

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 8 June 2020

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Jamie Lane (Chair), Councillor Graham Walker (Deputy Chair) Councillors Tony Ansell, Rufia Ashraf, Aziz, Janice Duffy, Penny Flavell, Andrew Kilbride, Dennis Meredith, Emma Roberts, Cathrine Russell and Zoe Smith

Councillor Stephen Hibbert – Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing
Councillor Anna King – Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety
Marion Goodman – Director of Customers and Communities
Louise Musson – Call Care Manager
Tracy Tiff, - Democratic and Member Services Manager

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2020 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. NORTHAMPTON FORWARD

The Committee received a briefing note regarding Northampton Forward. The Chair suggested that should the Committee have any questions that these are forwarded to him in writing and he would ensure they are then provided to the Chief Executive for response.

The Committee commented that questions that would be submitted would be around whether the Covid19 pandemic had impacted upon progress and that Northampton Forward should make reference to climate emergency.

AGREED: (1) That the update is noted.
(2) That the Committee forwards any questions it has on Northampton Forward to the Chair who would ensure they are then provided to the Chief Executive for response.

6. MONITORING OF PREVIOUS O&S REPORTS

(A) DEMENTIA FRIENDLY TOWN

Councillor Anna King, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Engagement presented the action plan in relation to the accepted recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny report: Dementia Friendly Town. She highlighted the salient points.

The Committee asked questions, made comment and heard:

- New employees would be dementia friendly trained
- In response to a query regarding progress on the accepted recommendations, the Cabinet Member advised that just one Officer is responsible for implementing the recommendations, which is in addition to her substantive role. A lot is reliant upon third parties too. Contact has been made with the Alzheimer's Society regarding a full day's training for staff. It is hoped that this training will be able to take place.
- A Museum Dementia Friendly Group is in existence.
- A Memory Group took place in September 2019 and it is hoped that a similar event can take place in September 2020.
- The possibilities of a Dementia Village are being investigated.
- It was emphasised that it is ambitious for the town to become Dementia Friendly in just a year; it would take time; however, a lot of people are doing a great deal for people living with dementia.
- The Committee highlighted that joined up working is vital and it would be a good opportunity for this to take place with the forthcoming Unitary Authority. Councillor King confirmed that she is a member of a number of shadow Authority Task and Finish Groups and would ensure dementia friendly is looked at. Dementia Friendly has been covered within the Customer Services Working Group.
- In response to a query regarding training on Dementia Friends for both Councillors and Officers, the Committee heard that this might be hosted remotely.
- It was confirmed that when the action plan is updated and presented to a future meeting of this Committee that an appendix is included detailing all groups and organisations involved.

AGREED: That the update is noted and a further update is presented to the September 2020 meeting of this Committee.

(B) CSE

The Chair advised that an update had not been provided and he would request that the Action Plan is provided to the next meeting of this Committee.

AGREED: That monitoring of the accepted recommendations contained within the Action Plan – CSE is presented to the July 2020 meeting of this Committee.

(C) CULTURE AND TOURISM

The Chair referred to the Action Plan detailing the progress against the accepted recommendations contained within the O&S report – Culture and Tourism, commenting that good progress had been made.

The Committee made comment, asked questions and heard:

- In response to a query regarding the virtual tour of the museum, it was confirmed that following the tender process, a local company had been engaged to undertake this work and would also be developing a heritage trail for the town also.
- Due to social distancing requirements it was confirmed that projects would now take longer to complete; additionally, a number of Museum staff have been seconded to the Resilience Hub.
- In answer to a question why just eight blue plaques would be installed initially, the Committee heard that the Cabinet Member for Planning is the lead Member and this query would be forwarded to him. It was added that further research needs to be undertaken. It was further queried whether Councillors could use their Councillor Empowerment Fund to help fund a blue plaque.
- The Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety confirmed that it was hoped that the civic service would take place in September 2020.
- In answer to a concern that the walls in the Abington Park Museum often being bare, the Cabinet Member confirmed that she would discuss this with Officers to ascertain whether pictures or artefacts could be displayed on the walls.
- The Chair was pleased to note how wonderful the Queen Eleanor Cross looked now it had been cleaned up.
- The importance of the leathercraft museum was highlighted and that its heritage should be protected. Councillor King confirmed that she would arrange a meeting with the lead of the sub-group that was looking at issues including the leathercraft.

