

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 8 September 2014

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Lane (Chair), Councillors Brian Sargeant (Vice Chair), Councillors Tony Ansell, Rufia Ashraf as substitute for Joy Capstick, Mick Ford, Elizabeth Gowen, Phil Larratt, Lee Mason, Suresh Patel and Winston Strachan

Councillor Mary Markham	Cabinet Member (Housing)
Councillor Tim Hadland (Planning, Enterprise and Regeneration)	Cabinet Member

Officers	Glenn Hammonds	Head of Corporate Finance
	Phil Morrison	Assistant Head of Finance
	Tim Bruce	Interim Asset Strategy and Technical Services Manager
	Tracy Tiff	Scrutiny Officer
	Nicola Brindley	Democratic Services Officer

Observer Tom Appleyard

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Sivaramen Subbarayan, Nilesh Ramesh Parekh, Anna King and Joy Capstick.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2014 were agreed as a true record.

3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

Councillor Jamie Lane declared an interest in item 6 as a member of the Planning Committee.

Councillor Mick Ford declared an interest in item 6 as a member of the Planning Committee.

Councillor Lee Mason declared an interest in item 6 as a member of the Planning Committee and Item 5 as a member of the ALMO Shadow Board.

Councillor Suresh Patel declared an interest in Item 10 as a Northamptonshire County Council Cabinet Member for Adult Care Services

5. ALMO

Glen Hammonds, Head of Corporate Finance addressed the Committee and presented a briefing with regards to the ALMO and how the Housing Revenue finances worked into the General Housing Fund. There was also an introduction on Northampton Partnership Homes and the forthcoming changes.

Phil Morrison presented a report and in response to a question confirmed that the CCTV monitoring costs were included in the figures. He confirmed that the General Fund changes were reviewed annually and audited by external auditors. The level of charges was set by the Chief Finance Officer.

Northamptonshire Partnership Homes were managing the HRA account and the General Fund Account.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

6. NORTHAMPTON BUS TERMINAL

Councillor Tim Hadland addressed the Committee and confirmed that there had been a delay in installing the permanent barriers but this work was due to start in the week commencing 22nd September and the sandbags be removed. The heating and cooling system would be installed in October and the extension and end panels for the Drapery would be installed in the next few weeks. Victoria Street toilets would be presented to the Planning Committee on the 13th September and installed thereafter as well as extending and widening the shelters in Victoria Street.

In response to a question, Councillor Hadland confirmed the installation of the heating and cooling system should be minimal disruption to the public.

Councillor Phil Larratt confirmed that he represented the south of the town and was pleased to hear that the shelters would have ends on them but wanted clarification on whether they were full or half ends and he had also received complaints from his constituents about the amount of time they had to spend on the bus before they were able to be let off. There needed to be a drop off point sooner.

Councillor Tim Hadland confirmed that there were footpath restrictions but would make the shelters as big as possible. They would review different solutions for a new drop off point for his constituents and would keep Councillor Phil Larratt informed of the progress.

In response to a question, Councillor Tim Hadland confirmed that planning consent was required for the toilets in Victoria Street and the length of the shelters would be double the length they were now.

Councillor Tony Ansell noted that there had been a smashed window in the bus station and there did not seem to be any maintenance carried out on the building. He considered that it was badly thought out from start to finish and had created a lot of criticism and hoped the railway station did not follow suit.

Councillor Tim Hadland confirmed that any large change would encounter teething problems and comments. The demolition on the Greyfriars site would start soon and would progress on the development of Northampton. In response to a question, Councillor Tim Hadland confirmed the sequence of the lights in the area had been designed to keep the buses moving although some people would cross the road regardless.

Councillor Jamie Lane confirmed that Northamptonshire Police had sent a letter to the

Committee in response to queries raised at the previous meeting and he informed of the key points contained within the letter which had suggested an ANPR camera be situated at the bottom of the Drapery which would issue fixed penalty notices to drivers to stop them driving up there.

Councillor Phil Larratt suggested that S106 monies could be used to purchase a camera for the bottom of the Drapery and on St Giles Square to stop people going the wrong way.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

7. NBC OWNED STREET LIGHTING

Councillor Mary Markham, Cabinet Member for Housing, presented a report on NBC owned street lighting and confirmed that all the work had been completed and they had reviewed all lights even those on adopted roads. Work was ongoing with Balfour Betty and they had a business plan in place for the maintenance of the lights.

