



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Northampton on Tuesday 31 August 2021 at 6.00 pm.

Present Councillor Dermot Bambridge (Chair)
 Councillor Jo Gilford (Vice-Chair)
 Councillor Anthony S. Bagot-Webb
 Councillor William Barter
 Councillor Pinder Chauhan
 Councillor Julie Davenport
 Councillor Janice Duffy
 Councillor Louisa Fowler
 Councillor Charles Morton
 Councillor Kevin Parker

Substitute
Members: Councillor Terrie Eales

Also
Present: Councillor Phil Larratt (Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport,
 Highways and Waste)

Apologies
for
Absence: Councillor Enam Haque
 Councillor Paul Joyce

Officers Stuart Timmiss (Executive Director – Place, Economy and
 Environment)
 Tracy Tiff (Deputy Democratic Services Manager)
 Ed Bostock (Democratic Services Officer)

8. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members

Councillors Haque and Councillor Joyce sent apologies. Councillor Joyce was substituted by Councillor T Eales.

9. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

10. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd June 2021 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

11. Chair's Announcements

There were no Chair's Announcements.

12. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of Urgent Business.

13. **North West Relief Road**

At the Chair's invitation, the Executive Director of Place, Economy and Environment presented a report for the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the funding gap for the project and to monitor the current processes including quality and change.

The Executive Director of Place, Economy and Environment described how checks and balances used in budgeting procedures would ensure that future projects were within the parameters of the budget.

The Committee made comments, asked questions and heard:

- The Executive Director for Place, Economy and Environment was working closely with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment, Highways and Waste to keep the project on track and within budget.
- Development funding had been cut; costings were based on limited information.
- A Levelling Up bid had been submitted to central government, a response was expected in October. The local MP was backing this bid.
- Planning/acquisition processes were in place, a further update would be brought to Overview and Scrutiny.
- The gateway process allowed for, and encouraged, member involvement at the beginning of the process.
- Approximately 95% of the contingency allowance cost was taken on by developers.
- The environment was a consideration from the start; highways contractors asked to think of ways to bring schemes to carbon neutrality.
- Procurement process – competitive processes built in, benchmarking against comparable schemes would come naturally.
- Forward Funding – payments all the way through the scheme. If the Levelling Up funding grant was successful, the Council would not be required to make contributions. The Committee welcomed the funding methodology going forward for scheme developments.

The Chair thanked the Executive Director of Place, Economy and Environment for his informative presentation.

Resolved: That

- 1) The Committee noted the historical funding methodology for scheme developments.
- 2) The Committee welcomed the funding methodology going forward for scheme developments, particularly welcoming the various gateways.

14. **The Council's Tree Policy**

The Executive Director of Place, Economy and Environment presented a report for the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide Scrutiny input into the Council's draft Tree Policy for West Northamptonshire.

The Committee made comments, asked questions, and heard:

- The Committee felt that there were too many trees in some areas; maintenance works should be prioritised.
- Cabinet would decide how the policy was funded.
- There should be flexibility since even healthy trees could become dangerous.
- Officers would look to rationalise existing policies across districts.
- Appropriate trees should be planted in the right locations.
- A policy was being looked into to bring existing expertise together.
- Fruit trees were associated with antisocial issues, e.g., apples being used as projectiles.
- Unidentified pieces of land were an issue.
- Early Member input would be important. It was suggested that a Member Task & Finish Group is set up.

Resolved: That;

- 1) A Task and Finish Group of this Committee is set up to investigate Tree Policy and Strategy. The Task and Finish Group would be Chaired by Councillor Pinder Chauhan and Councillors Duffy and J Gilford would join the Task and Finish Group membership
- 2) The Chair of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee would contact all non-Executives inviting those with an interest and expertise in the topic to join the Task and Finish Group. Membership of the Task and Finish Group would be limited to seven non-Executives.

15. **Work Programming Event**

The Committee heard that the Work Programming Event would take place on 7th October 2021. It would be open to all non- Executives to attend and partake. Cabinet Members would be asked to attend to inform of their priorities for the year which would be useful information to the Committee in setting its work programme and for pre-decision scrutiny.

Resolved that:

The Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee confirmed the date for the Work Programming Event as 7th October 2021 commencing at 6pm to be held at the Guildhall, Northampton.

16. **Review of Committee Work Programme 2021/2022**

The Committee received a report outlining the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021-2022.

The Committee asked questions, made comment, and heard:

- Highways and Waste should be a higher priority on the Work Programme
- The Update on Broadband would cover all providers.
- Bus Strategy the Committee was informed that this was included within the Cabinet Forward Plan; a partnership was being worked on.

The meeting closed at 8.07 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____