AGREED: (1) That the update is noted.

(2) That a further update is presented to the September 2020 meeting of this Committee.

7. PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Committee discussed the Performance Monitoring Report and the Chair invited members to suggest measures for future performance monitoring scrutiny.

The Committee suggested the following for future performance monitoring scrutiny:

- ESC06% of land and highways assessed falling below acceptable levels – detritus (NI195b) (4M) - The Chair referred to agenda item 8 advising that this indicator couples with the requested briefing note on fly tipping and both could therefore be covered at the same time.
- HML01 total number of households living in temporary accommodation
- HML07 total number of households that are prevented from becoming homeless
- NI157a %age major planning applications determined in 13 weeks or agreed extension

- 157b %age of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks or agreed extension

AGREED: That performance scrutiny is undertaken on the above indicators over two meetings of this Committee – July 2020 and September 2020.

8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2020/2021

The Chair presented the briefing note that detailed the outcome of the O&S Work Programming event that took place earlier in the year. He suggested:

A report on NPH and affordable housing is presented to the Committee initially, prior to a Scrutiny Panel being set up

A review on a Tree Policy for the town is put on hold until meetings can be held at the Guildhall

A remote training session on Section 106 Agreements is to be arranged and it was suggested that the Committee attend this and then at its July 2020 meeting consider whether there are any further questions to be put to the Cabinet Member for Planning fly tipping and littering – this issue would be covered at the July meeting of the Committee when Members were undertaking performance management scrutiny.

The Committee requested that it is provided with details of the West Northants Shadow Authority and also details of the impacts of Covid19 to the Authority to its July 2020 meeting.

AGREED: That: A report on NPH and affordable housing is presented to the Committee initially, prior to a Scrutiny Panel being set up

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The Committee is provided with details of the West Northants Shadow Authority and also details of the impacts of Covid19 to the Authority to its July 2020 meeting.

9. SCRUTINY PANELS

10. SCRUTINY PANEL 1

The Chair presented the briefing note regarding the O&S Food Poverty Scrutiny Panel. The Panel has not met recently and it was felt that it could meet now remotely over Zoom.

The Committee considered the briefing note, made comment, asked questions and heard:

- It was suggested that there was a need to revisit the scope of this Review in light of Covid19 and ascertain whether the scope requires widening.
- Concern was raised that school meal vouchers would not be provided over the summer holidays.
- It was noted that some groups and organisations have been providing extra food parcels
- The good work of the food banks and voluntary sector was noted.

AGREED: That the briefing is noted.
That meetings of the Scrutiny Panel reconvene remotely.

11. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP - GANGS AND KNIFE CRIME

The Chair presented the briefing note regarding the O&S Working Group – Gangs and Knife Crime. The Working Group has not met recently and it was felt that it could meet now remotely over Zoom.

The Committee considered the briefing note, made comment, asked questions and heard:

- The hard work of the Police was recognised in dealing with gangs in the main cities
- The lack of facilities such as youth clubs was highlighted.

AGREED: That the briefing is noted.
That meetings of the Working Group reconvene remotely.

12. POTENTIAL FUTURE PRE DECISION SCRUTINY.

The Chair confirmed that he would write to Councillor Hibbert and the Director of Housing and Wellbeing regarding pre scrutiny of the trial of buy back properties. He would also contact the Cabinet Member for Finance regarding him providing information to Overview and Scrutiny on the Impact of Covid19 on the budget and the impact on the budget for the Unitary Authority.

13. URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 7:05 pm