

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 29 July 2015

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Jamie Lane (Chair) , Councillor Brian Sargeant (Deputy Chair), Councillors Gareth Eales, Terrie Eales, Phil Larratt, Dennis Meredith, Samuel Shaw and Zoe Smith

Councillor Anna King, Cabinet Member for Community Safety (item 6&7)

Councillor Stephen Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing (Item 5)

Julie Seddon, Director of Customers and Communities (item 6&7)

Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

Daniel Soan, Telecoms and Communications Engineer - observing

Member of the Public Mr Thomas Appleyard - observing

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors James Hill, Brian Oldham, Suresh Patel and Graham Walker.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2015 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

There were none.

5. NBC OWNED STREET LIGHTING

Councillor Stephen Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, presented a briefing note to the Committee that detailed an update on street lighting.

Councillor Hibbert highlighted the key points:

- Street lights off the highway around some housing estates, including footpaths, garages, parking and pedestrian areas around blocks of flats are under the jurisdiction of Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH).
- Extensive cataloguing and condition survey assessment work has been undertaken and work has commenced on converting and adapting this data for incorporation into NPH asset management databases, which covers all 12,000+ stock and neighbourhood areas where there are street lighting upkeep responsibilities for NPH.
- So far there have been 8 reported repairs to street lighting maintained by NPH, a slight increase on the previous year
- It was noted that NPH is due to embark on the planning and coordination of environmental improvements covering estates in a priority order. Works to existing lights and columns will be picked up and included in the wider environmental scope of works
- In respect of the aim to improve safety of neighbourhoods, the Committee heard that additional lighting may be provided such as lampposts or high level lighting
- The Northampton Standard is inclusive of the installation of front and rear security lights; which will improve home security and enhance overall lighting levels

The Committee asked questions, made comment and heard:

- In response to a query how the public know the ownership of street lighting, the Committee heard that NBC owned street lights have a unique number so that any issues can be reported to Northampton Partnership Homes.
- 2% of stock has been repaired. The Cabinet Member was not aware of any that had been replaced but should there have been some replaced he would forward details to the Committee
- Concern was raised regarding the lack of lighting in shopping centres such as the one located in Southfields. There is a need to establish who has responsibility for such areas.
- The Committee suggested that it would be very useful for all ward Councillors to be issued with a map of where NBC owned street lights are located. There is also a need for the location of NBC owned street lights to be plotted on the interactive map; including details of the programme of renewal and replacement

The Chair suggested that there was a need for a Scrutiny Working Group to be set up that would investigate NBC street lighting including issues such as:

- The production of a map detailing the location of NBC owned street lighting which could be disseminated to all ward Councillors
- The location of NBC owned street lights to be plotted on the interactive mapping system

It was suggested that Councillor Phil Larratt chairs the Working Group and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee contacts the Committee inviting members to join the Working Group.

Councillor Hibbert was thanked for providing information to the Committee.

- AGREED:** (1) That the report is noted.
(2) That a Scrutiny Working Group (NBC owned Street Lighting), chaired by Councillor Phil Larratt., is set up
(3) That the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee contacts the Committee inviting members to join the Working Group (NBC owned Street Lighting)

6. COMMUNITY SAFETY (CSP) PERFORMANCE

Julie Seddon, Chair, Community Safety Partnership, (CSP), and Councillor Anna King, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, apprised the Committee of CSP performance. It was noted that a bi annual report from the CPS is provided to Overview and Scrutiny.

Julie Seddon highlighted the salient points contained within the briefing note:

- Performance Overview
- Actual Performance - April 2014 – March 2015. There has been an increase in overall crime in Northampton of 13.8% (+2282 crimes) from the baseline during the year. There have been reductions in three of the key crime types, particularly theft from person.

AGREED: That the report be noted and a further report is presented to the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 April 2016.

7. MULTI-AGENCY APPROACH TO STREET DRINKERS

Julie Seddon, Director of Customers and Communities, and Councillor Anna King, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, presented a briefing note to the Committee on street drinkers and beggars.

The Committee noted the salient points contained within the briefing note.

The Committee asked questions, made comment and heard:

- It was noted the one of the Scrutiny Panels would be looking at street drinking as part of its evidence gathering.
- The Committee heard that street drinking is a difficult problem. There has been an improvement recently; often the problem is created by the same group of people. The Local Authority now has new powers that it can use regarding tackling street drinking.
- In response to a query, the Committee heard that should drinking in a park be related to anti-social behaviour and underage drinking the Local Authority has powers to act.
- It was suggested that a briefing note on the new powers that a Local Authority has in respect of dealing with street drinking is given to the relevant Scrutiny Panel at its September 2015 meeting.

AGREED: That the briefing paper is noted.

8. SCRUTINY PANELS

8(A) SCRUTINY PANEL 1

Councillor Rufia Ashraf presented the scope of the review – Health check of the local economy to the Committee for its consideration and approval.

AGREED: That the scope of the review – Health check of the local economy is approved.

8(B) SCRUTINY PANEL 2

Councillor Dennis Meredith presented the scope of the review - The impact of anti- social behaviour on the town to the Committee for its consideration and approval.

Councillor Meredith highlighted that the Scrutiny Panel had agreed, at its inaugural meeting, that the title of the review should be amended to read “to investigate the impact of anti social behaviour on the town”. The Scrutiny Panel also agreed that it be suggested that the purpose of the Scrutiny review is updated to read “ To investigate the impact of anti-social behaviour on the town”.

AGREED: (1) That the scope of the review – The impact of anti-social behaviour on the town is approved.
(2) That the title of the Scrutiny review is amended to read “ The impact of anti-social behaviour on the town”.
(3) That the purpose of the Scrutiny review is amended to read “to investigate the impact of anti-social behaviour on the town”

8(C) SCRUTINY PANEL 3

Councillor Gareth Eales presented the scope of the review - Effectiveness of Enforcement of Licensing Policy in respect of Taxis and Private Hire to the Committee for its consideration and approval.

Councillor Eales highlighted that the Scrutiny Panel had agreed, at its inaugural meeting, that the title of the review should be amended to read “Effectiveness of Enforcement of Licensing Policy in respect of Taxis and Private Hire”. The Scrutiny Panel also agreed that it be suggested that the purpose of the Scrutiny review is updated to read “To investigate the effectiveness of enforcement of licensing, for taxis and private hire vehicles”.

The Scrutiny Panel had felt that to include gambling within its scope would have made the review too wide ranging.

AGREED: (1) That the scope of the review – Effectiveness of Enforcement of Licensing Policy in respect of Taxis and Private Hire is approved.
(2) That the title of the Scrutiny review is amended to read “Effectiveness of Enforcement of Licensing Policy in respect of Taxis and Private Hire”.

(3) That the purpose of the Scrutiny review is amended to read “to investigate the effectiveness of enforcement of licensing, for taxis and private hire vehicles”

9 POTENTIAL FUTURE PRE DECISION SCRUTINY

In response to a query, the Chair confirmed that a briefing note on the Code of Practice for Betting Shops would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting.

10 URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 6:35 pm