



# Rutland County Council

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the PLACES SCRUTINY PANEL** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on Thursday, 9th February, 2017 at 7.00 pm

**PRESENT:** Mr E Baines Mr N Begy  
Mr O Bird Mr W Cross  
Mr A Mann Mr M Oxley  
Mr A Stewart Mr K Thomas

**APOLOGIES:** Mr J Lammie  
Mr J Dale

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|--------------------------|--------------------|---|
| <b>OFFICERS PRESENT:</b> | Mr D Brown         | Director for Places (Environment, Planning and Transport) |
|                          | Mr Paul Phillipson | Director for Places (Development and Economy)             |
|                          | Mr J Faircliffe    | Housing Strategy & Enabling Officer                       |
|                          | Dr R Johnson       | Senior Transport Manager                                  |
|                          | Mr N Tomlinson     | Senior Highways Manager                                   |
|                          | Ms N Brown         | Acting Team Manager – Corporate Support                   |
|                          | Mr K Silcock       | