

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Wednesday, 24 July 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Nunn (Chair); Councillor Larratt (Deputy Chair); Councillors Eldred, Hadland, Hallam, J Hill, Hibbert and King

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2019 were agreed and signed by the Leader.

3. INTENTION TO HOLD PART OF THE MEETING IN PRIVATE IF NECESSARY

There were no items to be considered in private. Items 15 and 16 which had been due to be considered in private had been withdrawn and would be discussed at a future meeting.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

6. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

6.A REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ADULT SOCIAL CARE FACILITIES

Councillor Lane as the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Smith as Chair of the Task Panel presented the report. The issue had been referred from Council to Overview and Scrutiny for joint consideration by both NBC and NCC. However, no one from NCC had come forward for the panel which was disappointing, particularly in the light of unitary, when an integrated adult social care system would be needed.

Councillor Smith stated that the study had highlighted the importance of integrated systems with all agencies involved and effective data-sharing. Additionally, from a site visit to Islington, it was clear that effective care and continuity of care were much easier to establish where agencies were under one roof.

Councillor Lane expressed thanks to the Scrutiny Support Officer and to the Chair of the Task Panel. He asked for Cabinet's consideration of the 6 recommendations and for an early response. The Leader stated that the report was excellent and fully supported the recommendations.

The Leader pointed out that at a unitary meeting that day there had been ongoing progress on integrating health and social care which was positive. The Health and Wellbeing forum had been reinvigorated for Northampton with a number of projects bidding for public health money to support around that agenda, which was very valuable.

Councillor King stated that NBC were already working on safeguarding and care as well as social prescribing. This piece of work was excellent and a good example for the proposed unitary council.

In regard to the recommendation to link a housing officer to Northampton General Hospital, Councillor Hibbert pointed out that weekly meetings currently take place with the hospital to discuss housing issues.

Councillor Stone pointed out that, although functioning, the NCC Adult Social Care service was massively overspent and fragile. She asked whether the NCC Adult Social Care Strategic Plan had been shared with NBC. The Head of Housing and Wellbeing agreed to follow this up. Social prescribing was effective and well-implemented elsewhere; it would be useful to look at best practice. Councillor Stone also expressed concern that NCC don't regard cuckooing as a safeguarding issue and had already discussed this with Councillor King.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet noted the report and recommendations.

6.B REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - NORTHAMPTON POST UNITARY

Councillor Lane as Chair of Overview and Scrutiny introduced the report and thanked the Scrutiny Support Officer and Councillor Sargeant as Chair of the Task Panel for their support.

Councillor Lane outlined the recommendations and noted that the date of the final recommendation 2.1.10 was likely to be postponed. In relation to 2.1.7, Councillor Larratt pointed out that the Mayor was also President of the Sea Cadets during the year of office.

Councillor Birch questioned how the mayoralty would integrate with the town and parish councils and asked whether the town council would have control of the charitable trust if this were set up. These were questions which would need to be considered in due course.

Councillor Larratt pointed out that the Mayor would be for the whole of the borough area, not just the town.

The Leader and the Deputy Leader considered the report to be excellent, and the recommendations were noted.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet noted the report and recommendations.

7. FINANCE MONITORING TO 30 MAY 2019

Councillor Eldred as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted the bi-monthly financial monitoring report to the end of May 2019 and noted that there had been an overspend of £768,000. This was down from what had been predicted last year, and it was hoped to balance the budget by the end of the year.

Councillor Stone expressed concern at the overspend on temporary accommodation and

considered that there should be better measures in place to forecast need.

Councillor Stone queried why the over spend of £0.119m on the waste contract had not been predicted. Councillor Hallam pointed out NBC were currently receiving less for recycling. Recycling was a commodity product and the gains or losses resulting from market movements were shared between NBC and the supplier. If the contract had remained in-house, then all losses would have been borne by NBC. Although recycling had increased by 6% year on year, the money received for it was reducing. This was a problem faced by all councils.

Councillor Stone asked why £25m had been put aside for affordable homes. The Chief Finance Officer stated that this had been agreed by full Council so that funds were available immediately if the opportunity arose to purchase homes. Councillor Stone stated her opposition to purchasing private homes with public money. The Leader pointed out that 150 homes had already been completed and 500 more were in the planning and contracting process. Builders were required to build affordable homes within developments, and it was right that with the number of homeless people in the borough, NBC should seek to do whatever possible to provide more social housing.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet noted the contents of the report and noted that future reports will set out the actions being taken by Corporate Management Board (CMB) to address issues arising and mitigate the risks of overspends.

8. DRAFT SPECIALIST HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

Councillor James Hill as the relevant Cabinet Member outlined the report seeking approval of the draft Specialist Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for public consultation.

Councillor Smith stated that it was important that the right balance of housing was provided and expressed concern that developers were currently able to undertake an independent viability test, which often resulted in less than the full quota of affordable housing being provided. Councillor Hill agreed, but noted that the SPD would carry weight with the Planning Inspectorate. The Head of Planning pointed out that the Government had just issued guidance suggesting that all local authorities should have SPDs on this issue.

