

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Monday, 28 September 2015**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Jamie Lane (Chair); Councillor Brian Sargeant (Deputy Chair);  
Councillors Gareth Eales, Terrie Eales, James Hill, Phil Larratt, Dennis  
Meredith, Brian Oldham, Suresh Patel, Samuel Shaw and Zoe Smith

Councillor Alan Bottwood,	Cabinet Member for Environment
Ruth Austen	Environmental Health Manager
Phil Harris	Head of Housing and Wellbeing
Tracy Tiff	Scrutiny Officer
Nicola Brindley	Democratic Services Officer

**1. APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillors Rufia Ashraf, Graham Walker and Muna Cali.

**2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2015 were agreed as a true record.

**3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES**

There were none.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)**

There were none.

**5. MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACCEPTED  
RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
REPORTS:**

**5.A MANAGEMENT AND REGULATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING  
INCLUDING HIMOS**

Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing addressed the Committee and confirmed that the Additional HIMO Licensing Scheme was introduced in November 2014 and had started to deliver. Approximately 300 HIMOs have been licensed to date in an area of the town where it is estimated that there could be as many as 1,500 HIMOs. There have been changes in the team and Debi Waite has recently joined the Council as the Private Sector Housing Manager with a proven track record of successfully prosecuting rogue landlords.

Meetings have been held with private landlords and student landlords who have endorsed the Council's approach to rogue landlords. The first recommendation in the report has been delivered and good practice has been promoted.

The Council is currently considering making changes to its HMO Fees Policy – to reward good landlords with discounts and penalise bad landlords by reducing the length of the licence period – and finalising a new Enforcement Policy.

Landlords Forum meetings are now being held three times a year; the next two are in

October 2015 and February 2016.

Phil Harris confirmed that a formal written update (and response to the Overview & Scrutiny recommendations) will be provided at the next meeting.

In response to a question from Councillor Jamie Lane, Phil Harris confirmed that the Enforcement Policy would be approved by the Cabinet. If anyone is concerned about a problematic HIMO that is not licensed, they should report it to the Council.

It was acknowledged that the Housing Service needs to work closely with the Planning Service and support the work of the Planning Committee.

**RESOLVED: The comments be noted and a full report provided at the next meeting.**

## **6. CODE OF PRACTICE FOR BETTING SHOPS**

Councillor Alan Bottwood Cabinet Member for Environment and Ruth Austen Environmental Health and Licensing Manager presented the report.

In response to a question from Councillor Dennis Meredith, Ruth Austen confirmed that the increase of online betting was outside of their control as was the online betting offshore. She confirmed that the numbers of gaming machines was a cause for concern but there was no specific recommendation on numbers.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

## **7. PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT**

Councillor Jamie Lane presented the Performance Monitoring Report to the Committee.

It was requested that the report be made more user friendly and a member of Performance Department to come to Committee to explain how it worked.

**RESOLVED: That a member of the Performance Department present the report to Committee.**

## **8. SCRUTINY PANELS**

### **8.A SCRUTINY PANEL 1**

Councillor Samuel Shaw confirmed that they had selected the questions to ask the witnesses ahead of the next meeting. He confirmed that it had been well attended.

**RESOLVED: That the update be noted.**

### **8.B SCRUTINY PANEL 2**

Councillor Dennis Meredith confirmed that site visits had been arranged and walkabouts with Neighbourhood Wardens.

Councillor Phil Larratt and Councillor Dennis Meredith will attend a meeting of the Anti-Social Behaviour Joint Partnership Meeting and had found the new legislation useful to tackle street drinkers. They would also review littering.

Councillor Brian Oldham confirmed there was also a problem with dog fouling and the prosecution figures were poor. The law was not effective and too long to process.

**RESOLVED:** The update be noted.

### **8.C SCRUTINY PANEL 3**

Councillor Gareth Eales confirmed that the Panel had received a presentation at its last meeting on how Hackney carriages and private drivers were licensed. They had six core questions to witnesses and the induction course was to be reviewed to ensure it was as stringent as it should be.

**RESOLVED:** The update be noted.

### **9. STREET LIGHTING WORKING GROUP**

Councillor Phil Larratt confirmed that the meeting was this week and an update would be provided at the next meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the update be noted.

### **10. REPORT BACK FROM NBC'S REPRESENTATIVE TO NCC'S HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Councillor Brian Sargeant confirmed that he had attended the meeting and he found it very informative.

**Resolved:** That the update be noted.

### **11. POTENTIAL FUTURE PRE DECISION SCRUTINY.**

There were none.

### **12. URGENT ITEMS**

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 18.45