

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 30 September 2019

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Lane (Chair), Councillors Aziz, Duffy, Roberts, Russell and Smith

Councillor Jonathan Nunn, Leader of the Council
George Candler, Chief Executive
Councillor Mike Hallam, Cabinet Member for Environment
Chris Carvell, Contracts Manager
Councillor Stephen Hibbert, Cabinet
Louise Musson, Call Centre Manager
Tracy Tiff, Democratic and Member Services Manager

Member of the Public Mark Bocye

Press James Averill, Democracy Reporter

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received Councillors Ansell, G Eales and Walker.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 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)

Councillor Smith declared an interest as a Member of Northampton Leisure Trust – agenda item 6- Sports Policy.

Councillor Aziz declared an interest in agenda item 8 – Performance Monitoring Scrutiny, as a director of a Company that has houses in multiple occupancy (HMOs.)

5. NORTHAMPTON FORWARD

Councillor Nunn, Leader of the Council, and George Candler, Chief Executive, addressed the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and provided an update on Northampton Forward. Salient points:

- Since the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee a lot of progress has been made.
- The consultation has now finished. A lot of comments have been made and the Leader of the Council is working through the consultation comments but it appears that the majority of comments, over 50%, were supportive. There was strong encouragement for food and drink establishments within the town centre, history and culture makes people proud and there was also an acceptance of getting people living back in the town centre. Further comments were around improvement areas such as the Market Square and Gold Street. They need to be clean, units improved and other suggestions such as the fountain to be replaced. Christmas and Seasonal events were supported. The Drapery was highlighted as people felt it was not a comfortable place to cross; 26% said it needs to be made more pedestrian friendly. There was huge support for independent shops. Further comments included support for the restoration of buildings, more green space and more event space.
- Workshops were also held at the University of Northampton and in the town centre
- The consultants are finalising their work and their report is awaited.
- A Members' briefing will be scheduled at the appropriate time. A report will be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 16 October 2019 regarding the Town Centre Masterplan.
- The Rough Order of Magnitude (high level costings) was submitted to Government recently.
- The outline business case would be produced in January 2020, the full Business in April 2020 and the outcome reported in the summer of 2020.
- The Authority has been successful in a number of funding bids including the Stronger Town's Fund
- The Northampton Forward Board continues with its activity and the Cross Party Working Group continues to meet regularly.
- A further consultation is planned for December 2019 on the proposed areas that will form the business case submitted to government

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee made comment, asked questions and heard:

- In response to a query regarding ownership of buildings, the Committee heard that Gold Street has always been commercial but it was a good time for the Council to step in and acquire buildings to help improve shop fronts.
- The Market Square is one of the most valuable assets to the town and it is in a conservation area. Only 8% of respondents to the consultation commented that the Market Square should be left as it is.
- Local Plan, Part 2 - the intention is to adopt in Spring 2021. It was commented that December is not usually a good time to consult. The Leader of the Council confirmed that the timings of the consultation are driven by the submission date

- The Committee commented that plans need to be as strong as possible.
- Northampton Forward is an opportunity for all to be focussed on climate energy.

The Chair thanked Councillor Nunn, Leader of the Council, and George Candler, Chief Executive, for their informative address and asked for a further update at the November 2019 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

AGREED: That a further update on Northampton Forward is given to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 11 November 2019.

6. SPORTS POLICY

The update on the motion on the Sports Policy was noted. The Chair asked the Committee to forward to him any questions they might have and highlighted that progress on Motions is presented to full Council twice a year. It was suggested that the Sports Policy is included on the agenda of the November 2019 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

AGREED: That a further update on the Sports Policy is presented to the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny on 11 November 2019.

7. AIR QUALITY AND MANAGEMENT CHANGE WORKING GROUP

In the absence of the Chair of the Air Quality and Management Change Working Group; Councillor Hallam, Cabinet Member for Environment advised that the next meeting of the Working Group had been set for 8 October 2019. The two speakers at the recent meeting of full Council would be asked to attend the meeting; as would a representative from the Woodland Trust; along with a bag designer for supermarkets.

The Chair confirmed that Councillor Kilby-Shaw, Chair, Air Quality and Management Change Working Group, would provide an update to the November 2019 meeting of this Committee.

AGREED: That an update on the work of the Air Quality and Management Change Working Group is presented to the next meeting of this Committee.