RESOLVED:

- 1 Cabinet approved the draft Northampton Specialist Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for consultation for 8 weeks from 8 August 2019 to 3 October 2019.
- 2 Cabinet delegated authority to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning to make minor non-material spelling, formatting and other amendments to the consultation documents where they do not alter the intent of the SPD.

9. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR REPLACEMENT AND RENEWAL OF NBC STREET LIGHTS

Councillor Larratt as the relevant Cabinet Member introduced the report seeking authority for the contract to upgrade streetlights. A survey of all 1300 streetlights had taken place.

Once brought up to standard, these would be placed on a maintenance contract which would be more cost effective than the current ad hoc system. A further report would be brought to Cabinet in the autumn in respect of the maintenance contract.

Councillor Birch queried the service level agreement on maintenance; the timescale for repair was particularly important in identified high-crime areas. Councillor Larratt pointed out that maintenance would be considered once upgrading of the streetlights had been completed.

The Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager stated that the contractor should be appointed in August 2019, with works taking place between October 2019 and March 2020.

Councillor Ashraf asked when Community Safety walks would be organised to identify blind spots where crime took place. Councillor Larratt pointed out that the current plan related to existing stock, not new lights. New lights could potentially be provided through Community Safety, but this would be a separate matter. Councillor King offered to meet for a Community Safety walk.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet delegated authority to the Chief Executive, Northampton Borough Council, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and the Chief Finance Officer (s151), to enter into a contract with Balfour Beatty Street Lighting Ltd to undertake a scheme of column replacements and lamp renewals to street lighting in the Borough.

10. DESIGNATION OF AN ENHANCED ADDITIONAL HMO LICENSING SCHEME

This item was deferred until September 2019.

11. DRAFT PARKING STANDARDS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

Councillor Hill as the relevant Cabinet Member outlined the report seeking approval for consultation. Although parking was the responsibility of NCC, there were special needs in Northampton which required attention.

Councillor Ashraf stated that electric vehicle infrastructure together with provision for alternative transport such as cycleways was essential. She also considered that planning permission for Houses in Multiple Occupation should be refused if adequate parking was not provided.

The Head of Planning stated that EV points were covered by the current policy. Cycleways were covered by the Local Plan Part 2 which had recently gone out for consultation. Parking provision was not part of parking standards – the design and management issues would need to be looked at by the unitary council. At present it was not possible to refuse planning applications for HMOs on parking grounds – although Item 13 later in the meeting would strengthen the criteria by which these applications were judged.

RESOLVED:

- 1 Cabinet noted the contents of the draft Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document and agreed its release for public consultation (Appendix 1).
- .2 Cabinet delegated authority to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning to make minor non-material spelling, formatting, mapping and

other amendments to the consultation documents where they do not alter the intent of those documents.

12. WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE STRATEGIC PLAN - ISSUES CONSULTATION

Councillor Hill as the relevant Cabinet Member presented the report seeking approval for the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit to go out to public consultation on the Issues Consultation document for the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan.

Councillor McCutcheon referred to page 103 and considered that the Joint Core Strategy had set the wrong priorities – for example, the Oxford-Cambridge arc. Councillor Hill pointed out that the vision was needed in order to apply for funding as opportunities became available.

Councillor Hadland considered that more prominence should be given in the consultation to the Northern Orbital Road (page 122).

Councillor Larratt stated that clarification was needed on East-West rail which, as part of the Oxford-Cambridge arc, would provide an additional route to London (Old Oak Common) and open up the South-West. North-South rail would open up the route between Northampton and Market Harborough (p122).

The Head of Planning pointed out that feedback was helpful, although at this stage these were headings identifying relevant issues, for which detail would be developed in due course.

RESOLVED:

Provided Daventry District Council and South Northamptonshire Council also agree, Cabinet approved the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan – Issues Consultation for public consultation.

13. DRAFT HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

Councillor Hill as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report which brought findings from the Loughborough University study on HMOs. This aimed to reduce the concentration of HMOs from 15% to 10% of dwellings within a 50 metre radius of the application site.

Councillor Stone considered the description of need on page 236 to be unsatisfactory. HMOs resulted from low wages and high rents. There were safeguarding issues around vulnerable people such as care leavers and asylum seekers. Stronger enforcement was needed and a reduction in the backlog of investigations. Planning standards should be higher; for example, no person living in a HMO should be without an en-suite bathroom.

Councillor Stone was pleased to note the robust description of parking issues in HMOs.

Councillor Hill stated that standards would be raised by encouraging good landlords and HMOs.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet approved the draft Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for consultation for 8 weeks from 8 August to 3 October 2019.

Cabinet delegated authority to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning to make minor non-material spelling, formatting, mapping and other amendments to the consultation documents where they do not alter the intent of the document.

The meeting concluded at 7:10 pm