Council to proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people when developing new policies based on their views."

UPON BEING OUT TO THE VOTE THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY DECLARED CARRIED.

63. 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 Lord Mayor had been received.

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

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