

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND GENERAL PURPOSES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 20 April 2004

PRESENT: Councillor A Simpson (Chair); Councillor P Flavell (Deputy Chair);
Councillors Acock, Caswell, Church, B. Hoare, Mason (substituting for
Evans) Massey and Ruy (substituting for Concannon)

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor Larratt	Portfolioholder
M. Hunter	Head of Overview and Scrutiny
B. Hill	Chief Accountant
J. Warlow	Acting Chief Executive
P. Newman	Tourism and Events Manager
I. McClurg-Welland	Town Centre Manager

(none)

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Proceedings of the Meeting of the Committee held on 2nd March 2004 were signed by the Chair

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Concannon and Evans

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

There were none

4. DEPUTATIONS / PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none

5. CORPORATE PLAN STRUCTURE

The Chair advised that this item had been placed on the Agenda so that the Committee could be updated on the current position. He referred to the discussions at previous meetings and the fact that following the publication of the CPA Report this was being looked at afresh in connection with the Recovery Plan. The Acting Chief Executive then briefly outlined the position to-date, it being noted that there was a re-focus on five themes in the Corporate Plan with the new ones being loosely the same as the previous ones. The idea was, rather than to fit the services into the themes, all the services would be expected to show how they responded to all the themes. One of the next steps was for the Heads of Service to seek the views of their employees regarding these themes. There would also be a presentation to full Council possibly to the June meeting. One comment made was that measurable objectives were very important and was something that the original Corporate Plan did not have. Further comment was made that the Corporate Plan should be used as

the driving document giving the guidance on what the Council was trying to achieve and the basis on which to ensure that the objectives were being achieved. Further comment referred to the importance of taking account of the community strategy and the comments of other agencies. At the moment the corporate Plan was really a draft work in progress document. Councillor Larratt commented that the priority at the moment was the vision exercise involving all levels. Once this exercise had been carried out then the Corporate Plan would be looked at in more detail and would provide the opportunity for the Overview & Scrutiny Committees to look at it further and take account of the issues referred to at this meeting..

CONCLUSION That the position be noted at this stage and monitored and brought back on to the Agenda of this Committee for further discussion at the relevant time.

6. UPDATE ON THE RECOVERY PLAN

The Acting Chief Executive and Town Clerk then gave an update on the position with regard to the Recovery Plan commenting that the first Round Table Meeting which chaired by P Coleman had been held on the 6th April with a second meeting due on 22 April. He briefly outlined the composition and format of the Round Table meeting stressing that matters were changing on a daily basis but that the second version of the Recovery Plan would be made available the following day and would be circulated as soon as was reasonably possible. He stressed the importance of getting the Recovery Plan right and that the Programme on Project Documentation and Action Plans would be developed and implemented against a background of full consultation. It was noted that all Members were being kept up to date with Recovery Plan progress via the Recovery Newsletter, which was also briefed weekly to all employees. Also the Recovery Plan update was a standard item on future Council Meetings. In terms of the organisational structure the Council had already indicated that it intended to conduct a review of its political and managerial structures. Also it may be desirable to re-shape portfolios and Overview and Scrutiny Structures to mirror the Corporate Plan. It was noted that Members and Officers were already thinking about how the style and focus of Overview & Scrutiny could change with the need to play a constructive role in the delivery of the Recovery Plan being one of the drivers. The three main topic areas identified for action in terms of the Recovery Plan were: Leadership and Direction, Cultural and Organisational Change and Service Improvement. The Acting Chief Executive and Town Clerk then briefly outlined the timetable and proposals in terms of recruitment of a permanent Chief Executive and Directors. In the interim the help of former Chief Executives was proposed to be enlisted to help with the delivery of the Recovery Plan and interviews for this were due to take place on 4 May. In terms of recruitment for a permanent Chief Executive, Consultancy firms dealing specifically with this type of recruitment were being interviewed on 30 April.

CONCLUSION: That the current position with regard to the Recovery Plan be noted.

