

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 10 November 2014

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Jamie Lane (Chair), Councillor Brian Sargeant (Vice Chair), Councillors Tony Ansell, Rufia Ashraf, Mick Ford, Phil Larratt, Councillor Nilesh Parekh, Councillor Aziz as substitute for Councillor Winston Strachan, Councillor Nehar Begum as substitute for Councillor Sivaramen Subbarayan

Councillor David Mackintosh	Leader of the Council
Councillor Tim Hadland	Cabinet Member (Planning, Enterprise and Regeneration)
Julie Seddon	Chair of CSP
Richard Palmer	Planning Policy Team Leader
Adam Simmonds	Police Crime Commissioner
Martin Jelley	Deputy Chief Constable

Officers	Tracy Tiff	Scrutiny Officer
	Nicola Brindley	Democratic Services Officer

Observers	Tom Appleyard
	Councillor Dennis Meredith

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Joy Capstick, Elizabeth Gowen, Winston Strachan, Suresh Patel and Sivaramen Subbarayan.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th September were agreed as a true record.

3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

5. MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACCEPTED RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORTS:

5.A SERIOUS ACQUISITIVE CRIME, VIOLENT CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Councillor David Mackintosh presented the report to the Committee.

AGREED: That the report be noted and that monitoring is now complete on this Overview and Scrutiny report

5.B IMPROVING THE TOWN'S PARKS

Councillor Mike Hallam presented the report to the Committee and confirmed that

opportunities such as resurfacing the tennis courts and the Green Flag and Bloom award had been achieved this year. A lot of work had been done and the main items completed in early 2015 and would appear on the budget as and when.

Julie Seddon, Director of Customers and Communities, confirmed that there was now a process in place for booking the events in the park so all parties would know in advance and coordinate their activities.

It was discussed that members of the Park Management Group had mainly the attendance of one particular group which made decisions biased. Councillor Mike Hallam confirmed that this issue had been reported to him and was monitoring the situation closely.

AGREED: That the report be noted and that further monitoring of this Overview and Scrutiny report takes place at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2015.

5.C INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS AND S106 AGREEMENTS

Councillor Tim Hadland presented the report and confirmed that various matters were being dealt with and was ongoing. The CIL report would be presented to Cabinet in December and implements on 1st April 2015.

In response to a question from Councillor Phil Larratt, Councillor Tim Hadland confirmed that there was no provision for a dual carriageway for the North West Bypass and they were going to have what was available to them. The schedule of expansion was through Highways but CIL related to other types of infrastructure.

Councillor Jamie Lane requested an update in the spring 2015.

Richard Palmer, Planning Policy team Leader, confirmed that the GMS scheme was an arrangement with other councils and the Highways Department which allowed contributions to come forward. If CIL was not implemented then there would be only 5 obligations for infrastructure projects. The Committee asked if clarification could be given regarding the infrastructure funding gap of £150.7 m that has been identified across West Northamptonshire as reported in the in the action for recommendation 2 of the Overview and Scrutiny report.

In response to a question from Councillor Mick Ford, Councillor Tim Hadland confirmed that the circumstances for Section 106 monies changed as a result of the recession. As a Local Authority they kept assessing viability to get the best performance and the product delivered ie development going.

Richard Palmer confirmed that they would ensure that the correct infrastructure was in place so traffic did not grind to a halt. They were working with others to get the best deal around new development.

AGREED: (1) That the report be noted and that further monitoring of this Overview and Scrutiny report takes place in the spring 2015.

(2) That clarification be provided to the Committee regarding the infrastructure funding gap of £150.7 m that has been identified across West Northamptonshire as reported in the in the action for recommendation 2 of the Overview and Scrutiny report.

6. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (CSP) PERFORMANCE

Councillor David Mackintosh addressed the Committee and confirmed that the Partnership

had worked well with other agencies and were now developing health and care plans for vulnerable street drinkers in the town centre. There had been Street Drinkers and these are being addressed, but the new Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, that came into force in October 2014 will strengthen how these issues can be dealt with. A paper would be presented to Cabinet in December about the new Act, it was suggested that it would be useful for Overview and Scrutiny to receive a copy of this report, when it is published.

Adam Simmonds, Police Crime and Commissioner confirmed that the CSP Performance in Northamptonshire showed that violence had increased by 14% and Serious Acquisitive Crime had decreased by 20% which had outperformance elsewhere in the County. Good progress had been made and the Police had been working with other agencies. There were challenges around the PCSOs although they had 154 Special Constables who worked 4000 hours per month and 23000 hours in the last 6 months. This was a large contribution from people in this town outside their day jobs.

