

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL 3 - NORTHAMPTON POST UNITARY

Thursday, 29 November 2018

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Brian Sargeant (Chair), Councillor Paul Joyce (Deputy Chair) Councillors Aziz, Jamie Lane and Danielle Stone

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Lee Mason

Morcea Walker

Witnesses David Laing, Lord Lieutenant
James Saunders-Watson, High Sheriff and Dominic Hopkins,
Under High Sheriff
Terry Sibley and Phil Ager, Freemen of the Borough
Lynda Tomplinson, Jackie Brame and Philip Saunderson,
Northampton Rotary Club

Officer Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sam Kilby- Shaw.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

Councillor Jamie Lane, declared an interest, as a previous Mayor of Northampton, having had the Housebound Fund as one of his charities.

The declaration was for the life of this Review.

3. DEPUTATIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2018 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

5. WITNESS EVIDENCE

(A) LORD LIEUTENANT'S OFFICE

David Laing, Lord Lieutenant, presented his written response to the core questions to the Scrutiny Panel, highlighting the salient points.

The Scrutiny Panel made comment, asked questions and heard:

- There is a need to engage wider communities in civic events
- Lee Mason, co optee, advised that when she was Mayor of Northampton, she had visited 11-12 Groups that she had been unaware existed
- It was suggested that the Scrutiny Panel should compile a list of national bodies and festivals around the world that could be celebrated, for example, raising the flag.
- Northampton's Forums, particularly the Youth Forum, are good at promoting events
- David Laing informed the Scrutiny Panel of Citizenship Ceremonies that take place monthly. It was suggested that Borough Councillors be invited to attend.
- David Laing is currently compiling a folder of history and tradition of Northampton. The book written by RJ Morris was commended

David Laing was thanked for his address. The information provided would inform the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

(B) HIGH SHERIFF'S OFFICE

James Saunders-Watson, High Sheriff and Dominic Hopkins, Under High Sheriff presented the written response to the core questions to the Scrutiny Panel, highlighting the salient points.

The Scrutiny Panel made comment, asked questions and heard:

- The High Sheriff is appointed by the Crown. The primary role is to look after the High Court Judges.
- The High Court does not have a formal admin. Office. There is no funding for the role of High Sheriff. It is an unpaid role.
- Sessions House is owned by NCC which is an enviable asset as are the Guildhall, and Civic Church. They are a compact suite of buildings that offer a story line. It would be good for there to be a joint education project with Nottingham who courts and a National Museum of Justice.

James Saunders-Watson, High Sheriff and Dominic Hopkins, Under High Sheriff were thanked for their address, the contents of which will inform the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

(C) FREEMAN OF THE BOROUGH

Terry Sibley and Phil Ager, Freeman of the Borough presented their written response to the core questions to the Scrutiny Panel, highlighting the salient points.

The Scrutiny Panel made comment, asked questions and heard:

- Concern was raised that should there not be a Mayor should there be a Unitary Council, who would swear in Freeman of the Borough.
- The Freeman highlighted the history of the Mayor and the value of the role.
- In response to a query, the Freeman confirmed that previously the Mayor's Sergeant, or the Civic and Mayoralty Officer, undertook the admin for the Freeman.
- The Scrutiny Panel asked that clarification on the following roles be sought of the Chief Executive and Borough Secretary:
 - Mayor's Sargeant
 - Secretary
 - Chauffeur
- In response to a query it was confirmed that Freeman had been around since the Magna Carter.

Terry Sibley and Phil Ager, Freeman of the Borough were thanked for their address; the contents of which would inform the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

(D) THE CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE, MAYOR'S FUND FOR THE HOUSEBOUND

Consideration of this item was taken at agenda item 5(e)

(E) REPRESENTATIVES FROM NORTHAMPTON ROTARY CLUB

Lynda Tomplinson, Jackie Brame and Philip Saunderson, Northampton Rotary Club, addressed presented their written response to the core questions to the Scrutiny Panel, highlighting the salient points.

The Scrutiny Panel made comment, asked questions and heard:

- The history of the housebound fund is included within the book written by RJ Morris.
- Cheques for £25 are being given out this year to the housebound.
- Names of individuals that are housebound are provided by NPH, Age UK, Duston Old Peoples Association, Community Law and the Salvation Army
- The History of the Housebound Fund lays with the Mayor and is funded by charitable donations
- There is strict criteria to assign the cheques which are hand delivered.
- The Mayoralty of Northampton is very important
- It was commented that there is a need to involve diverse communities more
- It was suggested that a Charitable Trust could be set up for the Mayoralty.

Lynda Tomplinson, Jackie Brame and Philip Saunderson, Northampton Rotary Club, were thanked for their address, the contents of which would inform the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

The meeting concluded at 7:25 pm