Councillor Phil Larratt thanked Councillor Mary Markham and staff for their work. He was pleased that they had identified 359 lights owned by NBC.

In response to a question from Councillor Phil Larratt, Tim Bruce, Interim Asset Strategy and Technical Manager confirmed that they had walked the estates and temporary marked the lampposts which were NBC owned. They used a numbering system and put an aluminium strip on it with an ID number. They would use a GIS system to identify where the lamppost was and deal with it. They would investigate as to whether they could bring some of the lights up to an adoptable standard and then ask NCC to maintain them.

Councillor Phil Larratt confirmed that there was scope for the number of lights to be reduced by using modern and brighter lights which would still provide adequate lighting.

Tim Bruce confirmed that he would circulate the report of where the lampposts were to the members. They would be in the public domain although there was no timetable for that as yet.

In response to a question from Councillor Winston Strachan, Tim Bruce confirmed that some roads on the estate had not been adopted and would ensure that the roads and lights were in the strategy although it might take some years to deliver.

He confirmed that garage sites needed good lighting and if the demand for garages were high then the lighting would go with them. He confirmed that they were unable to identify how many NBC lights were switched off by NCC.

Agreed: The report be noted and the document detailing the location of NBC street lighting be circulated to the Committee.

8. SCRUTINY PANELS

8.A SCRUTINY PANEL 1 - IMPACT OF THE WELFARE REFORM ACT

Councillor Lee Mason presented a report on the Welfare Reform Act which was due to be received by Cabinet on 12 November 2014. She confirmed that there had been a considerable impact on people as their expenses had increased while their wages had not. They had received more telephone enquiries and the Discretionary Housing Payments had helped elevate some problems. Some people were unable to move as there were not enough two bedroom properties and there were also school issues. Some people had lost

their benefits and had to wait up to a year to get them reinstated.

They had received evidence from local voluntary organisations on the reforms and had dedicated resources to help people do things online. The Universal Credit would be reviewed in the future and there were concerns with delays and the Department of Work and Pensions. There had been an increase by four times for people going to a food bank and the need increased during the summer holidays. Evidence had been shared with the Poverty Panel.

Councillor Jamie Lane confirmed that he and Councillor Lee Mason would present the report to Cabinet.

Agreed: that the report be approved and presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 12th November 2014.

9. SCRUTINY PANEL 1 -INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE

Councillor Jamie Lane confirmed that Scrutiny Panel one was still at the early evidence stage and would meet next week on the 18th September where they would report the current situation. The work of the Panel would conclude in March 2015.

Agreed: That the update be noted.

10. SCRUTINY PANEL 2 - POVERTY IN THE TOWN

Councillor Elizabeth Gowen confirmed that they were gathering evidence and at the next meeting would be devising the core questions to be put to the key expert advisors at future meetings.

Agreed: That the update be noted.

11. SCRUTINY PANEL 3 - KEEP NORTHAMPTON TIDY

Councillor Tony Ansell confirmed that their next meeting would be on 17th September 2014 in the Court Room at 6pm. He acknowledged the success of the the "Report It" App where went directly to the Contact Centre. He had joined people in the town on a walkabout clean up and had found a large number of cigarette butts. He confirmed that the litter pickers were doing an excellent job and 86 fixed penalty notices were given last year. Site visits would be carried out with similar towns e.g. Peterborough and Walsall and there had been 2.6 million incidents of fly tipping nationally and half of them were reported to be in alleyways.

Agreed: That the update be noted.

12. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORTING AND MONITORING WORKING GROUP

Councillor Jamie Lane confirmed that the membership of the Working Group would be kept the same although Councillor Brian Sargeant would also be added. They were now meeting on 2nd October at 5.30pm to set the terms of reference of the Working Group for 2014/2015.

13. REPORT BACK FROM NBC'S REPRESENTATIVE TO NCC'S HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The briefing paper was noted.

It was agreed that Councillor Lee Mason attend the next meeting if she was available to.

14. POTENTIAL FUTURE PRE DECISION SCRUTINY

There were none.

15. URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 7:12 pm