

Appendix A to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2021/2022

Carried Motions on Notice from the Predecessor Councils

At its meeting on 1 November 2021, Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered various motions on notice from the predecessor Councils, the extract of the minutes of that meeting are detailed below. Updates and further information in respect of each of the Motions on Notice that the Committee agreed to include within its work programme are detailed below.

Extract of the minutes of Place OSC of 1 November 2021

Carried Motions:

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:

Carried Motion on Notice

To encourage developments in which NBC is directly involved to consider having accessible toilets that meet the standards set by the "Changing Places" campaign.

Update:

Changing Places toilets are a valuable facility for people with some more severe disabilities. More information can be found at <https://www.changing-places.org/>. They need to be located in places where there is the ability to provide a swift response to any failure of equipment, and where people likely to make use of them are likely to be present.

It would be appropriate for WNC to look to see changing places toilets provided in major destinations such as shopping centres, theatres, and leisure centres.

WNC applied for changing places funding from the Government grant for these facilities. It was recently awarded £40k. This is disappointing because the original indicative allocation for the three predecessor authorities totalled £260-290k, which was reduced when it was recognised WNC existed to £90-100k, but the actual grant award is lower than that. The Government suggested each toilet is likely to cost around £40k to install, although in practice the cost can easily be more than that. Given this, current thinking is to allocate this entire grant to one suitable body, capable of installing, maintaining, and using, the facility.

Carried Motion on Notice

- *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.*

Carried Motion on Notice

- *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.*

Update:

Work is ongoing on both of the above Motions on Notice.

Carried Motion on Notice

- *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.*

Update

- *To continue a review of sprinkler systems in 10 Northampton Partnership Homes buildings AND ask NPH to provide tenants of tower blocks with fire safety training.*

Building safety & council owned properties

For absolute clarity the properties that are managed by Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) are owned by WNC but we contract NPH to manage these on our behalf. As Place OSC are aware officers are currently working with various teams across the council and external partners to develop WNC's first housing strategy. WNC has suggested four draft themes for the strategy. These priorities have been developed following several workshops with Council members, internal teams and key partners. The four draft themes are:

1. Deliver the homes that people need and can afford to live in

2. Improve the quality, standard and safety of homes and housing services
3. Enable residents to live safe, healthy, independent and active lives
4. Support sustainable and thriving communities

Place OSC could request that a review of sprinkler systems in high-rise council housing stock managed by NPH is considered for an area of activity under the 2nd priority. If councillors felt some consideration of sprinkler systems should be given in new build council properties and/or housing association stock then this could be something that is considered if there is an appetite to set a 'WNC affordable housing standard' under Priority 1 of the new housing strategy.

Also, there is an ongoing piece of work across the council and NPH to shape the relationship between the new council and its Arms-length Management Organisation (ALMO). This work will include both organisations reviewing and agreeing refreshed governance and decision-making framework including assurance on health & safety and building standards. The review could include consideration across NPH & WNC of sprinkler system provision in high-rise buildings as part of the assurance work on health & safety and building standards.

- *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.*

Planning Policy & Building Control

Update

The provision of sprinkler systems within a building is not something that could be covered by planning policy. Sprinkler systems are a matter for the building control regime.

The approach to fire safety in tall buildings is in accordance with national policy and guidance which is currently based on a stay put policy with the principle of compartmentalisation being employed to provide protection to building occupiers. The Building Safety Act 2022 will result in some changes to this approach, especially in relation to higher risk buildings and there is potential for an increase in the use of sprinkler systems. Sprinkler systems require active management and maintenance and can pose further risks in themselves, for example potential for legionella, and when triggered they can create an enhanced smoke risk and have implications for the fabric of the building. A review of policy in respect of Northampton Partnership Homes properties would need to consider these factors. A requirement for two

separate staircases in Northampton Partnership Homes properties would add significantly to development costs and result in lower density developments so again these factors would need to be considered in a review of the policy.

Carried Motion on Notice

- *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.*

Update:

The default position is the Council will always seek to adopt land as part of the development but legally it is up the developer to make the decision.

Carried Motion on Notice

- *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.*

Update

It is suggested that the Chair of Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee discusses this carried Motion on Notice regarding how this can be taken forward.

Detailed below is the extract of the minutes of Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 1 November 2021 regarding motions on notice that the Committee agreed were already covered by items on its work programme:

Extract of the minutes of Place OSC of 1 November 2021

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 Place Overview and Scrutiny 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.*