



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at The Jeffery Room, Guildhall, Northampton on Monday 1 November 2021 at 6.00 pm.

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

Also Present: Councillor Rebecca Breese
 Councillor Phil Larratt

Apologies for
Absence: Councillor Terrie Eales

Officers Diana Davies, Democratic Services Officer
 James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager
 Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager
 Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director - Place and Economy

18. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

19. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 31 August 2021 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

20. Chairman's Announcements

The were no announcements from the Chair.

21. **Call in of Cabinet Decision of 12 October 2021: Item 6: Old Black Lion Pub and St Peter's Church - Northampton Town Funds**

The Chair confirmed that the call in of the Cabinet Decision of 12 October 2021 – Item 6 Black Lion Pub, St Peter's Church – Northampton Town Funds had been withdrawn.

22. **Tree Policy and Strategy Task and Finish Group**

The Chair introduced the report and invited the Chair of the Tree Policy and Strategy Task and Finish Group to address the Committee. The scope of the Task and Finish Group was outlined. The Committee discussed and considered the report and so raised the following points in response

Tenants inherit large trees but could not afford to maintain them. Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) had produced a report which would be circulated to the Committee for consideration in the review as part of the evidence gathering.

The calendar of meetings, members were supportive of hybrid meetings for the Task and Finish Group.

Members requested that the Tree Policy and Strategy Task and Finish Group, present regular briefings reporting on progress to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings.

Resolved that: subject to a minor amendment, the wording of which to be amended by Deputy Democratic Services Manager in consultation with the Chair, the scope of the Tree Policy and Strategy Review be approved by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

23. **Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2021/2022**

The Chair introduced the report and invited the committees comment on the content of the work programme for 2021/2022.

The committee discussed the work programme for 2021/2022 in detail

Members requested a detailed briefing regarding the Highways Contract which the Assistant Director Place and Economy agreed to schedule. The Highways Contract would be scheduled for Scrutiny review post briefing.

In responding to a member's question, the Assistant Director Place and Economy confirmed that an exercise had been carried out so that the terms of the new Highways Contract were improved.

Members requested that it be recorded that Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be given an opportunity to view all draft tenders and specifications in advance of the tender exercise being undertaken.

Councillor Ashraf entered the meeting at this point.

In considering the West Northants Infrastructure Strategy members also considered that the requirement for a footpath with bridge for cycleway over the HS2 development was pressing. Members agreed that it would need to be included as a separate item for Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide input.

Members discussed the limitation of the role of members nationwide when asked to scrutinise road safety however consideration could still be given to implementation of local measures:

- Speedwatch schemes
- Speed review panel for Parish Councils
- Improved engagement of highways particularly at pre application discussion stage to ensure the road safety of new estates would be given early consideration. To include reduction of speeds - outside schools, where vision display is inadequate and on congested roads
- Improved liaison between planning, highways and police

In the deliberation of library services members requested a report regarding the status of libraires and the proposed plan using the prepandemic data as a base line and the policy in place.

Resolved that: subject to the amendments, the wording to be amended by Deputy Democratic Services Manager in consultation with the Chair, the Work Programme 2021/2022 be approved by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee for submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group for its consideration and approval.

24. **Carried Motions on Notice - Predecessor Councils**

Members considered the Carried Motions on Notice from the Predecessor Councils and agreed the motions to be adopted on the work programme for West Northants Council's (WNC) Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- To encourage developments in which NBC is directly involved to consider having accessible toilets that meet the standards set by the "Changing Places" campaign.
- To strongly object to any further development to the south and south east of Northampton due to the impact it will have on local services, the lack of road infrastructure improvements and the impact on the A45 and local road network without adequate mitigation. To express concern at sites in East Wootton and South East Northampton being put forward for development in SNC's Local Plan. To call on SNC to take account of views from Natural England and other wildlife organisations in developing its Local Plan.
- To continue and increase SNC's effort to ensure planning permission for the Towcester 'relief road' meets Highways England's standard for adoption and

lobby government to ensure Towcester gets an adopted bypass, and lobby government to have the A5 de-trunked through the town at the earliest possible date.

