



Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at The Jeffery Room, The Guildhall, Northampton on Tuesday 21 March 2023 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Dermot Bambridge (Chair)
Councillor Jo Gilford (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Bob Purser
Councillor Anthony S. Bagot-Webb
Councillor William Barter
Councillor Paul Joyce
Councillor Terrie Eales
Councillor Louisa Fowler
Councillor Enam Haque
Councillor Charles Morton
Councillor Kevin Parker

Also Present:

Councillor Jonathan Nunn, Leader of the Council, Leader of the Conservative Group and Cabinet Member for Strategy
Councillor David Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Engagement and Regulatory Services

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Paul Dyball
Councillor Richard Solesbury-Timms

Officers:

Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director - Place and Economy
Rebecca Peck, Assistant Chief Executive
Ruth Austen, Assistant Director Regulatory Services
Karen Pell, Environmental Health Manager
Martin Wilson, Contracts and Performance Manager,
Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager
Marina Watkins, Committee Officer

93. Declarations of Interest

None advised

94. Minutes

It was noted that Cllr Bagot-Webb was in attendance at the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the amendment above, the Minutes of the meeting of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 7th February 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

95. **Chairman's Announcements**

None advised.

96. **Fly Tipping**

The Chair welcomed Councillor David Smith, Ruth Austen and Karen Pell to the meeting.

The Committee received a presentation from Ruth Austen, Assistant Director Regulatory Services outlining the types of fly tipping and work being undertaken to reduce it, including the Cleaner Communities campaign, dedicated webpages and work with the Communications team. The committee had provided scrutiny input last year into the initial shaping of the fly tipping policy.

In response to questions from Councillors:

- The intention was to win hearts and minds and encourage pride in the community
- The long term aim was to make fly tipping socially unacceptable. The hope was to develop a 'rogue's' gallery' on the website
- CCTV was currently being procured, which would be installed in the most commonly affected areas. In some instances just the presence of a camera could be a deterrent
- A large amount of evidence was required to complete a successful prosecution
- A monitored CCTV package was being purchased which would make better use of officer time
- Education was an important element of enforcement.
- There was often an increase in fly tipping at the end of the university year when students left their accommodation and landlords dumped bedding etc
- The definition of fly tipping was not clear. One bag could be construed as littering. It also depended on the ownership of the land involved. A person dumping items on their own occupied property would probably not be classed as fly tipping but would come under other legislation
- In cases where the Council took action, costs would be applied for and sometimes be awarded. Individuals on a restricted income would repay the fine under a payment plan. Fixed Penalty Notices were in the Council's control and the fines returned to the service.
- Statistics were being collected regarding number of incidents, number of fixed penalty notices issued etc. Performance Indicators could be provided to the Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis. It was harder to measure less tangible issues such as the impact on the local environment
- An annual report providing details on a ward by ward basis would be useful

- Domestic waste was more of an issue in the town areas, with commercial waste being more problematic in rural areas
- Mixed use areas, e.g. flats above shops needed additional information with regards to how, when and where to dispose of waste appropriately
- Recycling centres – hours of opening, locations etc was being considered as part of a wider review into the Waste strategy
- The involvement of businesses and community groups such as the Wombles was very much encouraged
- There were currently a number of reporting systems. The intention was to develop one, easy to use system.
- It was noted that the funds for farmers and other landowners to claim back the costs of clearing their land after fly tipping was onerous. It was noted that the Council were merely administering the scheme on behalf of other agencies. The scheme was grant money and therefore quotes were required
- There were regularly issues with littering at Junction 15 and 16. ANPR cameras had been considered but Police were not keen to prioritise. Further discussions were required with Highways on the issue.
- The Committee were reminded that the document was live and evolving, and would be returned to the Committee in 12 months' time with additional statistics

The Environmental Health Manager advised that at the moment incidents could be reported via email to: envcrime@westnorthants.gov.uk

The Chair thanked Councillor Smith and officers for their presentation and members for their contributions.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That The Committee noted the presentation
- 2) That the Committee provide further input into the Policy in 12 months' time.

97. Net Zero

The Committee received a presentation on Net Zero from Councillor Jonathan Nunn. The Council was taking a strong community leadership role for sustainability in West Northants.

- The Sustainability Strategy was launched a year ago, which set out bold targets
- The legacy Councils were at different levels with regards to their net zero policies
- The intention was to Net Zero WNC's own emissions by 2030 and those of residents and businesses by 2045
- It was preferable to cut emissions as much as possible and only make use of carbon off-setting when all other options had been exhausted.
- The Council had joined up to the UK100 Net Zero pledge, which set strong quality standards as well as providing opportunities for networking and best practise.
- A cross party Councillor working group had been established
- Four members of staff had been recruited to the Sustainability team
- Sustainability would be a big driver in the new Local Plan

In response to questions from Councillors, the following points were raised:

- Older commercial buildings were often not strong enough to take the weight of solar panels, however panels were becoming lighter
- It was important that planning policy played a role in ensuring that buildings were built appropriately to allow the installation of panels
- Solar panels were due to be installed on the roof of One Angel Square. This would only cover the Council's needs but other Council owned properties were being considered for the installation of solar panels, which would allow surplus electricity to be fed back into the grid
- The construction of buildings was becoming more sustainable. In some cases, buildings were constructed off site which reduced the carbon footprint and waste
- It would be inadvisable to re-open capped waste sites. It was pointed out that the emissions would reduce over time
- It was incredibly expensive to retro fit efficiency measures into old properties which is why it was important for new builds to be built to high sustainability standards
- It was suggested that consideration be given to a 'future show home' which would enable companies to showcase their products with regards to energy efficiency and sustainability

The Chair thanked Councillor Nunn for the presentation and members for their contributions.

RESOLVED:

That the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the presentation

98. **Updates from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Groups**

The Chairs of the Task and Finish and Oversight Groups to provide an update to the Committee

i) Highways Contract Strategic Oversight Group

Councillor Bagot-Webb advised that the Oversight Group would be undertaking their first review of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) next week

ii) Active Travel Oversight Group

Councillor Bagot-Webb advised that there had been a slippage of three months on the work of the Oversight Group. The first meeting would take place on 23rd May. Concerns was expressed regarding the Abington Active Travel Scheme. The Executive Director - Place and Economy advised that consultation on the scheme would be extended

RESOLVED:

That the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the updates from the Chairs of the Task and Finish and Oversight Group

99. **Waste and Resources Strategy Members Working Group**

Councillor Jo Gilford, the Chair of the Waste and Resources Strategy Working Group provided a progress report to the Committee. The intention was to produce a strategy to harmonise the waste services across West Northants. The scope of the working group was wide ranging and complex, including all elements of waste collection.

Work was progressing well, with baseline data gathered and consultants questioned.

RESOLVED:

That the update on the Waste and Resources Strategy Working Group be noted

100. **Review of Committee Work Programme 2022-23**

The Chair introduced the work programme and asked the Committee for their comments and views.

Items on libraries and the broadband contract were due to be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Executive Director - Place and Economy advised that it was necessary to bring an item on School to Home Transport Policy to the next meeting for the Committee's consideration. The matter would also be discussed with the Chair of People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the work programme be noted.
- ii) That an item on School to Home Transport Policy be included on the agenda for the Committee meeting in April

101. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

102. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____