8. PERFORMANCE MONITORING SCRUTINY

Councillor Hallam, Cabinet Member for Environment and Chris Carvell, Contracts Manager apprised the Committee on the following KPIs:

- ESCO2 - Percentage of household waste recycled and composted
- ESC09 - Percentage of fly tipping incidents removed within two working days of notification

A comprehensive written brief was circulated and the salient points were highlighted. The Committee heard that an end of year recycling figure of 49% would put NBC at around 85th

in the country compared to 219th. The "Clear Sack" Recycling Project being run in Far Cotton has shown that the increased level of recycling is far higher than the average increase across the Borough – this is a project we are looking to rollout further in areas not suitable for wheelie bins. Around 3000 properties were originally missed by Enterprise and didn't receive recycling bins even though these properties may have been suitable – a programme has been developed to roll these out in the coming weeks, this will also assist in increasing recycling percentages.

The Cabinet Member for Environment emphasised that flytip incidents are amongst the highest in the county and officers, along with the relevant stakeholders, are taking action to address this. The Warden team was recently featured in a national newspaper report ranking them 3rd highest nationally based on the amount of Fixed Penalty Notices they had issued. A new CCTV system is being trialled for enforcement and the cameras run on long life batteries. A camera is currently live in an undisclosed area. It is proposed that further cameras will be purchased.

The Committee made comment, asked questions and heard:

- It is a very good system but Councillors have received complaints about sack deliveries. The Committee was reassured that problems have now been rectified.
- In response to a query, the Cabinet Member confirmed that the longest wait for a bulky waste collection is one week.
- Should waste be fly-tipped on private land, officers have to speak with the landowner.

Councillor Stephen Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing, and Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing presented information on the following KPIs:

- HML01 – Total number of households living in temporary accommodation
- HM008 - Number of HMOs with an additional licence

A comprehensive written brief was circulated and the salient points were highlighted.

The Committee asked questions, made comment and heard:

- In response to a query regarding someone having to live in temporary accommodation, Phil Harris confirmed that both parties must make an effort and Officers do work with private tenants.
- It was confirmed that if people are homeless but living with family they are still included in the temporary accommodation figures
- There are different types of temporary accommodation, for example NPH has accommodation that is dedicated to temporary accommodation
- Individuals that are in temporary accommodation are given priority on the housing register; it is not common practice but they can bid for properties.

- In answer to a query regarding vulnerability, the Committee heard that Officers are careful to establish reasons why individuals are unable to stay with family
- Statistics are fairly stable currently
- In response to a query regarding whether HMOs are used for temporary accommodation, it was confirmed that they are not but hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation
- In accordance with HMO licensing standards are regulated and limits are set.
- Phil Harris confirmed that the consultation regarding HMOs ended in July and the Council is considering Article 4.
- In response to a number of unlicensed HMOs, Phil Harris advised that good, experienced Officers are in post and the consequences of non-licensing are serious.

Councillor Hallam, Cabinet Member for Environment and Chris Carvell, Contracts Manager Councillor Stephen Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing, and Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing

9. PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Chair asked the Committee for suggestions for future performance management scrutiny. He advised that he felt there were just four KPIs:

- HML01 – Total number of households living in temporary accommodation
- HM008 - Number of HMOs with an additional licence
- ESCO2 - Percentage of household waste recycled and composted
- ESC09 - Percentage of fly tipping incidents removed within two working days of notification

However these had been performance management scrutinised at this meeting, therefore it was suggested that the Committee keeps a watch on the above KPIs and should it feel the need to further performance management scrutinise them the Chair would contact the relevant Cabinet Members.

10. MONITORING OF O&S REPORTS

(A) DEMENTIA FRIENDLY TOWN

Louise Musson, Call Care Manager, presented the monitoring action plan in relation to the accepted recommendations of the Scrutiny Review - Dementia Friendly Town and highlighted the salient points.

The Committee made comment, asked questions and heard:

In response to a query regarding whether taxi drivers receive relevant training regarding dementia friendly, Louise Musson confirmed that she would liaise directly with the Licensing department regarding speaking with taxi drivers direct.

A keep safe card has been launched, however, taxi drivers understand what a keep safe card is

Concern was raised that dementia only features ones in the Local Plan and it was queried whether there was opportunity for it to be included more. It was confirmed that Northamptonshire County Council is responsible for the Dementia Strategy and this is currently being ratified. Comments made would be forwarded to the Head of Customers and Cultural Services.

Louise Musson, Call Care Manager, was thanked for her address.

AGREED: That a further update on the accepted recommendations of the Scrutiny Review - Dementia Friendly Town is presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 9 January 2020.

11. SCRUTINY PANELS

12. SCRUTINY PANEL 1

The written update was noted.

13. O&S WORKING GROUP - GANGS AND KNIFE CRIME

The written update was noted.

14. POTENTIAL FUTURE PRE DECISION SCRUTINY

There were none.

15. URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 7:36 pm