



Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at The Jeffrey Room - The Guildhall, Northampton, NN1 1DE on Monday 11 September 2023 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor André González De Savage (Chair)
Councillor Anthony S. Bagot-Webb
Councillor William Barter
Councillor Paul Joyce
Councillor Terrie Eales
Councillor Terry Gilford
Councillor James Hill
Councillor Kevin Parker
Councillor Sue Sharps
Councillor Jake Roberts

Also Present:

Councillor Phil Larratt, Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste
Councillor Rebecca Breese, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Built Environment and Rural Affairs
Councillor Jo Gilford, Chair of the Waste Strategy Working Group

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Alison Eastwood

Officers:

Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director of Place, Economy & Environment
Fiona Unett, Assistant Director for Waste
Richard Wood, Head of Planning Policy and Specialist Services
Alan Munn, Team Leader Planning Policy
Colin Barrett, Estates Manager
James Povey, Transport Strategy and Development Manager
Louis Devayya, Senior Economic Growth Officer

Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager
Marina Watkins, Committee Officer

124. Declarations of Interest

None advised.

125. **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 21st June 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

126. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chair advised that he had attended the Scrutiny Triangulation meetings and the Scrutiny Committee forward plan had been considered. The Group would review requests for scrutiny from members.

127. **Progress Reports**

a) WNC Local Plan

Alan Munn, Team Leader Planning Policy provided the Committee with a brief presentation updating the Committee on the Local Plan. Consultation would be taking place in the new year with a view to adopt the new plan in 2026.

- Two workshops would be arranged for members
- Travel will be considered as part of the new Local Transport Plan (LTP), though it and the Local Plan will emerge alongside each other
- In the hierarchy of plans, the Local Plan was set at a strategic level and detail would be provided through the LTP and other plans, which would cross reference each other
- Safe designated areas for the storage of items such as scooters was necessary
- There was a need to engage with young people in the process as they would be the communities of the future. Proactive engagement should be made with schools and youth forums
- Open spaces should be of good quality, usable and easy to maintain
- The Plan would undergo an eight week consultation period early in the new year. A consultation plan would be submitted to committee for consideration
- It was disappointing that viability studies were carried out in some areas in 2021 and consultation would not commence until 2024. It was noted that that the new Local Plan was a very large project and therefore progress could be slow
- Councillor Breese urged members to attend the workshops as it was very important to gain as much representations as possible

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the process for the preparation of the draft plan for public consultation.

b) Draft waste Strategy

Fiona Unett, the Assistant Director for Waste provided the Committee with a presentation outlining the headline results on the consultation carried out over six weeks from 5 July to 21 August 2023.

- Over three thousand responses had been received to the consultation
- A high level of support had been identified for education regarding reusing items and waste prevention
- Residents prioritised good customer service, reducing waste and protecting the environment
- Further information was requested regarding what items/materials can be recycled
- The cost of living crisis was evident in the waste collected, with less food waste and less recycling being collected
- More cardboard was being recycled due to the increase in on-line deliveries since the pandemic
- The working group would meet in September to consider the draft strategy before its submission to Cabinet in November
- It was suggested that recycling bins should be installed in the town, however it was noted that education was needed to ensure that they were used correctly and not contaminated
- Re-use shops would be promoted as part of the new HWRC
- The bins/bags provided to properties needed to be appropriate to the housing

RESOLVED:

That flood risk management scrutiny was undertaken, and the changes to the Flood and Water Act 2010 were noted.

c) Flood Risk Management

Colin Barrett, Estates Manager provided the Committee with a presentation outlining the duties of the Council as the Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA). Upcoming changes to the Flood and water Act 2010 would alter the role of the team. Highways and the Council worked together with regards to flooding issues. The Council as the LLFA were statutory consultees on planning applications and work was being undertaken to reduce the backlog. Recruitment to the team was taking place.

RESOLVED:

That the update on flood risk management be noted.

128. Bus Network Review

The Chair welcomed James Povey, Transport Strategy and Development Manager who outlined progress on the bus network review. Two consultant reports had been circulated with the agenda.

- Local bus use had not fully recovered since the pandemic
- The first report provided a baseline review of current services and identified routes as 'red', 'amber' and 'green' depending on their commercial viability

- The second consultant's report included options to sustain and also improve the bus network
- It was noted that during the course of the initial review, Stagecoach had withdrawn a number of services. This had not altered the outcome of the review however, as it was noted that any of the routes identified as 'amber' had the potential to collapse
- The intention was to work with operators to move 'amber' services into 'green' and become self-sufficient within two years
- It was considered that Stagecoach and other operators should market their services/routes to employers and students
- The WNCAST appraisal tool would be used to assess candidate schemes
- A needs analysis had not yet been undertaken, and the next stage would be to identify gaps where needs are not met
- At the pre-meeting it was agreed that a representative of Stagecoach be invited to a future meeting of the Committee
- With regards to zero emissions targets, the Council would want to work with stakeholders to put forward proposals for government funding opportunities
- James Povey undertook to check the routes and how they were funded as well as whether community transport providers were still operating
- Combining routes should be considered to improve financial viability

The Chair thanked James Povey for their presentation and members for their contributions.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee undertook pre-decision scrutiny of the bus review and comments and suggestions proposed will be taken in consideration.

129. **Membership of the Active Travel Oversight Group**

Councillor Tony Bagot-Webb, Chair of the Active Travel Oversight Group advised that changes were required to the membership of the Group. Councillors William Barter and Paul Joyce had agreed to join the Group. Councillor Alison Eastwood would be a substitute when required.

A meeting of the Active Travel oversight Group had been held prior to the Committee meeting. Further resources were required to speed up progress, with input required from planning and highways. The Executive Director of Place, Economy & Environment undertook to provide contact details at the university.

RESOLVED:

That Councillors William Barter and Paul Joyce be appointed to the Active Travel Oversight Group. Councillor Alison Eastwood to be appointed as a substitute member.

130. **Review of Committee Work Plan**

The Chair introduced the work programme and advised that with regards to the M&S and BHS development, a site visit to comparable sites would be arranged. The Committee agreed that a virtual or a physical visit could be organised if that was easier for all. A report would be presented to the meeting on 15th January 2024.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted and the date of 15 January 2024 is added to the work programme for consideration of the M&S and BHS development.

131. **Urgent Business**

Draft Place Vision

The Chair advised that he had agreed to a request of an item of urgent business to be admitted to the agenda. The Chair welcomed Louis Devayya, Senior Economic Growth Officer to present the draft Place Vision to the Committee.

- The draft Place Vision was an engagement tool to start a conversation about increasing pride in place
- The Vision sat under the Corporate Plan but above and linked to all other strategies
- The many strengths of living and working in the county were emphasised in the Vision, including strategic location and a highly skilled workforce
- The Vision set the goal, whilst the strategies set out how the goals could be achieved
- Consultation and engagement would be on going and involvement encouraged
- Engagement with young people, as future customers was highlighted as a priority
- The County had a strong presence with regards to research and development
- Further consideration should be given to how to measure success

RESOLVED:

That Place OSC undertook pre scrutiny of the draft Place Vision; with comments and suggestions being taken into consideration.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____