

COUNCIL

Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,

on Thursday, 26th September, 2019 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Tony Brewer in the Chair;

Councillors John Baird, Chris Baron,
Kier Barsby, Jim Blagden, Christian Chapman,
Ciaran Brown, Melanie Darrington,
Samantha Deakin, Dale Grounds, Arnie Hankin,
Andrew Harding, David Hennigan, Tom Hollis,
Rachel Madden, David Martin, Andy Meakin,
Lauren Mitchell, Keir Morrison, Warren Nuttall,
Matthew Relf, Kevin Rostance, Phil Rostance,
Dave Shaw, John Smallridge, Helen-Ann Smith,
David Walters, Lee Waters, Daniel Williamson,
John Wilmott and Jason Zadrozny.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Andy Gascoyne, Trevor Locke,
Sarah Madigan and Caroline Wilkinson.

Officers Present: Craig Bonar, Lynn Cain, Carol Cooper-Smith,
Richard Crossland, Ruth Dennis,
Theresa Hodgkinson, Peter Hudson, Mike Joy,
Paul Parkinson, Abbie Smith and Shane Wright.

C.41 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

C.42 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 25th July and 5th September, 2019, as now submitted, be received and approved.

C.43 Announcements from the Chairman, Leader, Members of the Cabinet and the Head of Paid Service

Leader of the Council

"Thank you, Chairman. Just a very brief update for Members from me. We have just had the first ever Alderman Awards event prior to this full Council meeting and I just wanted to make clear that although it was a civic service and something we've done to commemorate those Members who have given above and beyond, there was actually no cost to the Council because I've chosen to have an invoice raised and personally pay for all the badges, the

frames, the printing, the tea and coffee and everything else that was associated with it, Mr. Chairman.”

C.44 Questions from the Public

No questions were received from the public.

C.45 Petitions

No petitions were submitted for consideration.

C.46 Report on Urgent Key Decision

The Leader of the Council advised as follows:-

“In accordance with Rule 17.2 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules it is necessary for me to inform the Council when an executive decision has been taken pursuant to Rule 16 (Special Urgency Provisions.)

I can confirm to the Council that one such decision has been taken by me as a matter of urgency recently.

The decision related to the acquisition of a commercial investment property. The decision was key and contained exempt information but the full 28 days’ notice could not be given due to the need to proceed with the transaction without delay.

The Rule 16 Notice and the non-exempt elements of the decision have now been published.”

C.47 Interim Review of Polling Places

Council was requested to consider the proposals for revised polling places following an interim review dealing with urgent polling place issues and based on the recommendations from the Polling Places Review Working Group.

RESOLVED that

- a) the recommendations of the Polling Places Review Working Group as set out in the minutes of the meetings held on 1st August and 16th September, 2019, as appended to the report, be approved;
- b) as a result of (a) above, the final proposals setting out the changes to the polling districts as outlined in Appendix D to the report, be approved;
- c) should a polling place be unavailable in the run up to an election, the (Acting) Returning Officer be delegated authority to select an appropriate alternative and seek formal retrospective approval from Council following the election should this be a permanent proposed change;

d) it be noted that the approved changes will take effect on 27th September, 2019.

C.48 Recommendations from the Cabinet and the Council's Committees

In accordance with the Council Procedure Rule 2(ix), Council considered two recommendations from the following:-

Minute No. CA.20
Cabinet – 16th September, 2019
New Corporate Plan

RESOLVED

that the new Corporate Plan, as presented to Council, be approved.

Minute No. CA.21
Cabinet – 16th September, 2019
2019/20 July Financial Monitoring Update Report

RESOLVED that

- a) amendments to the Capital Programme as set out in Sections 6.1 and 6.2 of the Cabinet report, noting that there are no additional borrowing implications, be approved;
- b) the revenue budget revisions for 2019/20 as set out in Section 3 of the Cabinet report, be approved.

(During consideration of the Cabinet recommendations, Councillors Rachel Madden and David Hennigan left the room at 7.47pm and 7.48pm and returned to the meeting at 7.50pm and 7.51pm respectively.)

C.49 Updates from Members of the Cabinet on their Portfolio Activity

The following Cabinet Members gave updates in respect of their Portfolio activity:-

Portfolio Holder for Place, Planning & Regeneration

"In August the Council was informed that it had been successful in its bid for funding from the Future Highstreets Fund, with its bid for Sutton Town Centre progressing onto the business case development stage, where we'll put forward a more detailed bid.

