

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 23 March 2015

PRESENT: Councillor Jamie Lane (Chair); Councillor Brian Sargeant (Deputy Chair); Councillors Tony Ansell, Elizabeth Gowen, Anna King, Phil Larratt, Nilesh Ramesh Parekh, Suresh Patel and Les Marriott (substituting for Councillor Rufia Ashraf)

Councillor Lee Mason

Officers	Tracy Tiff Nicola Brindley	Scrutiny Officer Democratic Services Officer
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1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rufia Ashraf (Councillor Les Marriott substituted) and Councillor Matt Lynch.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2015 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

Councillor Lee Mason addressed the Committee on agenda item 6 – b Scrutiny Panel 2 – Poverty in the Town.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

There were none.

**5. CABINET'S RESPONSE TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORT:
MANAGEMENT AND REGULATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING,
INCLUDING HIMOS**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received Cabinet's response to the Overview and Scrutiny report: Management and Regulation of Private Sector Housing, including HIMOs. It was noted that Cabinet had accepted all of the recommendations contained within the report.

This report would now be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Monitoring Work Programme 2015/2016 and the Cabinet Member would be asked to attend a meeting of this Committee in the autumn to provide an update of the implementation of the accepted recommendations.

AGREED: (1) That Cabinet's response to the O&S report: Management and Regulation of Private Sector Housing, including HIMOs is noted.
(2) That the O&S report: Management and Regulation of Private Sector Housing, including HIMOs is added to the O&S Monitoring Work Programme 2015/2016.

6. SCRUTINY PANELS

6.A SCRUTINY PANEL 1

Councillor Jamie Lane, Chair, Scrutiny Panel 1 – Interpersonal Violence, presented the final report to the Committee. It had been a comprehensive review with a wealth of evidence received. The Right Honourable Theresa May, MP, had made suggestions for inclusion within the report when she visited Northampton with Michael Ellis, MP, and had requested to see the final report.

AGREED: That the final report of Scrutiny Panel 1 – Interpersonal Violence is approved and presented to Cabinet in the Municipal year 2015/2016.

6.B SCRUTINY PANEL 2

Councillor Lee Mason addressed the Committee regarding the report and advised that there was considerable concern about the amount of poverty within the wards. There had been knock on effects from the bedroom tax and an increase for the food banks. The recommendation was that they had needed to use the third sector for guidance and support as it was an ongoing concern. She considered that it was not going to improve with the Universal Credit and would welcome another review in the future.

Councillor Elizabeth Gowen, Chair, Scrutiny Panel 2, advised that this had been an in-depth review with a number of key expert advisors presenting evidence. Housing benefit claims had increased especially for working families and the Council already provided help and advice for new tenants not to get into debt in the first place. The recommendation in the report would help improve the situation.

Thanks were given to the Scrutiny Officer, Councillor Lee Mason and the other members of the Scrutiny Panel for their input.

AGREED: That the final report of Scrutiny Panel 2 – Poverty in the Town is approved and presented to Cabinet in the Municipal year 2015/2016.

6.C SCRUTINY PANEL 3

Councillor Tony Ansell, Chair, Scrutiny Panel 3 – Keep Northampton Tidy, presented the final report to the Committee. It had been a comprehensive review with a wealth of evidence received.

He confirmed that they had compared Northampton, Peterborough and Market Harborough and found that Northampton had been ahead of Peterborough. He considered that Enterprise had been doing a better job although there were still issues with fly tipping and only one person had been prosecuted in the last two years. Fly posting was still a problem in town and many were months out of date. Dog fouling was also a problem and only a handful of fixed penalty notices had been issued.

He expressed his disappointment at the number of Councillors and witness experts who attended meetings but thanked those who did.

Thanks were also given to the Scrutiny Officer and the Scrutiny Panel.

AGREED: That the final report of Scrutiny Panel 3 – Keep Northampton Tidy is approved and presented to Cabinet in the Municipal year 2015/2016.

6.D OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PARKING WORKING GROUP

Councillor Brian Sargeant, Chair, O&S Parking Working Group, presented the final report to the Committee. Councillor Sargeant advised that following a motion to full Council this Working Group had been set up. It had been a short sharp Scrutiny activity that had received a lot of evidence through site visits, desktop research and responses to the core questions.

He confirmed that the County Council had reviewed the situation 12 months ago and they had seen a great improvement since then. He noted that the Claret car park had not been used on Match day and had made a recommendation to Cabinet that it be opened. They had received good suggestions from Cobblers and Saints. A recommendation of the final report was that the situation be reviewed again once the new stands had gone up.

AGREED: That the final report of the O&S Parking Working Group is approved and presented to Cabinet in the Municipal year 2015/2016.

6.E OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TREE MAINTENANCE WORKING GROUP

Councillor Phil Larratt, Chair, O&S Tree Maintenance Working Group, presented the final report to the Committee. Councillor Larratt informed the Committee that this Working Group had been set up following a motion to full Council. The Scrutiny activity had received a lot of evidence which had informed the conclusions and recommendations of the final report.

They had set out to review problems and complaints with the trees in the different wards and had found that light was the main issue. A copy of the County Council's Standards for tree work was attached to the report. They had liaised with Northamptonshire Partnership Homes and were keen to work with the Council and planning department. The recommendations were that light should be taken into account due to green energy and solar panels this made an impact on people's lives. It should be developed further for the whole County.

Councillor Marriott commented that the report was covered well over a short period and hoped to see in the future the right sort of tree in the right place.

Councillor Phil Larratt gave thanks to everyone's support.

AGREED: That the final report of the O&S Tree Maintenance Working Group is approved and presented to Cabinet in the Municipal year 2015/2016.

7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2014/2015

The Chair presented the draft wording of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014/2015 to the Committee for approval. Following approval of the Committee the Annual Report would be finalised and presented to Council in the Municipal year 2015/2016.

AGREED: That the wording for the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014/2015 is approved and the Report is presented to full Council in the Municipal year 2015/2016.

8. REPORT BACK FROM NBC'S REPRESENTATIVE TO NCC'S HEALTH, ADULT CARE AND WELLBEING CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Suresh Patel provided an update from Northamptonshire County Council (NCC)'s Health, Adult Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee; highlighting the salient points of the meeting.

He confirmed that the County Council had adopted the assessment and would transfer to them on 1st July. The money had been ring-fenced and they were assessing 66 clients. He confirmed that it was vital that someone from the Council attended meetings of this Committee.

AGREED: That the update is noted.

9. URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 6:35 pm