

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL 2 - IMPACT OF THE MOVE OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON**

Thursday, 13 September 2018

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Sam Kilby-Shaw (Deputy Chair), (In the Chair), Councillor Dennis Meredith

CO-OPTED MEMBER: Jane Bunce, University of Northampton

Witnesses Councillor Tim Hadland (Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise)
Councillor James Hill (Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning)
Councillor Stephen Hibbert (Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing)
Councillor Anna King (Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety) and Chair of CSP

Officer Debi Waite, Private sector Housing Manager
Ruth Austen, Environmental Health and Licensing Manager
Derrick Simpson, Town Centre Manager

Councillor Mc Cutcheon - observing

Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Walker (Chair), Councillors Jane Birch, Vicky Culbard, Gareth Eales, Penny Flavell and Danielle Stone.

2. DEPUTATIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2018 as a true and accurate record.

5. WITNESS EVIDENCE

Councillor Hadland (Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Enterprise) and Councillor James Hill (Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning) presented their responses to the core questions, elaborating on the salient points.

The Scrutiny Panel made comments, asked questions and heard:

- Concern was raised regarding buses and traffic flow on the Bedford Road. It was queried whether the traffic lights needed altering to cope with the traffic. It was confirmed buses had been running this route for some weeks.
- The Highways Authority has put in improvements to Bedford Road
- There is adequate staff parking (758 spaces) on the University site and they are also being encouraged to car share.
- The HMO Policy is being investigated and the results are expected shortly.
- With regard to parking, the Cabinet Member (Regeneration and Enterprise) advised this is unknown until students have arrive at the University.
- The students are a benefit to the town.
- In response to a query regarding planning on the University site, the Panel heard that there are currently about three vacant plots on site.

Councillor Hadland (Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise) and Councillor James Hill (Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning) were thanked for their address.

Councillor Anna King (Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety) and Chair of CSP, presented her response to the core questions, elaborating on the salient points.

The Scrutiny Panel made comments, asked questions and heard:

- The University is an excellent facility
- The University is working with the CSP
- The CCTV improvements in Beckett's park will commence week commencing 17 September 2018
- St John's MSCP car park has reached capacity on numerous days over the past year, the University has not had an impact on this car park at this time.
- The University will be invited to be involved in the Council's Forums
- The fresher students will be been given a tour of Northampton again this year; Officers and Councillors will also go into the University to meet with students
- The Night's Out Campaign is being developed with the University and Student's Union
- Northampton town centre achieved Purple Flag Status and the University will be working towards Purple Flag
- The move of the University will have a positive effect on the town, across many sectors including culture, retail, heritage and leisure

Councillor Anna King (Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety) was thanked for her address.

Councillor Stephen Hibbert (Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing) and Debi Waite, Private Sector Housing Manager, presented their response to the core questions, elaborating on the salient points.

The Scrutiny Panel made comments, asked questions and heard:

- There will be an inevitable impact on the area students move into and the area they leave behind
- Prices of houses may be driven up by the increased demand
- Agents are struggling to fill the HIMO's in the area that students have moved away from
- Enforcement of HIMO's is good. Where there is an Article 4 Direction in place this restricts approved HIMO numbers to 15% of properties in those areas.
- Multi Agency meetings are held to ensure good property rental properties are promoted
- The Multi Agency Group will have a stand at the Fresher's Fayre
- In answer to a query, it was confirmed there is no evidence which shows a correlation between beggars and the University moving to Waterside or students numbers in the town centre.
- There are 950 beds on site for students at Park Campus, and 250 at St George's Avenue campus, 450 beds at St John's Halls. There will be 3,000 new students but not all will chose to live on the Waterside site

Councillor Stephen Hibbert (Cabinet Member for Housing & Wellbeing) and Debi Waite, Private Sector Housing Manager were thanked for their address.

Ruth Austen, Environmental Health and Licensing Manager, presented her response to the core questions, elaborating on the salient points.

The Scrutiny Panel made comments, asked questions and heard:

- Student numbers are similar to previous years just in different locations, they would still have used the town centre, when located out of town
- There has not been a changed to the number of licensed premises in Kingsthorpe currently but change may occur around use and type rather than the number of licensed premises

Ruth Austen, Environmental Health and Licensing Manager was thanked for her address.

Derrick Simpson, Town Centre Manager, presented his response to the core questions, elaborating on the salient points.

The Scrutiny Panel made comments, asked questions and heard:

- The Town Centre Manager has been working with the University for the past year regarding safety issues, which includes park and ride, safer routes, CCTV, Lighting etc.
- It is expected that the daytime economy will change and there will be early evening opportunities for businesses
- Traffic modelling has been undertaken as part of the planning application and parking levels will be monitored.
- Taxi marshals will be introduced shortly to assist the night time economy and Street Pastors are already in place.

Derrick Simpson, Town Centre Manager was thanked for his address.

6. WRITTEN EVIDENCE

The written evidence, submitted by a ward Councillor was noted.

7. ENERGY CENTRE UPDATE

Jane Bunce, Co Optee, presented her briefing note to the Scrutiny Panel highlighting the salient points.

The Panel asked questions and made comment:

- In response to a query regarding solar panel, the Panel was advised that the roofs are flat and all energy saving options had been investigated. There are green roofs in situ.
- Natural ventilation is used, whereby the vents are open in all the rooms at night.

Jane Bunce was thanked for the information provided which would inform the evidence base of this Scrutiny review.

8. SITE VISITS

Councillor Sam Kilby Shaw, Deputy Chair, advised the Scrutiny Panel of Councillor Walker's comments in respect of the recent site visit:

"The parking problem is not going to go away,
But if I may say it's something that we need to continue to keep looking into, can I say I was very impressed with the university,
It will bring more to Northampton than any other project in past 30 years."

The Scrutiny Panel noted the briefing note, in particular the conclusions:

The Scrutiny Panel was impressed by the high standard of the facilities provided and the excellent finish.

The Halls of Residence will provide an excellent facility for students.

The Scrutiny Panel was concerned regarding the lack of parking facility (park and ride) on the east of the town but noted that discussions are taking place regarding

this. The extent of any difference to parking will not be realised until the new academic year.

The Scrutiny Panel felt that the new site is an asset to the town, providing facilities for all to use, such as the café and restaurant. It was also pleased that the site is a community site and during the visit, people walking their dogs through the site were observed.

The Scrutiny Panel was pleased that students will receive both safety talks from the University and personal safety talks from the Police and Fire Service upon their arrival.

The findings from the site visit would inform the evidence base of the Scrutiny review.

The meeting concluded at 19:52 hours