In addition to this, the Council learnt in September that both Kirkby and Sutton were to benefit from the Towns Fund with up to £25 million worth of investment available for each town. We're waiting on the Government for full details of the offer and conditions but funding is aimed at improving transport, skills and culture in each town. Unlike the Future Highstreets Fund, the Towns Fund is not a competitive bid and has been allocated to us.

I will just point out though that these are ring-fenced for specific things that the Government sets and is not something that assists with our precarious financial position at the minute. But I am sure that you will agree with me that

this is great news and I look forward to working with Members and officers on drawing up ambitious plans to continue the exciting transformation of Ashfield.

The latest Ashfield Job's Fair took place on the 13th of September and was another great success with 70 recruiters pitched and 650 job seekers in attendance. Ashfield and Mansfield have been jointly hosting Brexit business events. The Manufacturing and Engineering Event was held on the 25th of September at Portland College in partnership with the Council; 35 businesses attended and with the welcome address delivered by Councillor Zadrozny. Coming up on the 1st of October is the Transport and Logistics Event and on the 9th of October is the HR and Personnel Event, both hosted at Mansfield Civic Centre.

On the 20th of September the Entrepreneur's Programme had a networking event and seminar with 32 people registered; 15 have since taken up the option of one-to-one mentoring support following the last round of workshops and 18 Business Growth Advisory Clinics have been held over four days since the launch on the 3rd of October. They're now being supported by advisors from MBV and Growth Hub for up to 12 hours. The support ranges from business planning, sales and marketing strategy, raising finance, action planning, knowledge transfer training and Council service support.

The first Discover Ashfield Photographic Competition has been launched to promote the area's attractions. With the support from Chad this has been well received with over 40 submissions received in the first few days.

Working in partnership with the town teams, we are running several promotions through to Christmas including support for our opticians with National Health and Eye Health Week. Working with the areas micro pubs in promoting Micro Pub Week and the Ashfield Ale Trail. Celebrating Ada Lovelace Day on the 8th of October with a plaque unveiling in the town celebrating her contribution to computer science and mathematics. Supporting Small Business Saturday on the 7th of December, followed by the ever popular Christmas Shop Window Competition.

Our Planning Department continues to perform well against statutory planning targets. The new ROMO Fabrics Headquarters and Larwood have been nominated for a Royal Town Planning Institute Regional Awards and the results are expected on Friday the 27th of September.

The number of enforcement and compliance cases being resolved has improved and several notices have been issued to remedy planning breaches. The transfer of the Building Control service to Erewash is progressing following Cabinet approval and this change will bring much needed resilience to our building control provision. Thank you, Chairman."

Portfolio Holder for Housing

"Colleagues have a follow-up to this Council's motion to act on climate change and the Assets Team has commenced work with both APSE Energy and Nottingham City Council in order to review all aspects of the Council's energy usage in order to reduce the Council's carbon footprint as well as reducing its energy costs. Ashfield's decision to work with Nottingham City is one which is now being followed by several other Councils in the area.

As part of the Housing Department's continual ambition to improve service to its residents, the Housing Teams have commenced multi-service drop-in sessions at sheltered courts across the District every quarter. The initiative is part of the service's drive to bring its services direct to the homes of residents.

As well as improving services to residents the department is also keen to enhance and develop its workforce, with the repairs team recently taking on three new apprentices including joinery and heating engineers. Whilst the Tenancy Team are currently advertising an apprentice to work within the money management service to help those most in need of support. The team also took upon itself to set up a stall in the recent Ashfield Jobs Fair in order to promote Council-wide opportunities to residents and job seekers.

I am pleased to report the Homeless Service has now settled in as a team, wholly owned and managed by Ashfield District Council, and in order to ensure the service develops to an exemplar status the department commissioned an independent health check of the service, with recommendations and action plan already drawn up to follow. The team have also submitted a bid to the LGA seeking monies and assistance to research the underlying causes of homelessness in the area. This is in line with Ashfield's ambition to lead the way in homeless prevention across the county.

The Private Sector Enforcement Team have, along with other teams in the Council, provided a sterling service over the summer, dealing with a spate of traveller encampments setting up and moving around the District. This has involved the team offering an immediate response to reports of encampments emerging in order to fulfil the Council's statutory duties as well as commence legal proceedings as quickly as possible. This has involved team members voluntarily starting early, working late in the evening and at weekends in order to provide a professional and proactive service for the Council.

With the travellers' situation now in abeyance the team are also being proactive in tackling poor housing conditions in the private rented sector, having prepared the issue of six civil penalty notices with a further eight pending. Thank you, Chairman."

Portfolio Holder for Regulatory Services

"I'll bring a few words on Licencing, Environmental Health, Pest Control, Private Sector Enforcement, Selective Licencing and Disabled Facilities Grants.

On Licensing, the Licensing Team continues to increase its customer's numbers primarily through our new taxi driver applications. Now that the staffing levels of the team have been addressed, a programme of compliance visits have recommenced, resulting in enforcement action taking place. The aim of any enforcement action is to better educate the licence holder as to his or her obligations.

We've reviewed our fees and charges ahead of the 2021 year and whilst we have very recently introduced new fees and charges for the licensing of animal welfare premises it is expected that the majority of fees and charges will remain as they currently are which will offer security and peace of mind to our

customers. However, the Licensing Manager is currently assessing the true cost of each licensing function in order to better reflect where there may be potential scope for changes in the future.

On Environmental Health, they are working hard to improve the standards in food premises. This involves a robust approach with the assessment of food establishments to give a food standard and hygiene rating. We would encourage all residents to check the food rating of establishments online that they visit.

On Pest Control, the Pest Control Service saw an increase in income of 47% in 2018/19 and in 2019/20 the growth in income is continuing having achieved a further 12% increase from the April to August, compared to the same time in the previous year. The Pest Control Service continues to develop a client-base in Mansfield with a third of jobs relating to this area.

We come on to Private Sector Enforcement. The team works with tenants and landlords to investigate and to resolve issues, providing support where possible but also being prepared to take legal action where necessary. A recent focus of the team has been licensing homes in multiple occupation (HMOs).

New regulations came into effect from October 2018 that meant a greater number of HMOs fell under the licensing requirements. HMOs must meet certain criteria especially in respect of fire safety and it's up to the team to ensure the standards are met.

The Selective Licensing scheme for private sector properties in parts of New Cross and Stanton Hill are all private rented properties, irrespective of their size, have to be licenced. They all now have to be licenced. The scheme was introduced in 2017 as a way of tackling concentrations of poor quality and poorly managed private rented accommodation. The scheme has been successful in improving standards albeit it has been controversial, as it applies to all landlords, good or bad.

The team deliver a range of other statutory functions dealing with hoarded properties, properties that are filthy and verminous and they also take a lead in respect of unauthorised encampments, gypsies and travellers.

The team will work with and support landlord owners when an encampment is on their land. When it is on Ashfield District Council land the team will take action and normally serve a direction to leave on day one and then go through the court process to obtain an order as quickly as possible. Work is ongoing through the Countrywide Unauthorised Traveller Group to look at what preventative further methods councils can take.

And on to disabled facilities grants, a final point, the service delivers approximately £1 million pounds' worth of adaptations each year to private properties to help residents maintain their independence. The team deliver a full range of adaptations from access ramps to wet rooms, from stair lifts to ground floor extensions.

The residents in need are directed to Nottinghamshire County Council's occupational therapist (OT) in the first instance for assessment. The OT service then refers cases to the DFG team, the Disabled Facilities Grants Team. If the adaptation relates to an adult a means-test is conducted to see if the applicant needs to contribute towards the cost. This does not apply for a child. The upper limit for a grant is £40,000. This covers most adaptation requests but can be problematic in respect of some of the larger extensions.

The service and the work they do is funded by the Better Care Fund. This organisation will continue to work as clearly and as well as they can with the residents and the taxes etc. but we will be enforcing situations when need be. Thank you."

Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Streets, Parks and Town Centres

"Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I will be brief. I just want to first of all take this opportunity to formally welcome Carol Cooper-Smith into her new role as Interim Chief Executive of this Authority. You were a fantastic Director and I know you'll take that energy forward into being the Interim Chief Executive, so thank you for that.

Right, onto my report. First thing I want to say is about green space improvements in Sutton. The play area at John Whetton Park was completed in August, combining new toddler and junior play improvements. Further investment to upgrade the tarmac surface in the play area is planned in October.

The procurement stages of the Heritage Lottery are progressing well with the appointment of contractors to complete the viaduct restoration and dredging work at Kings Mill Reservoir which are due to commence on site in October. The detailed designs are being completed for the Heritage Centre and internal display systems in preparation of the work commencing in early December.

