



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber, Lodge Road, Daventry on Tuesday 18 October 2022 at 6.00 pm.

Present Councillor Dermot Bambridge (Chair)
 Councillor Jo Gilford (Vice-Chair)
 Councillor Bob Purser
 Councillor Anthony S. Bagot-Webb
 Councillor Pinder Chauhan
 Councillor Paul Joyce
 Councillor Louisa Fowler
 Councillor Kevin Parker

Corporate Councillor Ian McCord
Scrutiny Councillor Keith Holland-Delamere
members: Councillor Jamal Alwahabi
 Councillor Mohammed Aziz

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

Apologies Councillor William Barter
for Councillor Rupert Frost
Absence: Councillor Enam Haque
 Councillor Danielle Stone (Corporate OSC)

Officers Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director - Place and Economy
 Fiona Unett, Assistant Director Waste
 Nick Henstock, Assistant Director Highways and Transport
 Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager
 Marina Watkins, Committee Officer

68. **Declarations of Interest**

69. **Minutes**

70. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chair advised that agenda item 5 – Highways and Transport Contract Review would be a joint scrutiny item with members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

71. **Waste Management Contract**

The Chair welcomed Fiona Unett, the Assistant Director of Waste who provided the Committee with a presentation detailing the current waste contracts and the approach to develop a new waste strategy for WNC.

- Contracts had been inherited from each of the predecessor Councils for waste collection, residual waste and household recycling centres with differing end dates
- A new Waste Strategy for WNC is a statutory requirement and members' views will be welcomed as the strategy is developed.
- There is a need to set realistic expectations and balance cost with ambition
- The intention is to consider best practice from other Councils
- Issues to be considered include waste collection frequency, the fuelling of vehicles and the location of depots and household waste centres
- The intention is to draft a draft vision by spring

In response to questions from Councillors:

- In the past, a good income could be yielded from recyclables. However, the position had changed over the last five years. At the height of the pandemic there was not enough capacity to deal with the amount of recyclables, which meant the waste industry were able to increase their costs for accepting these materials. The one opportunity that WNC may consider is developing the Council's own Materials Recycling Facilities (MRF) to reduce the need to use waste companies & the strategy will consider this and similar options.
- Partnership work will be considered if that provides the best solution, including the possibility of working with neighbouring authorities
- The use of electric vehicles would need to be carefully considered to weigh up the costs and benefits. Overnight, low voltage charging would reduce costs
- In response to comments about cleanliness, it was noted that Members and Officers needed to work positively together to reinforce a pride in the area and that a strategy would soon be released regarding educating residents on fly-tipping and littering

It was agreed that a cross-party Working Group be set up to be led by Cabinet members, and that the group would include members from Place and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The following Members asked to be considered for membership of this Group: Councillors Mohammed Aziz, Bob Purser, Jo Gilford, Louisa Fowler and Dermot Bambridge.

It was noted that the final membership of the group will be confirmed as soon as possible and that a members' briefing session would be held in early December to start the process

The Chair thanked officers for their presentation and members for their contributions.

RESOLVED:

That the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Corporate Overview and scrutiny Committee:

- i) Notes the presentation
- ii) Noted that a Cabinet Working Group would be set up with members of both Place and Corporate OSC. The following Members asked to be considered for membership of this Group: Councillors Mohammed Aziz, Bob Purser, Jo Gilford, Louisa Fowler and Dermot Bambridge.

72. **Joint Scrutiny - Highways Contract Task and Finish Group**

The Chair introduced Nick Henstock, Assistant Director Highways and Transport. A draft scope for the Highways and Transport Oversight Group was circulated at the meeting.

- The review should take a strategic outlook on the highways contract and leave operational matters to the team at ground level.
- It would be useful to identify and best practise where scrutiny of contracts had been carried out
- Members should be the voice of the residents and feed into the scrutiny process
- Performance Indicators (PIs) will play an important role in the monitoring of the contract
- The Executive Director - Place and Economy undertook to provide Councillor Aziz with copies of the old and new highways contracts
- That the first meeting of the Highways Oversight Group take place on 15th November at 6pm in the Jeffery Room, the Guildhall

RESOLVED:

That the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Corporate Overview and scrutiny Committee:

- i) Notes the draft scoping document
- ii) Agrees that the inaugural meeting of the Highways Oversight Group take place on 15th November at 6pm in the Jeffery Room, the Guildhall

73. **Report of the Tree Policy and Strategy Task and Finish Group**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Pinder Chauhan and invited her to introduce the report of the Tree Policy and Strategy Task and Finish Group.

Councillor Chauhan noted that the Task and Finish Group had been running for many months with involvement from parish councils, residents and the Forestry Commission. The Chair congratulated Councillor Chauhan and the Task and Finish Group members on the report and work undertaken.

Following a discussion, the following points were made:

- The Chair reported comments put forward by Councillor Cecile Irving-Swift, asking that there is a requirement for checks to be carried out before a tree was planted, including suitability of the soil, location, drainage etc
- Climate change and the environmental benefits of trees could be further highlighted
- Issues raised regarding who takes responsibility for trees planted in an unsuitable location and causing damage to the highway or danger to the public
- The Tree Policy was reviewed in part to make it easier for the public to report problems/issues
- The Executive Director - Place and Economy noted that once the report was agreed, Officers would draft the Tree Policy and Strategy. The Director added that he would be happy to work with the Task and Finish Group in order to set milestones to enable monitoring to be carried out
- At 5.1.5 of the report (key lines of enquiry) the following words would be added 'in particular climate change and improving air quality'.

RESOLVED:

That the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- i) Approves the report of the Tree Policy and Strategy Task and Finish Group.
- ii) That appropriate amendments be made to the document before its submission to the Cabinet meeting in November 2022.

74. Review of Committee Work Programme

The Chair introduced the work programme and asked the Committee for their comments and views.

It was noted that People Overview and Scrutiny Committee were looking at housing issues and it was considered whether there was a role for Place scrutiny. It was a complicated area involving social and affordable housing, land supply and the Local Plan. It was considered that the matter should be raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

75. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business

The meeting closed at 8.07 pm

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Chair: _____

Date: _____