

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL 2 -
IMPACT OF THE MOVE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON

Thursday, 22 November 2018

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Sam Kilby Shaw (Deputy Chair – In the Chair) ,
Councillors Jane Birch, Gareth Eales, Dennis Meredith and Danielle Stone

Witnesses PS Lorna Clarke and PS Rod Williams, Northants Police
Owen Morris, Becky Bradshaw and Raf Garcia,
University of Northampton

Officer Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

Members of the Public

Emma Roberts, Daniel Soan, Heather Bryant, Jill Harvey, Morcea Walker, Poppy Patterson, Millie Harley, Charlotte Millen, Gemma Thompson, Rose Taylor, Richard King, Chris Banks, Michael Harris and three other members of the public. Councillor Julie Davenport was also present

Press James Averill, Democracy Reporter

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Graham Walker (Chair) and Jane Bunce (co optee.)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESS

Emma Roberts, Labour Party candidate for Delapre and Briar Hill, addressed the Panel on agenda item 5(b).

Daniel Soan, Conservative candidate for Delapre and Briar Hill, addressed the Panel on agenda item 5(b).

Heather Bryant, local resident, addressed the Panel on agenda item 5(b).

Councillor Julie Davenport addressed the Panel on agenda item 5(b).

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2018 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

5. WITNESS EVIDENCE

(A) NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM, NORTHANTS POLICE

PS Lorna Clarke and PS Rod Williams addressed the Scrutiny Panel, presenting their written responses to the core questions.

The Scrutiny Panel made comment, asked questions and heard:

- An incident with fireworks being discharged on University premises did happen on 5 November 2018. The Police are working to identify the offenders and have been supporting the University with taking disciplinary action (how to support the University). Searches were carried out on site to investigate this incident and also to prevent (and it was) further planned firework incidents (had been stopped.)
- Ongoing parking and anti-social behaviour issues will take time to resolve. There is a need for a satisfactory solution for parking issues. Neighbourhood Policing Team are supporting this ongoing work.
- Students are encouraged not to drive to the University.
- In respect of a concern regarding traffic congestion, it was suggested that contact is made with Highways, NCC.
- The students are welcomed into to the town and it is hoped that they will stay on in the town.
- In response to a concern about crime on the campus, PS Clarke commented that the five designated Police Officers are there to deal with crime and investigate it. Students are primarily 18-21 years old and are vulnerable by their age and mainly being away from home for the first time. They have regular contact with the policing team, almost (are) “over policed” to give them guidance and support. There are no issues with the majority of students.
- Regarding the night-time economy in the town, there is not a high demand for Police assistance in respect of students causing issues. Monday and Wednesday are student nights and they tend to congregate safely in the Students Union Bar.
- Students are looking to organise a number of community events such as “roots celebrations”
- Peer education is often effective.
- The University has a “Residential Life Team”, which involves students
- PS Clarke commented that the move of the University had generally gone well and had been overall positive. There had been some issues. It was highlighted that there are over 3000 to 5000 (1,000) students going through the site each day.

PS Clarke and PS Williams were thanked for their informative address, the contents of which will inform the evidence base of this Scrutiny review.

(B) REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON AND THE STUDENT UNION, UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON

Emma Roberts, Labour Party candidate for Delapre and Briar Hill, addressed the Scrutiny Panel. She commented that she had spoken to a number of local residents and was bringing their concerns to this meeting. There are problems, particularly with parking. Emma Roberts conveyed concern regarding the report of the University (agenda item 5 c) advising that in her opinion this did not include all the issues and concerns. There is a real need for there to be communication between residents and the University. It was acknowledged that promises had been made that this would take place. Emma Roberts suggested that there is a need to stop students parking in residential streets; the University needs to step in and assist.

Emma Roberts submitted a petition which was received and would be fed through the appropriate channels. She requested that this petition is actioned urgently. She forwarded photographs of parked cars and asked that this is circulated to the Panel.

The Scrutiny Panel asked questions and heard:

In response to a query, Emma Roberts commented that residents want to welcome the students and work together but they are concerned regarding parking and anti-social behaviour. There is a need for regular communication with residents. Liaison with the University, students and residents is important.

It was commented that residents from Thomas Chapman Grove were supportive of residents parking permits and are aware there would be a cost involved. Ms Roberts made reference to the University making a contribution towards such a parking scheme.

Emma Roberts was thanked for her address.

Daniel Soan, Conservative Party candidate for Delapre and Briar Hill, addressed the Scrutiny Panel commenting that he was speaking on behalf of both residents that he had spoken with and students. In his opinion the move of the University had created problems. He was aware that a meeting had been held with residents and the University; he advised that he had spoken with Highways at NCC and that consultation is forthcoming. Residents also have issues with anti-social behaviour and parking on footpaths. He commented on the need for the consultation to start.

The Scrutiny Panel asked questions and heard:

In response to a query regarding potential solutions, Daniel Soan suggested that it is now time for the University and community to work together and public events held on the University campus would be useful. Multi Agency events should be held.

Daniel Soan was thanked for his address.

Heather Bryant, local resident, addressed the Scrutiny Panel. She concurred with the comments raised by Emma Roberts. She informed the Panel of an incident that had occurred in her street and she had called 999. Heather Bryant had also made complaints to the University and submitted a number of photos of parked cars. Anti-social behaviour also takes place. She suggested there is a need for double yellow lines in Malthouse

Close. The University had made a number of commitments but these had not been actioned.

The Scrutiny Panel asked questions and heard:

The University had provided residents with the contact details of Security Staff on site but the Officers are unable to leave site

In response to a query regarding anti-social behaviour, Heather Bryant advised that she had found a number of canisters and had handed these into the University. CCTV cameras had been installed in Malthouse Close but students now move further into the Close away from the cameras.

Heather Bryant was thanked for her address.

Councillor Julie Davenport addressed the Scrutiny Panel as both a Borough and County Councillor. She suggested that there was a need for the Panel to have sight of the Planning application and any S106 agreement. She referred to HMOs and a resident that had been assaulted over parking. Anti-Social Behaviour takes place in Malthouse Close.

The Scrutiny Panel suggested that the planning application is revisited at a future meeting, with a particular focus on the S106 agreement.

Councillor Julie Davenport was thanked for her address.

Owen Morris, Head of PR and Communications, Becky Bradshaw, Head of Health and Safety and Raf Garcia (Students Union) of the University of Northampton presented their written response to the core questions to the Scrutiny Panel. It was highlighted that a recent meeting with residents had been held and the comments raised by the public speakers at this meeting of the Scrutiny Panel had been answered at the public meeting. Contact had been made with those who had raised concerns. The planning application was referred to and it was noted that it had been intended that the move of the University would not impact negatively on emissions. It had therefore been decided that there would be no student parking on campus; this is in line with most Universities. A park and ride facility has been implemented. Owen Morris advised that he is aware of a petition that had been submitted to Highways, NCC, and commented that the University had offered to pay for the consultation regarding parking solutions.

The Scrutiny Panel asked questions and heard:

- In response to a query regarding collating a register of students' vehicles, Becky Bradshaw advised that this might be possible but it would need to be investigated regarding data protection. Students vehicles are not permitted on site therefore it would be difficult to identify student vehicles.
- Raf Garcia advised that from this year there has been a "blanket ban" regarding student vehicles on site.
- In answer to a question regarding anti-social behaviour, Becky Bradshaw confirmed that where the offending individual can be identified they are then taken through the discipline process. All students sign up to the Code of Conduct.

- The Scrutiny Panel referred to the recent fireworks incident and was advised that 15 students were involved and were going through the discipline process. The majority of students were very upset about this incident taking place.
- Becky Bradshaw advised that the University could look into providing a contribution towards any residents' parking scheme.
- Staff can park on the University site.
- Raf Garcia advised that the Students' Union works with the community regarding projects and heritage work. The issues with parking are overshadowing this good work.

The Scrutiny Panel suggested that the Chair contacts the relevant bodies and asks that the parking solutions are expedited and an update is provided to the next meeting.

Owen Morris, Becky Bradshaw and Raf Garcia were thanked for their informative address; the contents of which would inform the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

(C) MANAGER, STUDENT HOMES, NORTHAMPTON

A representative from Student Homes was not present.

(D) LETTING AGENCIES, NORTHAMPTON

Representatives from Letting Agencies, Northampton were not present.

The meeting concluded at 7:30 pm