- To continue a review of sprinkler systems in 10 Northampton Partnership Homes buildings. To undertake an urgent review of the planning policy with regard to residential developments and provisions for sprinkler systems in all new residential buildings of 5 storeys or above. To review the possible need for two separate stair cases to exit tower blocks. To ask NPH to provide tenants of tower blocks with fire safety training.
- To agree to take specified actions to reduce the risk from housing developments that established management companies to manage open spaces and amenities below the standard for adoption and with no democratic oversight or accountability.
- To recognise that there are significant concerns regarding the establishment of Managed Agencies on new developments. To urge our MPs raise this matter with the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government to work towards regulating Managed Agencies.

It was recognised that a number of inherited motions on notice would be reviewed by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee as plans and policies were developed or were included on the WNC 2021/2022 work programme:

Climate Change Plan

- To agree to implement any recommendations from the current Scrutiny Review concerning Air Quality in The Drapery. To note that the Administration is working with partners to address the abuse by motorists of the Traffic Regulation Orders applying to The Drapery and are pursuing other measures to enable improved vehicle flows.
- To establish a Scrutiny and Improvement task panel to investigate whether DDC is doing all that it can to minimise its impact upon the environment and examine how DDC, through its actions, can provide leadership to local communities in seeking ways of reducing harmful emissions.
- To agree to declare a Climate Emergency in Northampton and commit to making it carbon neutral by 2030. To request a report at the start of 2020 setting out action taken and how the aim has been included in the start-up plans for West Northamptonshire Council.
- To declare a Climate Emergency in Northamptonshire and commit to a target of making Northamptonshire carbon neutral by 2030. This Council further commits to work with partners to deliver that goal. This Council calls upon its successor councils to continue this work once they come into existence.
- To call on NBC to work with public transport operators, NCC and the government to improve air quality by taking specified actions to reduce the use

of diesel powered buses and coaches in the area, reduce cars idling, and establish car-free zones around schools where possible.

- To establish a scrutiny working group to assess the existing carbon footprint of the district and review potential actions and associated cost estimates this Council could take to limit the effects of climate change in South Northamptonshire. To call upon its successor West Northamptonshire Council to continue this work once it comes in existence.
- To commit to searching for best ways to encourage and work with local organisations, residents and businesses across the borough to see how they can make a difference to the environment through all relevant technologies, including options to switch to green energy companies.

Tree Policy and Strategy

- To call for a transformation of underused urban spaces across Northampton. To develop a tree planting strategy that will replace the number of trees that are being felled or have died. To increase the number of trees in the town to create a cleaner, greener Northampton.
- To call for a transformation of underused urban spaces across our county, to be planted with new trees to help the future generations enjoy what many of us have taken for granted. To request the initial work to form a joint plan for wider scale reinstatement of street trees as part of the move to Unitary.
- To call on NBC to develop an up to date Tree Policy.

Road Safety

- To agree to work closely with developers, academies and trusts to make sure, where possible, schools that are being built in the county don't build-in the traffic problems that are such a feature of many existing schools. To promote some of the excellent best practice examples already established in many schools across the county to help alleviate issues around drop off time in both existing and new schools.

Spatial Options

- To require that all further development sites, not currently included within the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, but attributed to the growth of Northampton, are concentrated in the vicinity of the proposed Northern Orbital Road so that they can contribute to the delivery of this much needed infrastructure and secure its early delivery.

Re-cycling and Waste Contract Review

- To investigate and recommend innovative models for the recycling of cans and bottles that can be available in locations across the borough. The model recommended should educate, entertain and encourage the process of recycling.

- To agree to take specified actions to enable Northampton to lead an eco-friendly Britain relating to plastic waste and recycling, environmental education, a reward scheme to encourage recycling, and use of the planning process to encourage developers to consider low carbon developments.

Social Value Policy

- To agree to promote membership of the “Making It” and “Made in Britain” campaigns to local companies; to continue to encourage potential manufacturers to site within Northampton; and to use local suppliers wherever possible and cost effective to support the local economy.

Resolved that: the condensed list of motions, taken from the ‘Carried Motions on Notice from the Predecessor Councils’, be incorporated in the work programme for West Northants Council’s (WNC) Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

25. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____