



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at The Guildhall, Northampton on Wednesday 26 January 2022 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 Louisa Fowler
 - Councillor Enam Haque
 - Councillor Kevin Parker
 - Councillor Richard Solesbury-Timms
- Also Present:**
- Councillor Phil Larratt
 - Councillor Jonathan Nunn
 - Councillor David Smith, Cabinet Member – Community Safety & Engagement and Regulatory Services
- Apologies for Absence:**
- Councillor Janice Duffy
 - Councillor Terrie Eales
- Officers**
- Jo Barrett, Assistant Director - Housing and Communities
 - Diana Davies, Democratic Services Officer
 - Stuart Lackenby, Executive Director - Adults Communities and Wellbeing
 - Victoria Rockall, Community Safety and Engagement Manager
 - Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager
 - Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director - Place and Economy

31. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

32. Minutes

Councillor Enam Haque advised that apologies had been submitted for the meeting of 14 December 2021

RESOLVED that: the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the minutes, subject to the amendment, of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 14 December 2021.

33. Chairman's Announcements

The Chair reminded the Committee of the additional meeting on 31 January 2022, added to the municipal calendar to meet the demand of the planned work programme.

34. Farthinghoe Bypass

The Cabinet member - Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste introduced the agenda item and highlighted the following contextual points:

- Installation of traffic signals on the A422 was proposed
- The pinch point in Farthinghoe – making it one-way could be considered a possible resolution
- Proposed work being developed within government guidelines
- Continued to work with the Parish Council and representatives
- A parish consultation would be undertaken in due course
- Would be working with the community and the detailed scheme would be worked on once consultation complete
- It had been recognised that a site marshal would be beneficial to this development, and an advertisement for the role was imminent. One element of the role would include community liaison. A full job specification would be drawn up
- Emphasis would be given to implementation of the right governance being in place, to ensure the facilitation of efficient communication and that the correct focus was given to the right issues

The Committee considered the presentation and members raised the following points:

- No mention of the A43, nor Northampton, Should the government be looking at the larger picture
- HS2 work traffic had and would continue to cause disruption. When both the Farthinghoe and the HS2 works were in progress simultaneously what plan was being considered for mitigating the disruption on these routes?
- HS2 development, Farthinghoe could see increased number vehicles and a significant number being HGV's, should consideration be given to fast tracking the traffic lights

The Cabinet member - Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste made the following points in response:

- The original report for Farthinghoe dated back to 1980, predated the building of the M40
- The marshal would be responsible for managing the road closures
- The public consultation needed to be undertaken, completion estimated as Autumn/Winter 2023

RESOLVED that: the report to the Committee be noted.

35. Tree Policy and Strategy Task and Finish Group

The Chair of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Tree Strategy and Policy Task and Finish Group provided a verbal update regarding the progress and highlighted the following points:

- Meetings in 2021 build the works programme and developed core questions
- Questions were circulated to:
 - cabinet members and heads of service
 - schools, community groups, housing associations, parish councillors, save our street trees
- Consultation aimed at:
 - Identifying issues to ensure trees are planted in the right places to mitigate damage, insurance claims and harm from fruit droppage
 - Changing terminology from urban and rural to open areas, enclosed spaces
 - Identifying diseased trees, consideration to be given to the feasibility of a replacement programme
 - Development of a holistic policy
 - Historic issues should inform the policy to ensure trees planted now do not impact future generations
- Identified that an extension of time would be required to enable an informed report to be presented to Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee - the end of April was proposed

A tree issue in a member's local ward was highlighted and the question would be put to Executive Director Place and Economy outside of the meeting. The Committee heard that removal of trees was now legislated and a consultation process was in place and notice had to be given. The Committee were also informed that there are three criteria for removal:

- Danger to life
- Danger to property
- Diseased

The Committee considered the presentation and members raised the following points:

- Had Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) and tenants been invited to respond to the core questions.
- How was the invitation received by NPH

The Chair of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Tree Strategy and Policy Task and Finish Group made the following points in response:

- NPH and other housing associations had received an invitation to respond.
- NPH have indicated that they would be interested in engaging with the policy. They could consider revising contracts for their tenants. Cabinet would review the contracts.

RESOLVED that: the verbal update be noted.

36. **Crime and Disorder Scrutiny**

The Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing introduced the report to the Committee.