The mobile App "Love Exploring" has been rebranded and new trails and games have been added. Further trails and games are being developed which will be added later this year with an engagement activity being planned with the App developed for the October half-term.

The Annesley Art Project has been completed, delivering a series of public art links to the established community at Annesley Rows, with the new community at the Jasmine Gardens on Willow Fields housing development and Newstead and Annesley Country Park.

Up to £350,000 funding has been secured from Notts. County Council for flood alleviation works at Titchfield Park brook in Hucknall. ADC and NCC officers have been working in partnership to develop a business case and secure funding to reduce flooding to local properties located further downstream of the brook's catchment.

The project will be led by Notts. County Council with Ashfield's place team officers delivering the attenuation scheme at Titchfield Park. The design work will commence shortly but it is envisaged the works will see the reallocation of the existing children's play area and large scale earthworks to reshape and naturalise the brook corridor in front of the boathouse.

Refurbishments of the existing play area at Nabbs Lane Park is underway. Designs for the new equipment has been procured and are being evaluated. The designs are being scored with help from pupils from a local primary school and work is due to start before Christmas but is subject to availability of the new equipment and weather. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.”

Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Health and Leisure

“Thank you, Chair. Just a brief update on a couple of things in my portfolio.

Kirkby Leisure Centre; we’ve held a number of consultation events now as we get closer and closer to actually putting spades in the ground. I’m pleased to say that Kirkby Leisure Centre is now the number one responded to consultation Ashfield Council has ever carried out. The most responses we’ve had back for a consultation. These consultations have been very positive. People have been clear that they’re excited to have the two swimming pools, the adventure play area, the climbing area and all the improved facilities that come with it which, of course, include the multi-purpose gym, bleacher seating and everything else involved.

Councillor Zadrozny and I will be going round a number of leisure centres across the country over the coming weeks just to make sure we’ve got everything we want in that facility. We’re not going to be able to build it again so I’m quite excited that we’re almost there at deciding how exactly it’s going to be run and we expect to be starting on site in October 2020 time. So that’ll be the rough time we’ll actually be putting spades in the ground.

Moving closer to home, I think Members won’t be blind to the fact that we’re very keen on big public events; the Big Screen events being a major part of that. The next event coming up is a Halloween event where we’re going to be showing two screenings of family themed Halloween films. We’re going to be showing Hocus Pocus and Hotel Transylvania in Sutton Town Centre and obviously aside from that we have all the Remembrance Day parades coming up in a few weeks’ time as well.

So there, that’s an update from my portfolio, obviously I’ll happily e-mail any more reports to Members later on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.”

Portfolio Holder for Community Safety

“Thank you, Chair. Just want to give the Council a couple of updates on some good news bits from our Anti-Social Behaviour Casework Team. For those of you that may not have seen the papers recently, Ashfield District Council successfully brought a case in the Magistrates to prosecute a Mr. David Rowe, who will now be sentenced for two offences as a direct result of this Council taking action on failing to take reasonable measures to prevent fly-tipping and for disposing of controlled waste in a manner likely to cause pollution to the environment.

We’ve also had a closure order on Langton Court. I know our Members from Sutton will be quite aware of some of the problems that we’ve been having on there recently. On the 30th of August the Council secured a closure order for 23 Langton Court through a case presented at the Magistrates. The closure order is enforced for a period of three months. This means that now if

anybody enters that property in that time they will be committing an offence so it's a nice bid to try and make Langton Court and the surrounding area a bit safer and a bit of a nicer place to be for the residents of Sutton.

Other than this I am very proud to announce that this week we've heard our much awaited mental health worker is going to join our Complex Case Team on a secondment basis from the Notts. Health Care Trust. This will allow a greater understanding of mental health throughout the Community Safety Department and will prove invaluable in helping residents with mental health issues that prevent them effectively engaging with the team and with the community. I'm sure the Council would love to join me in welcoming Amanda Cramer, she's a qualified Crisis Care Practitioner with extensive experience in the field of mental health and I'm very happy to welcome her here. Thank you."

Portfolio Holder for Corporate Communications, Governance and Cross Portfolio Support

"I'll keep this very brief. Just to let Members know next week 'Ashfield Matters' will be arriving in households. We're very proud of this edition. It will be telling people exactly what we've been doing, what we've got planned and when I spoke about the Corporate Plan earlier, where we want Ashfield to be. This is actually proving what we're actually doing...tangible things.

But I also want to say a big congratulations to Shane, our new, full time member of the Democratic Team. I couldn't be happier."

