

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 25 September 2017

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Jamie Lane (Chair), Councillor Graham Walker (Deputy Chair); Councillors Brian Sargeant, Tony Ansell, Rufia Ashraf, Mohammed Aziz, Alan Bottwood, Vicky Culbard, Janice Duffy, Dennis Meredith, Cathrine Russell, Sam Kilby-Shaw, Zoe Smith

Witnesses Councillor Mike Hallam, Cabinet Member for Environment
Councillor Anna King, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Community Safety
Ruth Austin, Environmental Health and Licensing Manager
Derrick Simpson, Town Centre Manager
Neil McCullough, Oxford Economics
John Dale, Head Of Economic Development
Paul Walker, Head Of Economic Development

Councillor Jonathan Nunn, Leader of the Council – observing
Simon Bovey, Interim Chief Executive – Observing
Ian Gray, Interim Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning - Observing
Chris Randall, Interim Head of Finance, LGSS, - Observing

Officers Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

Members of the Public Mr Thomas Appleyard

1. MINUTES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Christopher Malpas.

2. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

Mr Thomas Appleyard addressed the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on agenda item 5(a) – Keep Northampton Tidy.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

There were none.

4. MONITORING OF PREVIOUS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORTS

(A) KEEP NORTHAMPTON TIDY

Mr Thomas Appleyard, individual, addressed the Committee. He expressed his concerns regarding litter and commented that two Panels had looked at keeping the town tidy over the past ten years with little effect. Mr Appleyard advised that he had run a number of litter picks; he had also submitted a report that he had authored to the O&S Panel – Keep Northampton Tidy; the report contained around 81 suggestions some of which had been adopted by other Councils. Mr Appleyard reported that he had written to over 100 companies in Northampton asking them to take action and clean up the areas outside their buildings. Mr Appleyard stressed the need for enforcement. He commented that flytipping in certain areas of the town could be seen on google maps. There is a need for a short, medium and long term Strategy.

Mr Appleyard was thanked for his address.

Councillor Mike Hallam, Cabinet Member for Environment, and Ruth Austen, Environmental Health and Licensing Manager, presented the monitoring action plan in respect of the Overview and Scrutiny report – Keep Northampton Tidy. The salient points within the document were highlighted.

The Committee made comment, asked questions and heard:

- The Cabinet Member for Environment is keen to move forward on Purple Flag. A Working Group has been set up, led by the BID.
- The success of initiatives such as Green Flag, Purple Flag and Bloom was highlighted
- The Service has a short, medium and long term strategy
- In respect of a query regarding fly posting, ASB powers are used. Community Protection Notices are served and flyposts had been removed, highlighting the effectiveness of ASB powers.
- The need for a zero tolerance policy regarding fly posting was suggested.
- The gating of Marble Arch will be used as a model to judge its effectiveness.
- Meetings with Highways England are scheduled.
- Contact needs to be made with the Highways Authority regarding litter picking on its roads.
- Issues such as dog fouling will be targeted.
- Discussions regarding shop trollies are ongoing.
- For the nine month period prior to the Enforcement trial, 80 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued, during the trial 1500 were issued.

It was suggested that the Cabinet Member for Environment and the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, together with the Environmental Health and Licensing Officer present an update to the meeting of the Committee in April 2018 on Purple Flag and the Enforcement Contract.

Councillor Hallam and Ruth Austen were thanked for their address.

AGREED: That the Cabinet Member for Environment and the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, together with the Environmental Health and Licensing Officer present an update to the meeting of the Committee in April 2018 on Purple Flag and the Enforcement Contract

(B) RETAIL EXPERIENCE IN THE TOWN

Derrick Simpson, Town Centre Manager, presented the briefing on retail experience in the town centre highlighting the salient points.

The Committee made comment, asked questions and heard:

- There are 50 vacant shops in the town centre, 18-21 of which have been vacant long term.
- The Committee was pleased to note there are more footfall counters in the town.
- The Committee asked if it could be investigated if the seating around the fountain could be returned.
- A number of events take place on the Market Square.
- The town centre is defined as within the inner ring road.
- Park and ride is being investigated.
- St Johns Car Park has seen an increase in usage since the opening of Angel Square.
- Traffic enforcement around the Drapery is being investigated.

Derrick Simpson was thanked for his address.

AGREED: That the information provided is noted.

(C) HEALTH CHECK OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Neil McCullough, Oxford Economics, gave the Committee a comprehensive presentation on the economic growth and investment in Northampton. The salient points were highlighted.

The Committee made comment, asked questions and heard:

- Manufacturing is growing but differently, it is coming closer to services
- The construction of the economy is mainly driven by the types of jobs
- Cost of living is different across the country

Neil McCullough was thanked for his comprehensive presentation.

Paul Walker, Economic Consultant and John Dale, Head of Economic Development presented the Monitoring Action Plan to the Committee – Health Check of the Local Economy. It was requested that representatives of SEMLEP present information to the Committee on recommendation 1-Skills Need to the meeting on 16 November 2017.

AGREED: That a further update is provided to the next meeting of the Committee with representatives of SEMLEP present information to the Committee on recommendation 1-Skills Need.

(D) MATCH DAY PARKING

The Committee received an update on the progress of the accepted recommendations contained within the Overview and Scrutiny report – Match Day Parking. John Dale, Head of Economic Development, highlighted the salient points.

AGREED: That the update is noted and a further briefing is presented to the meeting of the Committee on 16 November 2017.

5. NBC OWNED STREET LIGHTING

The Committee received an update on the progress of the accepted recommendations contained within the Overview and Scrutiny report – NBC owned street lighting. John Dale, Head of Economic Development, highlighted the salient points.

AGREED: That the update is noted.

6. PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered the Performance Monitoring report and requested that the Cabinet Member and Director attend the next meeting to provide details on:

MEP01 – Number of new businesses locating on Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone.

AGREED: That the Cabinet Member and Director attend the next meeting to provide details on: MEP01 – Number of new businesses locating on Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone.

(A) PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY

The Committee put on record its thanks to Debbie Ferguson, Community Safety Manager, who had recently retired. The hard work and dedication that Debbie had displayed was emphasised, as was the good work and support that she had given to the Overview and Scrutiny process.

The Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Community Safety presented a comprehensive briefing note Serious Acquisitive Crime. The salient points were noted.

The Committee commented, asked questions and heard:

- There has been a huge increase in the theft of tools from vehicles. The figures do not include attempted thefts, which are often not reported. It would be useful for an awareness campaign to be launched.
- From 5 October 2017 neighbourhood Policing is changing, it was suggested that Inspector Dave Rayfield, Northants Police is asked to attend the next meeting to provide an update.
- Street football and other such initiatives were welcomed by the Committee.

Councillor King was thanked for her informative address.

AGREED: Inspector Dave Rayfield, Northants Police is asked to attend the next meeting to provide an update on Neighbourhood Policing.

7. SCRUTINY PANELS

8. SCRUTINY PANEL 1

The update from the Chair of Scrutiny Panel 1 was noted.

9. SCRUTINY PANEL 2

The update from the Chair of Scrutiny Panel 2 was noted. The Chair highlighted that the Panel is meeting at various locations around the borough.

10. SCRUTINY PANEL 3

The update from the Chair of Scrutiny Panel 3 was noted. The Chair of the Panel advised of witnesses expected at the next meeting of the Panel, along with details of conferences and seminars that Panel members would be attending.

The Panel had watched an informative TED video after its September meeting which had been very useful.

11. O&S REPROVISION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES CONTRACT WORKING GROUP

The interim report of the O&S Reprovision of the Environmental Services Contract Working Group was welcomed and approved by the Committee.

The Chair of the Committee would present the report to Cabinet at its meeting on 18 October 2017.

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

Councillor Sargeant presented his briefing note detailing the work of NCC's Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee. He emphasised the value of a Centre for Public Scrutiny conference that he had recently attended.

13. POTENTIAL FUTURE PRE DECISION SCRUTINY.

There were none.

14. URGENT ITEMS

At this point the Chair advised the Committee to be cautious when promoting Scrutiny Panels on social media; in particular in respect of the use of photographs.

The meeting concluded at 8:35 pm