

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 15 July 2019

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

Councillor Jonathan Nunn, Leader of the Council
George Candler, Chief Executive
Ruth Austin, Environmental Services and Licensing Manager
Councillor Danielle Stone – observing

Dr M Dickie, Chair, Friends of Northampton Castle

Press James Averill, Democracy Reporter

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2019 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Duffy, Flavell, Graystone and Roberts.

3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

Dr Dickie, Chair, Friends of Northampton Castle addressed the Committee on agenda item 5 – Northampton Forward.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

There were none.

5. NORTHAMPTON FORWARD

Dr Dickie, Chair, Friends of Northampton Castle, addressed the Committee emphasising the need for a focus on local history. She conveyed concern that there was not a local historian on the Board and a Heritage Strategy had not been produced. Dr Dickie gave a brief history of the town, advising that the town began around the 8th or 9th Century at Black Lion Hill and had expanded east from there. Dr Dickie referred to when the town centre had walls and gates and asked that the gates were brought back so that medieval history could be retained. There needs to be a destination for people to visit Northampton. Dr Dickie concluded her address by advising that the Friends of Northampton Castle had a website and contained within this was a petition - *“Create a public park celebrating the history of Northampton!”*

Dr Dickie was thanked for her address.

Councillor Jonathan Nunn, Leader of the Council, and George Candler, Chief Executive, gave the Committee a briefing on Northampton Forward.

The Committee heard that town centres are changing dramatically, including Northampton town centre; due mainly to the impact of online shopping and out of town retail centres. However, 35% of the town centre of Northampton is retail; which is more than other town centres. A masterplan will be created and consists of two stages. Over 300 towns expressed an interest and Northampton is one of 41 towns that has been included in the list for funding. Northampton has the ambition and assets to make the town centre really good and become more of a destination; there is a need for there to be an offer to attract people into the town. It was acknowledged that Northampton Borough Council (NBC) could not deliver this on its own and was keen to ensure that everyone's views had been captured. A full consultation process took place and 600 responses were received; in addition, a shop was used in the Grosvenor centre for the consultation and a further 800 responses came in. NBC is also working closely with the University of Northampton. A number of sub-groups will be set up to work on different streams. Councillor Nunn confirmed that historians would be a key part of the process. It was highlighted that decisions would be made through Cabinet and full Council. The next stage of the process would be around heritage; for example the restoration of shop fronts.

The Committee asked questions, made comment and heard:

- It was queried whether this would provide an opportunity to increase green spaces in the town and use solar panels. It was acknowledged that the borough of Northampton does consist of a lot of green space but there is little in the town centre.
- It was commented that funding is available via the urban tree planting scheme.
- The aesthetics of the shop fronts in St Giles Street was commended and it was suggested that this could be replicated in Abington Street. Councillor Nunn supported this suggestion.
- Concern was raised regarding the current location of the Tourist Information Centre. NBC is working with Northamptonshire County Council regarding the future use of County Hall.
- Heritage weekend is scheduled to take place during September 2019.
- In response to a query regarding the use of empty shops, Councillor Nunn confirmed that the Grosvenor Centre is increasingly community focussed.
- In answer to a query regarding the results of the consultation, Councillor Nunn confirmed that he could attend a future meeting of this Committee to provide future details. He confirmed that the questionnaire was comprehensive and took over 20 minutes to complete. It was queried how many individuals started the questionnaire but failed to complete it.

Councillor Nunn and George Candler were thanked for their address and were invited to attend the next meeting to provide a further update.

AGREED: That the update is noted and a further briefing will be presented to the September 2019 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6. AIR QUALITY AND MANAGEMENT CHANGE WORKING GROUP

Councillor Kilby-Shaw, Chair, Air Quality and Management Change Working Group, presented the minutes of the inaugural meeting of the Air Quality and Management Change Working Group that took place on 18 June 2019 and highlighted the salient points.

The Committee asked questions, made comment and heard:

- In response to a query regarding the planting of additional trees, Councillor Kilby-Shaw advised that UK has a target of planting a certain number of trees per year; this target has been exceeded by Scotland and Wales but not by England. It takes ten years for trees to grow and reduce carbon. Councillor Kilby-Shaw gave an example of an organisation, Nationwide Building Society that has been reducing its carbon omissions since 2015.
- It was noted that generally people are pro-carbon omission reductions, are recycling more and buying more responsible goods. Car manufacturers are making both electric and hybrid vehicles.

The date of the next meeting of the Air Quality and Management Change Working Group has not as yet been scheduled but it expected to take place in September 2019, the minutes of which will be presented to the September meeting of this Committee.

AGREED: That the update is noted and the minutes of the next meeting of the Air Quality and Management Change Working Group are presented to this Committee for information.

7. MONITORING OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORT

(A) CEMETERIES

Ruth Austin, Environmental Services and Licensing Manager, presented the Monitoring Action Plan – Cemeteries to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and highlighted the key points.

Ruth Austin was asked to congratulate the Cemeteries Team on behalf of the Committee for their hard work.

AGREED: That a final update on the accepted recommendations contained within the O&S Report - Cemeteries at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 November 2019.

8. PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Corporate Performance All Measures and Outturn Report – March 2019 and requested that the relevant Cabinet Member and Head of Service attends the next meeting of this Committee to provide an update on the following Key Performance Indicators:

- 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

AGREED: That Overview and Scrutiny undertakes performance management scrutiny at its next meeting on the following key performance indicators:

- 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

9. SCRUTINY PANELS

10. SCRUTINY PANEL 1 - FOOD POVERTY

Councillor Meredith, Chair of Scrutiny Panel 1, presented the scope for approval.

AGREED: That the scope of the Review for Scrutiny Panel 1 – Food Poverty is approved.

11. WORKING GROUP - GANGS AND KNIFE CRIME

Councillor Walker, Chair of the Working Group, presented the scope for approval.

AGREED: That the scope of the Review for the Working Group - Gangs and Knife Crime is approved.

12. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORTING AND MONITORING WORKING GROUP

The Chair gave background to the Overview and Scrutiny Reporting and Monitoring Working Group. There was a need to confirm the membership for 2019/2020

Meetings were confirmed as:

- 11 November 2019
- 18 December 2019

Commencing at 5:15pm

Membership of the Working Group:

Councillor Lane (Chair); Councillor Walker (Deputy Chair); Councillors Meredith, Russell, Kilby Shaw, and Sargeant.

AGREED: That the membership of the Reporting and Monitoring Working for 2019/2020 is agreed as detailed above.

13. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2018/2019

The Chair presented the O&S Annual Report for 2018/2019 for the Committee's consideration and approval.

AGREED: That the O&S Annual Report for 2018/2019 approved and presented to full Council in September 2019.

14. POTENTIAL FUTURE PRE DECISION SCRUTINY

The Committee would consider the progress report regarding Northampton Forward at its next meeting.

15. URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 19:30 hours