Martin Jelley, Deputy Chief Constable, confirmed that in the last five years he considered that Northampton had moved onto a new level with the help of Superintendent Mick Stamper and Chief Inspector Mark Evans. Street drinking and dispersal orders had been very positive.

Julie Seddon, Chair of the CSP, confirmed that she endorsed what had been said and confirmed that although there were challenges which still needed to be responded to, they had an effective Safety Community Partnership which was the key to making progress.

In response to a question from Councillor Brendan Glynane, Councillor David Mackintosh confirmed that the new Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Police Act 2014 would make the threshold for evidence lower and could see action being taken on suspicion/concerns rather than evidence. The Cabinet report had a summary of changes and would be made available to all Members.

Councillor Aziz made reference to the Asian gold issue and Councillor David Mackintosh confirmed that a lot of work had been done around this problem. A joint seminar had taken place at the Bangladesh Association where advice had been given to the community and intelligence made available to the Police which had been productive.

Adam Simmonds confirmed that confidence in the Police had increased to 85% and was still rising but forces were still under pressure. Street drinking and violence had decreased by 20% in the last two years which made the Town Centre safer but there was still work to do in the daytime and the Asian area.

Martin Jelley, Deputy Chief Constable advised that they were aware of the Asian gold issues and had put a lot of effort into the community at the time with extra patrols and community meetings to work on prevention. Predictive policing had also worked well and had seen a 20% reduction in burglaries although not specific to Asian communities but made areas safer.

Councillor David Mackintosh advised that they had seen issues with people who had moved here from the EU where they had a different culture in relation to drinking. If Councillors were aware of any issues in their wards then to report to him and he would look into it.

Councillor Tony Ansell praised the work Adam Simmonds had carried out as Police Crime Commissioner so far and had confidence Adam would tackle the issues. He expressed concerns over too many licenced shops in one area for example the Wellingborough Road.

Adam Simmonds confirmed he shared his view on the licensing issues and hoped to tighten the rules in licensing as in some areas where the night-time economy effected the daytime.

In response to a question from Councillor Rufia Ashraf, Adam Simmonds confirmed that they would not be reducing the number of PCSOs but their target was to increase the amount of Special Constables to 900 by 2016. They wanted to bring back the concept of a village Constable who would be warranted and fully trained and increase the visibility of the Police.

Councillor Phil Larratt thanked Adam Simmonds for the Special Constable in Hunsbury and the residents were very happy with their high visibility. It worked well and urban areas needed their own Specials as well.

Adam Simmonds confirmed that Northampton was on a journey to becoming the safest place and there were 1000 Police across the county who were working on behalf of the residents to keep them safe.

In response to a question from Councillor Brendan Glynane, Martin Jelley confirmed that sexual offences had increased as there were historical offences being reported. There was also a Police Operation which would start next week to give preventative messages to the public about car crime and robbery.

AGREED: That the update be noted.

7. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY

Councillor Mike Hallam presented the report to the Committee and confirmed that they had been working with the contractor to address the issues. They had seen a change in food recycling as this had decreased since it was first introduced as people were wasting less food. In response to a question he confirmed that if people needed to reorder bin bags then they should call the Contact Centre. People were given two bags each week to drive down the amount of waste sent to landfill. There was a national shortage of getting replacement food bins and orders were currently taking 4 weeks.

In response to a question from Councillor Brendan Glynane, Councillor Mike Hallam confirmed that food waste had been introduced in March 2011. He also confirmed that there were periodic checks as part of the contract to check if homes with bigger bins still required them.

Councillor Jamie Lane referred to the Motion made at Full Council in September which was carried:

‘There are many areas of the Eastern District where historic planting of the wrong kind of tress in the residential areas cause a number of problems for residents – from light being blocked from homes, to fallen debris, to damage to property from roots.

‘This Council resolves to develop a plan to consider removing trees that are identified as problematic and consider replacing them with smaller tress more suited to residential areas.

‘This Council recognises this issue is complex and many trees are located on housing land that will soon be managed by Northampton Partnership Homes so therefore refers this matter to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider.’

Councillor Mike Hallam confirmed he would provide an update to the Committee at the next meeting.

AGREED: (1)That the report be noted.