The Community Safety and Engagement Manager presented the report and gave an overview of current performance and trends relating to crime and disorder within the remit of West Northamptonshire Council and highlighted the following points:

- Performance – the report separates Daventry, Towcester and Northampton reflecting how they were historically recorded
- The statistics recorded would not reflect a normal year due to the differing trends during the national pandemic
- Crime down across all areas albeit indicating some pressure points
- Violence against women warranted an ‘action point’ so the activity reflects the priority given to addressing this
- In April 2021 a statutory duty was introduced for provision of support to victims of domestic abuse
- Local domestic abuse board – Tailoring services
- Strategy – cross country, worked with colleagues and then development of strategy
- Current Priorities
 1. Focused on strengthening governance
 2. Early intervention and prevention
 3. Provision of Services
 4. Minimising Harm
 5. Justice and Recovery
- Northampton town council data collection for future to be at ward level so priorities would reflect the needs of the ward
- Data indicated crime levels similar to other areas
- Provision of two-way comparison would be useful. Peer reviews in future reports compare how West Northamptonshire Council compares across towns
- WNC and Police priorities refreshed in line with community groups, community representative forums. The information received would inform the priorities and drive activity at a local level
- Stalking and harassment category would also include neighbourhood disputes and showed an increase correlating with the pandemic
 - Jan 2022 indicated both trends showed decline as nationally people spent less time together as they mobilise
- Police and parish councils have a rapport through the police liaison representative
- Public perception of work being carried out to address crime is low. Members were invited to provide the team with ideas for improvement

The Committee considered the presentation and members raised the following points:

- What’s WNC doing to take remedial measures regarding gun crime?
- Has there been a lot of enforcement by police tackling issues on county lines?
- Is there a list of community representative forums?
- How can roads being used as rat runs be addressed?

- Drink spiking in Brackley
- Could reports be provided at ward or possibly parish level?
- Community group, over lockdown reported shed crime and car crime. Police targeted the area and named and shamed culprits.
- Members noted that the police liaison representative in parishes wasn't consistent throughout West Northamptonshire Council

The Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing and the Community Safety and Engagement Manager made the following points in response

- WNC working with:
 - neighbourhood engagement groups,
 - Action Plans in place.
 - Building relationships.
 - Active around Spring family centre,
 - work closely with children's trust,
 - safeguarding.
 - Neighbourhood working group,
 - in schools working with children
 - series of activities working with communities
- It's recognised that organised crime could be taking advantage of County lines
 - Looking at interventions to be put in place for youth on the fringe of crime
 - Pre-Christmas gun related level of response from the police was significant. It had been noted that this had not been communicated well to the public. Recognised that communication needed to improve
 - The level of knife crime remained similar or below
- A list of community representative forums would be shared with the Committee members
- Members were advised that a reporting tool was available
- If reported, drink spiking would be investigated and addressed
- It would be investigated whether that level of information was recorded and could be extracted to a report
- Committee discussed other partners involved in the CSP such as the Police, Probation Service and the Police and Crime Commissioner and whether they should be invited to a further meeting when the Committee undertook crime and disorder scrutiny.

RESOLVED that: Crime and Disorder Scrutiny had been undertaken for 2021/2022.

37. **Review of Committee Work Plan 2021/2022**

The Deputy Democratic Services Manager introduced the report inviting the Committee to review the proposed new items for inclusion on the Place Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2021-2022. A full review of the work programme would take place at the committee meeting held on 31 January 2022.

The Chair presented the proposed action plan and invited the Executive Director, Place and Economy to address the Committee.

Active Travel:

- Funding from government
 - Task and finish group would be required to report to this Committee and then to Cabinet; it would comprise a number of committee members
 - It would be a 6-12 months commitment
 - A short presentation would be made a future Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee before a decision would be made on members for a Task and Finish Group, this would provide background information in relation to Active Travel
- Consultants would be brought in to assist in relation to scooters and electric hubs. Lambrettas were proposed also as a form of active travel.

The Committee discussed the proposed agenda item, and felt that Active Travel should be included onto the Work Programme and a Task and Finish Group would lead on this work.

St James Bus Lane:

- Bus Lane had been made 24/7 enforcement
- Council's reputational damage
- Severe financial loss/hardship to residents
- Delegated decision, redelegated to a manager
- Manager had over ruled decision of residents and ward objections

The Committee discussed the proposed agenda item, St James Bus Lane and found that:

- The Monitoring Officer had deemed due process had been followed
- Cabinet had reversed the decision that had been made previously therefore the situation had been remedied
- Rationale had changed resulting in less delegate powers

Proposed Development – Northampton Railway Station Car Park

- At the meeting of Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 31 January 2022, a presentation would be provided regarding Northampton Town Plan (planning and growth including other main town progress and review). It was suggested Councillor Stone is invited to attend that meeting of Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee before further consideration be given for inclusion on the work programme

The Committee considered three new topics identified my members.

RESOLVED that: the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Agreed the inclusion in its work programme for 2021/2 of the topic Active Travel.
- b) St James Bus Lane, would not be included on the work programme
- c) Proposed development – Northampton railway station car park. An initial recommendation be made that Councillor Stone is invited to attend the meeting of Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 31 January 2022 where the proposed development in Northampton would be discussed, before further consideration be given for inclusion on the work programme.

38. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 8.26 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____