Leader of the Council

"Mr. Chairman, I've got no particular updates but I just wondered briefly why I was so tired lately and I think it's because of this immense amount of work that's been going on.

Councillor Relf listed dozens of things and I think I was at every one of them. The Brexit meetings that we've been having with businesses and I've got another one next week. The Jobs Fair, I was there and we've been on the swimming pool treks.

I've been out with Dan and Kier when we've been up to the closure orders, in St. Mary's ward where there was that terrible machete attack and I think, I'd just like to say, Mr. Chairman, how very proud I am of the Cabinet.

They are working incredibly hard and I've just sat here and watched Tom and Mel and Helen scribbling off things because of the amount of time we've got left, which list numerous other events, activities and things that go on behind the scenes.

This Council is working incredibly hard to be proud of our past but ambitious for the future and I think the lists of stuff, we might roll our eyes while one or two of us list lots and lots of stuff, but actually that's because we've got lots and lots of stuff to be proud of and I think the Cabinet and the Councillors behind us are doing an immense job and I'm very, very proud to work with this team, Mr. Chairman."

(During the Portfolio Holder updates, Councillors Chris Baron, Dave Shaw and David Hennigan left the room at 8.00pm, 8.10pm and 8.10pm and returned to the meeting at 8.02pm, 8.12pm and 8.13pm respectively.)

C.50 Notice of Motion

There were no notices of motion submitted by Members.

C.51 Questions received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13

There were no questions submitted by Members.

C.52 Questions received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.2 - In relation to Cabinet and Committee Meeting Minutes published since the last ordinary meeting of the Council

There were no questions submitted by Members.

C.53 Emergency Notice of Motion

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5 (Urgent Items), the Council received an emergency notice of motion moved by Councillor Jason Zadrozny and seconded by Councillor Dave Shaw as follows:-

“This Council calls on our Members of Parliament to act more responsibly and in the public interest.

Following Parliament being recalled, exchanges between MP’s in the House of Commons have become unnecessarily heated and personal. Culminating in crass and inflammatory language from political parties on both sides of the house yesterday (25th September 2019).

This Council makes no comment on the debates taking place. We simply call on members to use more considered and mature language in debates.

This Council believes that trust in politics and politicians is at an all-time low. At a time when many vital issues are facing Ashfield and the United Kingdom as a whole we expect our MP’s to show humility and leadership, dealing with the challenges that face us in a style more befitting the mother of democracies.

Elected members of local government would not be able to behave in this manner, as the standards in public life rules would find us in breach of bringing the office of Councillor into disrepute. If Councillors are leading by example, despite passionate differences of opinion, we expect even better from those representing us locally and nationally in Westminster.

Ashfield residents deserve better from its elected representatives who should seek to raise the bar for our area and the quality of life. There is more to representing people than party political point scoring.

This Council therefore resolves to write to both MP's representing Ashfield District Council area and the leaders of all political parties in Westminster, asking for them to reflect on the tone and nature of their debates.

The letter will seek reassurances that MP's will debate in a more mature, fact-based, less personal and less adversarial style.

It will ask that the pressing issues of the day for Ashfield residents including but not limited to Brexit, Infrastructure investments, Health, Education, The Environment, Jobs and the Economy and Crime and Disorder are prioritised over petty party squabbling."

(At this point in the proceedings and in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 23, a motion was moved and seconded to extend the conclusion of the meeting to 9.30pm. The motion was put to the vote and duly carried.)

Having been duly debated, the emergency motion was put to the vote and it was

RESOLVED

that the Council agrees to write to both MP's representing the Ashfield District Council area and the leaders of all political parties in Westminster, asking for them to reflect on the tone and nature of their debates with the letter seeking reassurances that:

- MP's will debate in a more mature, fact-based, less personal and less adversarial style;
- the pressing issues of the day for Ashfield residents including but not limited to Brexit, Infrastructure investments, Health, Education, The Environment, Jobs and the Economy and Crime and Disorder are prioritised over petty party squabbling.

During consideration of the motion, the following Councillors briefly left the meeting and returned as follows:-

Councillor:	Left Room (pm):	Returned to Meeting (pm):
Tom Hollis	8:20	8:23
Helen-Ann Smith	8:46	8:54
Samantha Deakin	8:49	8:54
Chris Baron	8:51	8:57
Dale Grounds	8:51	8:57
Kevin Rostance	8:52	8:54
John Smallridge	8:56	8:57

The meeting closed at 9.06 pm

Chairman.