



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber, The Guildhall on Tuesday 29 March 2022 at 5.30 pm.

Present Councillor Dermot Bambridge (Chair)
 Councillor Jo Gilford (Vice-Chair)
 Councillor William Barter
 Councillor Pinder Chauhan
 Councillor Janice Duffy
 Councillor Louisa Fowler
 Councillor Enam Haque
 Councillor Charles Morton
 Councillor Kevin Parker

Also Present: Councillor Phil Larratt, Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport,
 Highways and Waste
 Councillor David Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety
 Engagement and Regulatory Services
 Councillor Nigel Hinch – observing
 Councillor Jonathan Harris
 Councillor Sally Beardsworth

Apologies for
Absence: Councillor Anthony S. Bagot-Webb
 Councillor Terrie Eales
 Councillor Richard Solesbury-Timms

Officers Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director - Place and Economy
 Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager
 Ruth Austen, Assistant Director - Regulatory Services
 Fiona Unett, Assistant Director - Highways and Waste

Public attendees:
Mr Mellor of CA-WN
Mr J Crick

46. Declarations of Interest

None advised.

47. Minutes - 26 January 2022

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 26th January 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

48. Minutes -31 January 2022

Councillor Haque referred to the Masterplan item and advised that he was a member for Castle Ward, but had no interest to declare.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the amendment above, the Minutes of the meeting of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 31st January 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

49. Chairman's Announcements

The Chair advised that a Housing Strategy workshop would follow the conclusion of the Committee meeting.

At this point the Chair agreed to re order the agenda and confirmed that the Work Programme item would be considered first.

50. Review of Committee Work Plan

Mr Mellor of CA-WN addressed the meeting and stressed the urgent need for Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) with regards to sustainable and renewable energy. The Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee were requested to assess WNC's plans for such guidance. Councillors considered that such guidance should include industrial developments, as well as residential.

Mr Mellor was thanked for his address.

The Executive Director - Place and Economy advised that this was a national issue to be dealt with through legislation and building regulations, so as to ensure consistency he commented:

With regards to industrial units, the new Northampton Gateway would be net zero
With the current high energy costs, it was likely that solar energy and renewables would become more affordable in relative terms
The new Strategic Plan for West Northants was currently a priority
Although recognised that this was a national issue, current policies should be used to full effect to encourage sustainability
The challenge was to balance sustainability with the viability of any developments

The Chair introduced the report on the Place Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

- The Chair proposed that the Sustainability Strategy be added to the Committee's Work programme
- Libraries would be considered at the May meeting
- The Highways contract was scheduled for discussion at the September meeting
- A Sustainability Strategy should be considered by all Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Councillor Larratt agreed to raise the matter at Cabinet.

- The Executive Director - Place and Economy suggested that Cabinet could be provided with a presentation on the Sustainability Strategy
- The Chair offered to also raise the issue at the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- It was suggested that the waste disposal contract should be scrutinised well in advance of the contract renewal. The Assistant Director Highways & Waste, Environment, Development and Transport advised that an Oversight Group would be required in July to overlook numerous waste issues.

RESOLVED:

That the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Agreed to the inclusion of the Sustainability Strategy in the Work Programme
- b) Libraries to be included in the agenda for the May meeting of the Committee

51. Presentation - Active Travel Strategy

Councillor Jonathan Harris addressed the Committee, and requested that once a Sustainability Oversight Group was set up, that all Committees should be able to feed into the process. With regards to active travel, any work should link in to the UN 2017 sustainability goals. Consideration should be given to the rural areas and villages, and not just be focussed on the town areas.

Mr John Crick, representing Living Streets Northampton addressed the Committee. The group worked to provide better walking and cycling infrastructure in Northampton. Active Travel England would be set up in the Autumn. The Billing Road Corridor Scheme should be re-started, and the cycling and walking plan re-published so as to avoid the loss of any Highways funding.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste advised that the Billing Road Corridor scheme would have caused difficulties, particularly regarding access to the hospital and would therefore not be progressed. The Assistant Director Highways & Waste, Environment, Development and Transport advised that the Billing Road/Rushmere Road would be the subject of future consultation.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste introduced the Active Travel item. The Assistant Director Highways & Waste, Environment, Development and Transport provided the Committee with a presentation on the Active Travel Strategy, outlining the health and environmental benefits:

- The new standard for travel – LTN1/20 was explained.
- Active Travel England would provide best practise and oversight, as well as be statutory consultees and assess funding applications.
- A Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) would be produced and the process was outlined
- Scrutiny input into the Plan would be required, via an Oversight Group with check in points at key milestones
- The Terms of Reference for the Active Travel Oversight Group were circulated at the meeting for the Committee's consideration and approval

- The Chair of the Group would be Councillor Anthony Bagot-Webb, who already had involvement in Brackley developments and HS2 issues
- Other Group members would be: Councillors Louisa Fowler, Janice Duffy, Kevin Parker, Charles Morton and Sally Beardsworth
- The Assistant Director Highways & Waste, Environment, Development and Transport considered that active travel needed to become a fundamental part of good urban design and connectivity
- The hope was to have a Strategy ready by the end of the calendar year
- Ongoing maintenance and funding of footpaths needed to be considered
- Councillors suggested that consideration be given to villages and suggested Brixworth as a case study
- Milton Keynes was highlighted as a good example of connectivity
- The prevalence and quality of bus services should be considered, particularly in more rural areas

RESOLVED:

- a) That members noted the presentation on the Active Travel Strategy
- b) That the Task Panel membership comprise of Councillors Anthony Bagot-Webb (Chair), Louisa Fowler, Janice Duffy, Kevin Parker, Charles Morton and Sally Beardsworth
- c) That the Terms of reference for the Active Travel Oversight Group are approved.

The Executive Director - Place and Economy left the meeting at 7pm to attend a prior engagement

52. Fly-tipping

Councillor Sally Beardsworth addressed the Committee and expressed disappointment that the draft Fly Tipping Policy contained no reference to the negative impact that fly tipping had on local wildlife. It would also be useful if the Policy contained a list of registered waste removal companies. Brent Council put skips in various locations on a regular basis to try to prevent fly tipping. It was suggested that Newham London Borough Council could be considered as they had experienced a large drop in fly tipping following the introduction of a people's panel.

The Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Engagement and Regulatory Services introduced the item on the draft Fly Tipping Policy.

The Committee received the report of the Assistant Director – Regulatory Services Protection on the draft Fly tipping Policy and heard:

- The scale and impact of fly tipping was outlined, along with the cost implication and damage to the environment and eco-system
- Education and enforcement would be used to improve the situation

- The Council would work with contractors and share information with colleagues
- Best practise would be taken into consideration
- Was it possible to include provisions to try to prevent a recurrence of the mass dumping of waste by travellers in some areas
- There was a difficulty in prosecuting when there was no name or address and evidence was very important. CCTV was usable in some situations under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA)
- Residents were encouraged to plant and maintain flower beds in the castle Ward in order to deter dumping, but the affect was temporary
- There should be zero tolerance for serious and repeat offenders. Stricter enforcement was required.
- The ease and speed of reporting needed to be as easy as possible
- Councillors should send any further comments to the Deputy Democratic Services Manager to collate and forward to the Assistant Director Regulatory Services

RESOLVED:

That the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Provided comment into the proposed charter and action plan, taking into consideration the information provided at the meeting
- b) Agrees to receive an update on the progress of the actions outlined in the action plan in March 2023

53. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____