

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 10 June 2019

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Lane (Chair), Councillor Walker (Deputy Chair)
Councillors Ansell, Ashraf, G Eales, Kilby-Shaw, Roberts and Russell

Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing (items 7a) and 7b))
Marion Goodman, Head of Customers and Communities (items 5 &6)
Tracy Tiff, Democratic and Member Services Manager

Press James Averill, Democracy Reporter

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Aziz, Duffy, Flavell, Sargeant and Smith.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2019 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

There were none.

5. HERITAGE AND CULTURE

Marion Goodman, Head of Customers and Communities, apprised the Committee on heritage and culture. She referred to the recommendation of Overview and Scrutiny regarding Northampton becoming a city of culture by 2025; which had been very welcomed. The Committee heard that Officers, Members and Partners had been researching regarding submitting a bid and had noted that a number of towns had made a bid:

- Luton
- Tees Valley
- Lancashire

- Southampton

Marion Goodman confirmed that the above Authorities had put in a lot of work to day in respect of their bids such as:

- Luton had a budget of £350,000 for a pilot programme and extensive consultation
- Lancashire held an event and has a Cultural expert exploring the potential. A bidding team is being established.
- Tees Valley has convened a Task and Finish Group comprising a number of representatives. They are aiming for 2025.

The Committee was informed that there are a number of processes that must be followed to submit a bid, including:

- Write the bid which will include various assessments and costings
- Promotion campaign
- Engaging a professional
- Identify funds required

It is therefore proposed that a long term strategic vision and aim for Northampton to be a city of culture for 2029 would be launched. It was realised that 2025 was too soon. The Arts Council was supportive. It was commented that by this time projects such as the Vulcan works would be completed. Work will continue and funding would be identified.

The Chair commented that funding was key and this would be a fantastic piece of work.

Marion Goodman was thanked for her informative address.

AGREED: That the update is noted.

6. SPORTS POLICY

Marion Goodman, Head of Customers and Communities, referred to the carried motion of full Council of 11 March 2019:

“In preparation for the transition to Unitary we call upon NBC to produce a Sports Strategy for the people of Northampton that draws on the Sports Strategy for West Northamptonshire of 2009.

The purpose of this strategy, as well as reviewing current facilities, would be to identify gaps, reflect current user preferences and requirements.

Only by doing this can we protect the assets in Northampton for the people of the town.”

Officers had liaised with partners, including Northampton Leisure Trust regarding a Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Northampton Leisure Trust was keen to work with Northampton Borough Council.

The Committee suggested that smaller groups such as youth clubs and Scouts, are consulted with. It was noted that Community Engagement at Northampton Borough Council has a wide network that could be consulted with.

It was suggested that Marion Goodman provides a comprehensive update to a future meeting.

Marion Goodman, Head of Customers and Communities, was thanked for her address.

AGREED: That a further update is provided to the September 2019 meeting of this Committee.

7. MONITORING OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORTS

(A) HOMELESSNESS (PRE DECISION SCRUTINY)

Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing, referred to the comprehensive Action Plan regarding progress on the accepted recommendations contained with the Overview and Scrutiny Report: Homelessness (Pre Decision Scrutiny).

Phil Harris highlighted the salient points contained within the Action Plan emphasising the new Legislation had put extra demands on the Homeless Service.

The Committee made comment, asked questions and heard:

- A Multi-Agency Forum would be established. It was expected 20 Agencies would be initially involved at a Workshop that would be convened in September 2019.
- In response to the Chair's request for addresses to be included on the suite of advice leaflets; Phil Harris confirmed this would be included.
- In response to a question regarding the next Rough Sleepers Count, Phil Harris confirmed that he would inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the date.
- It was suggested that Councillors are offered mental health training and first aid training.
- In answer to a query regarding after hours service, Phil Harris confirmed that the Street Outreach Team would be widely promoted. The suite of leaflets would also advise what should be done in an emergency and who to contact.
- Phil Harris undertook to provide the statistics regarding the number of individuals in bed and breakfast accommodation. He provided details of the process for people moving from bed and breakfast accommodation.

Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing, was thanked for his informative address.

AGREED: That a further update is provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at is November 2019 regarding the Forums and final information and advice leaflets.

(B) CSE

Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing, highlighted the key points contained within the Action Plan of the accepted recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny report: Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). He advised that the Action Plan was work in progress and a number of the actions are tied in with work that is being undertaken on safeguarding.

The Committee asked comments, made comments and heard:

- Targets provide are realistic.
- Refresher training on safeguarding would be useful for Councillors
- Regarding recommendation 11: Northampton Borough Council actively encourages and hosts a series of briefings and training sessions for community groups in the borough (including community centres and youth groups), in order to raise awareness of how to recognise the signs of CSE and how to report it. Phil Harris confirmed that to reach youth groups and other community groups, Officers would go through the Community Engagement and Safety Team.

The Chair thanked Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing, for his informative address and asked that a further update is provided to the November 2019 meeting of this Committee.

AGREED: That a further update, including details on targets set, is provided to the November 2019 meeting of this Committee.

8. SCRUTINY PANELS

8A SCRUTINY PANEL 1

Councillor Russell, Chair, Scrutiny Panel 1 – Homelessness and Rough Sleepers thanked all those involved in this Review; particularly the rough sleeper who had shared his experiences with the Panel. She informed the Committee that she had given a presentation on this review to the East Midlands Scrutiny Network who had very much welcomed it and had commented on how well evidence was gathered by Northampton on its Scrutiny reviews.

AGREED: That the report: Homelessness and Rough Sleepers (May 2019) is approved and presented to Cabinet for consideration.

8B SCRUTINY PANEL 3

In the absence of Councillor Sargeant, Chair, Scrutiny Panel 3 – Northampton Post Unitary; Councillor Lane presented the report. He thanked the Mayor of Northampton 2018/2019 for addressing the Panel and providing information and also to all the other key expert advisors.

It was suggested that recommendation 6.1.8 is altered to read:

6.1.8 The re-establishment of the roles of Major's Serjeant and Town Serjeant, as Honorary roles, for example an Alderman or former Councillor are investigated.

AGREED: That, subject to the change to recommendation 6.1.8 as detailed above, the report: Northampton Post Unitary (May 2019) is approved and presented to Cabinet for consideration.

8C SCRUTINY PANEL 4

In the absence of Councillor Smith, Chair, Scrutiny Panel 4 – Adult Social Care Facilities; Councillor Russell presented the report. She highlighted the findings from the site visit to the London Borough of Islington

AGREED: That, the report: Adult Social Care Facilities (May 2019) is approved and presented to Cabinet for consideration.

9 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY EVALUATION OF O&S REPORTS WORKING GROUP

Councillor Lane, Chair, of the Overview and Scrutiny Evaluation of O&S Reports Working Group, presented the final report to the Committee. He emphasised that the findings had highlighted the good Overview and Scrutiny process at Northampton Borough Council.

AGREED: That the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Evaluation of O&S Reports Working Group is approved and presented to Cabinet for consideration.

10 POTENTIAL FUTURE PRE DECISION SCRUTINY

The Chair suggested that it would be requested that a briefing note on Northampton Forward; particularly around the consultation process. It would be further requested how Overview and Scrutiny could input into the decision making process.

AGREED: That the Leader of the Council is asked to attend the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide a briefing note on Northampton Forward ; particularly around the consultation process and how Overview and Scrutiny could input into the decision making process.

11 URGENT ITEMS

The Chair advised that Councillor Kilby-Shaw would be chairing the Climate Change Working Group and requested that the minutes of the Working Group are submitted to this Committee.

Councillor Kilby-Shaw confirmed that the inaugural meeting of the Working Group was scheduled for 18 June 2019 and that all Councillors were welcome to attend.

The meeting concluded at 7:37 pm