7. BRANDING OF NORTHAMPTON - PRESENTATION BY P.NEWMAN

At this juncture the Committee received a presentation from P Newman, Tourism and Events Manager in terms of the position regarding the branding of Northampton. He briefly outlined the background to this issue, commenting that following liaison with many groups; organisations etc in the Town the common factor that was suggested by all had been for the creation of a brand for Northampton. He stated that in response to the question "why does

Northampton need a brand?" the answer was in the fact that everything now had a brand; most towns and cities were developing brands to promote their town i.e.: Nottingham, Leicester, Derby. A brand was not just for marketing a place. From the analysis carried out it was found that some towns played-off their postal code, i.e. Milton Keynes. A brand would create an impression, it made local people feel good about their town and this was most important. A brand could be developed around many things and in addition there were different levels of branding. P Newman then went on to elaborate further upon the search for a logo that could work for all different aspects of Northampton and to this end it was being suggested that this be "Northampton Celebrates". He added that the business sector was fully behind this and packs were being produced containing marketing and publicity material, copies of which were circulated at the meeting. Copies of these packs would be distributed to the public to get the views of the local people. He added that the packs had been produced at nil cost. The next step was a strong marketing campaign as branding had the backing of the private sector but it was now necessary to make sure that it was something that the people of Northampton could connect with. In response to a comment it was noted that the Town Centre Manager would make a presentation to a future meeting of this Committee about economic development in the Town. In terms of Members involvement with the branding process it was a case of Members encouraging the public to feed their views and comments into the system, their feelings for the Town and the opportunity to promote further what the various groups and organisations were currently doing in terms of branding. P Newman was then thanked for his presentation.

CONCLUSION: That this Committee endorses the logo "Northampton Celebrates" for the branding of Northampton and that this issue be referred on to the Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their views and comments accordingly.

8. PRESENTATION ON FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF NORTHAMPTON BY NEW TOWN CENTRE MANAGER

I. McClurg-Welland, Town Centre Manager, then gave his presentation on his first impressions of Northampton during the few months he had been in post. He stated that like Northampton Borough Council the Town Centre Partnership had been concerned with branding which was essentially about creating an identity for the Town Centre Partnership and he circulated copies of the Partnerships new brand accordingly. He then briefly outlined his ideas on Town Centre Management commenting that it was about a balance of understanding and strategy. The Town Centre Partnership had a vision a couple of years ago, which because it was considered to be the right one, remained at the present time. What had changed over the years was that the Town Centre Partnership now had six clear objectives as follows: -

1. Ensure the greatest accessibility to the Town Centre for all
2. Market and promote the Town Centre and provide effective liaison between the Town Centre and all stakeholders.
3. Develop role functions and economy of the Town Centre
4. Promote high levels of public safety in the town Centre
5. Encourage and promote environmental standards in the Town Centre.
6. Ensure Northampton is represented locally, regionally and nationally.

He then elaborated upon things currently being done to improve the Town Centre, ie: in

terms of graffiti, cleanliness, advertising boards etc. The Town Centre Manager concluded by stressing that a successful Town Centre was about partnership and working together and on this note advised that on Wednesday 28 April there would be an AGM of the Town Centre Partnership to which all Members were invited and encouraged to attend.

The Committee confirmed that on both issues at 7 and 8 there seemed no need for scrutiny to review work that was so obviously progressing successfully.

I McClug-Welland was then thanked for his presentation.

CONCLUSION: That the position be noted.

9. UPDATE ON MEMBER/OFFICER RELATIONS

The Head of Overview & Scrutiny advised that there was little further to report since the last meeting with regard to this issue. The Borough Solicitor had drafted amendments to the Protocol and as agreed at the Chairs & Deputies meeting had been sent to certain Members to confirm. The amended Protocol would be submitted to Standards Committee on 22 June 2004. Councillor Church commented that he had not received these draft amendments to date.

CONCLUSION: That the position be noted.

10. REVIEW OF YEAR AND FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair gave a brief resume on the issues covered by this Overview & Scrutiny Committee over the last twelve months which included South Midlands Study, Customer Relations, Unitary Status and Regional Government, Marketing the Town, The Layout of Agendas for Overview & Scrutiny Committees etc. Some issues such as Corporate Governance were still in progress and therefore needed to be kept on the Agenda for future meetings, as did the Corporate Plan, The Recovery Plan and Customer Relations. He suggested that in advance of the next meeting the Working Group meet to discuss issues to be placed on the Agenda for the next meeting.

- CONCLUSION:**
- (1) That the Committee be kept updated on the Corporate Plan and Recovery Plan.
 - (2) That the Town Centre Manager make a report on the Economic Development in Northampton to a future meeting
 - (3) That Customer Relations be an issue to be placed on the Agenda for discussion at the next meeting but that it continue to be monitored and possibly be an issue for discussion at future meetings to enable the Committee to be kept updated.

The Meeting concluded at 1950 hours.

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified