



OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY VIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

TO CABINET - 11 SEPTEMBER 2019

Report Title	RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – EVALUATION OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORTS
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Agenda Status: PUBLIC

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To present to Cabinet for consideration, the comments and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the findings of the Scrutiny Review – Evaluation of Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Reports.
- 1.2 All Overview and Scrutiny review reports are published on the Overview and Scrutiny page on the Council's Webpage and a copy of this report can be located: www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny - Previous Scrutiny Reviews.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet that:
 - 2.1.1 Cabinet is informed that the outcome from this Scrutiny activity had found Overview and Scrutiny at NBC is good and works very well. The Call in process at NBC has been noted as an example of best practice by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS). O&S has featured in a CfPS document – Scrutiny Frontiers regarding its good practice of public engagement and the report – Management of Community Centres was shortlisted for a good Scrutiny award by the CfPS.
 - 2.1.2 In any new Unitary Authority there should be some Scrutiny process. The method of Scrutiny operated at Northampton Borough Council is retained in any new Unitary Authority.

3.1 Background and Issues

- 3.1.1 Following approval of its work programme for 2018/2019, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting in April 2018 commissioned the Working Group to undertake this Scrutiny activity. An in-depth piece of Scrutiny activity commenced in May 2018 and concluded in March 2019.
- 3.1.2 A Working Group was established comprising Councillor Jamie Lane (Chair); Councillors Aziz, Bottwood, Kilby-Shaw, Meredith and Smith.
- 3.1.3 This Scrutiny activity links to the Council's corporate priorities, particularly corporate priority - Exceptional services to be proud of.
- 3.1.4 The Working Group established that the following needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council's corporate priorities.

3.2 Background Information

Background data, included:

Previous Scrutiny Review Reports, including:

2005/2006

[Planning](#)

2006/2007

[Public engagement and communications](#)

[Best value review](#)

[Tree policy](#)

[Allotments \(water charges\)](#)

[Street scene](#)

[Leisure services](#)

[Homelessness \(rough sleepers\) task and finish group](#)

[Community safety \(evaluation of dispersal orders\)](#)

2007/2008

[Community engagement](#)

[Voluntary sector](#)

2008/2009

[Councillor Call for Action](#)

[Billing Waste Water Working Group](#)

[Historic Buildings Task and Finish Group](#)

[Contaminated Water task and finish group](#) - phase one

Contaminated Water task and finish group - [phase two](#)

[West Northants Development Corporation \(WNDC\) and partnership working with Northampton Borough Council \(NBC\)](#)

[Evaluation of Overview and Scrutiny](#)

[Proposed Post Office Closures](#)

[Customer Services](#)

2009/2010

[West Northants Emergent Joint Core Strategy](#)

[Concessionary Fares](#)

[More Facilities for Older Children](#)

[Community Centres](#) This scrutiny review was shortlisted for a Centre for Public Scrutiny Good Scrutiny Award. As part of the shortlist process, a [video](#) was produced. The judges thought that this work, which facilitated the transfer of a large number of community facilities from the council to community control, demonstrated the contribution that scrutiny can make to implementing a key Government policy around community asset transfer successfully at local level.

2010/2011

[Cost of Consultants](#)

[Sheltered Housing and Housing Options for Older People](#)

[Absence Management](#)

[Northamptonshire Alcohol Strategy](#)

[Pre-Scrutiny of Environmental Services Procurement](#)

[Leisure Trust Implementation](#)

[Neighbourhood Model](#)

Lease that Northampton Borough Council has With Northampton Town Football Club, the Contractual Arrangements between Northampton Town Football Club and the Rugby and Northampton Athletics

[Commissioning Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector](#)

2011/2012

[Councillor Empowerment Fund](#)

[Hate Crime](#)

[Independent Living Strategy](#)

2012/2013

[Customer Services](#)

[Evaluation of Overview and Scrutiny \(2012\)](#)

Serious Acquisitive Crime, Violent Crime and Community Safety

2013/2014

Retail Experience

Section 106 Agreements and Infrastructure Requirements

Improving the Town's Parks

2014/2015

Management and Regulation of Private Sector Housing (including HIMOs)

Impact of the Welfare Reform Act

Interpersonal Violence

Poverty in the Town

Keep Northampton Tidy

Parking

Tree Maintenance

2015/2016

Impact of Anti-Social Behaviour on the Town

Health Check of the Local Economy

Effectiveness of the Enforcement Policies in respect of Taxis and Private Hire

NBC Owned Street Lighting

2016/2017

Museum Trust (pre decision scrutiny)

Child Sexual Exploitation

Homelessness (Pre-Decision Scrutiny)

Emissions Strategy (Action Plan)

Monitoring Action Plans for previous Scrutiny Reviews and information regarding the number of accepted recommendations :

Internal expert advisors:

Relevant Cabinet Members and Senior officers in respect of the success of each Scrutiny Review being evaluated.

4 Key Findings and Conclusions

- 4.1 After all of the evidence was collated the following conclusions were drawn:
- 4.1.1 In reviewing the evidence received regarding the impact of the Scrutiny Reviews since 2006, it was concluded that they had all made a positive review, some examples as detailed below:
- 4.1.2 The Working Group was pleased to note that the Scrutiny review around Community Centres had been shortlisted for a Centre for Public Scrutiny Good Scrutiny Award. As part of the shortlist process, a [video](#) was produced. The Working Group noted that the judges thought that this work, which facilitated the transfer of a large number of community facilities from the council to community control, demonstrated the contribution that scrutiny can make to implementing a key Government policy around community asset transfer successfully at local level. This was felt to be an example of good Scrutiny at Northampton.
- 4.1.3 Regarding the Planning Scrutiny Review, the Working Group queried whether Parish Councillors could also automatically have speaking rights; often when they register, it is too late and the speaker list for the planning application is full. Parish Councils are statutory consultees and their views are given due consideration and by permitting Parish Councillors to have automatic speaking rights could extend the length of Planning Committee meetings. It was emphasised that the general impact of the planning report (2005/06) had been good.
- 4.1.4 In reviewing the impact of the Street Scene Scrutiny Review, the Working Group felt that there was a need to educate residents regarding recycling. It was realised that that some of the recommendations had been superseded by Law. However that the general impact of this report was good.
- 4.1.5 It was welcomed that the majority of the recommendations in the Scrutiny Report – Community had been implemented and made a real difference.
- 4.1.6 The Working Group, in reviewing the progress on the accepted recommendations contained within the Hate Crime Reporting Scrutiny report, was pleased to note that the Authority won, in 2016, a national award for its work on hate crime. The Working Group agreed that it would be useful if the Community Forums could undertake any work around hate crime towards rough sleepers and perhaps lobby Government. It further suggested that it would be useful for Parish Councils to be briefed on hate crime awareness.
- 4.1.7 In reviewing the progress made on the accepted recommendations contained with the Scrutiny report – Keep Northampton Tidy, it was noted that praise from the public had been received regarding the work of Veolia. There is a noticeable difference in the cleanliness of the town and the town has been awarded Purple Flag, it lasts for one year and an application has to be submitted annually.
- 4.1.8 Evidence received highlighted that this Scrutiny activity had found Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) at is good at NBC and works very well. In any new Unitary Authority there should be some Scrutiny. The method of Scrutiny operated at Northampton Borough Council is retained in any new Unitary Authority. The Call in process at NBC has been noted as an example of best practice by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. O&S has featured in a CfPS document – Scrutiny Frontiers regarding its

good practice of public engagement. This information should be included O&S Annual Report 2018/2019.

5. Options

- 5.1 Cabinet will need to consider the possible options as part of its response to the recommendations.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Policy

- 6.1.1 The work of Overview and Scrutiny plays a major part in the development of the Council's policy framework through its work programme.
- 6.1.2 The report and its recommendations have policy implications in relation to the Council's response to the recommendations. Cabinet's response will need to consider these issues in detail.

6.2 Resources and Risk

- 6.2.1 Cabinet will need to consider the resourcing issues for the recommendations made.

6.3 Legal

- 6.3.1 Legal issues will need to be considered as part of Cabinet's response to the recommendations.

6.4 Equality

- 6.4.1 Equality issues will need to be considered as part of Cabinet's response to the recommendations.

6.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

- 6.5.1 The Committee received evidence from a variety of sources as detailed in paragraph 3.2 of this report.

Background Papers

Overview and Scrutiny Committee report – Evaluation of O&S Reports (May 2019)
Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 10 June 2019

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