(2)That an update on the tree policy for the borough; including any maintenance programme be provided to the January 2015 meeting of this Committee.

8. SCRUTINY PANELS

8.A SCRUTINY PANEL 1 - INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE

Councillor Jamie Lane confirmed that it was Domestic Abuse Awareness week in week commencing 24th November 2014. 25 November 2014 is International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the Scrutiny Panel, along with Officers from Community Safety and Women's Aid will man a stand located in the Spencer Percival area of the Guildhall between 11.30am and 1.30pm and an information pack given to Councillors to highlight the campaign in their wards.

AGREED; That the brief be noted.

8.B SCRUTINY PANEL 2 - POVERTY IN THE TOWN

A Briefing Note was supplied.

AGREED: That brief be noted.

8.C SCRUTINY PANEL 3 - KEEP NORTHAMPTON TIDY

Councillor Tony Ansell confirmed that there had been four meeting for Keep Northampton Tidy and the attendance had decreased to 38% at the last meeting. There were two further meetings on 26th November 2014 and 26 January 2015 with evidence gathering on 9th March for the panel to approve the report. Nikki Ive taken this out but you may want to add something – Cllr Ansell referred to the number of Neighbourhood Wardens and the number of fixed penalty notices that they had issued; which he perceived to be around 1.5 each. He had visited other towns and cities for a comparison and wanted Northampton to be a spotless town every day.

Councillor Jamie Lane gave thanks to Councillor Tony Ansell for his hard work on the matter and was disappointed at the attendance numbers. He reminded Councillors that they were Councillors for the Borough as well as their wards and had a responsibility to attend the meetings.

A reminder would be sent to the Members detailing the dates of the next meetings.

AGREED: That the report be noted.

9. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORTING AND MONITORING WORKING GROUP

Councillor Jamie Lane confirmed that there had been 100% attendance for this meeting and the next one would be on 5th January 2015. A report would be submitted to the Committee on 25th January 2015.

AGREED: That the Terms of Reference for the Reporting and Monitoring Working Group 2014/2015 be approved.

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

A briefing note was submitted to the Committee and it was confirmed that the next meeting would be in March.

It was proposed by Councillor Phil Larratt and seconded by Councillor Tony Ansell that it be requested that Councillor Brendan Glynane be the Council's representative on this Committee.

Councillor Jamie Lane confirmed he would take this proposal to the Leader of the Council for consideration.

AGREED: That the report be noted.

11. POTENTIAL FUTURE PRE DECISION SCRUTINY

Councillor Phil Larratt proposed to reiterate to Cabinet on CILs.

AGREED: That this be noted.

12. URGENT ITEMS

Councillor Jamie Lane referred to the motion that was unanimously carried at full Council at its meeting in October 2014:

"This Council recognises the exceptional parking problems that residents and tenants regularly encounter in St James as a result of match day parking. But the problems in St James are not only match day parking. The people coming into St James taking up residents' and tenants spaces include people coming into the area to work and some people parking at the flats and walking to the station to avoid the parking charges there. This council therefore resolves to do the following:

1. Look into the possibility of issuing tenants in NBC homes that have allocated parking areas with free parking permits. The properties considered would be: Cordwainer House, Stitchman House, Stirup House, Lapstone House, Eyeletter House, Abbey House, Melbourne House, Devonshire House, although this list is not exhaustive. This measure would ensure that premium allocated parking is not occupied by people from the outside area. This should be supplemented with sufficient enforcement to tackle inappropriately and incorrectly parked vehicles.
2. This council also agrees to consult with Northamptonshire County Council, the Police and Highways to look at the possibility of extending free parking permits into other parts of St James, Upton, Duston and other parts of the town which may then replace the current parking permit scheme which is presently under review and thus remove the need to financially penalise the people of St James simply because people from the outside area come to park in St James, as a successful sports club is located on their door step.
3. This Council resolves to ask the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to carry out a detailed investigation to look at these options for Cabinet to consider."

The Chair suggested that the Committee will set up a Working Group entitled "Match Day Parking" which would not meet in public session.

It was confirmed that Councillor Brian Sargeant would be Chair, with Councillors Rufia Ashraf, Tony Ansell, Brendan Glynane and Mick Ford on the Working Group.

The terms of reference for the Working Group would be presented to the Committee at its meeting in January 2015 for approval.

AGREED: That .the Match Day Parking Working Group be set up, with membership as detailed above.

The meeting concluded at 7:37 pm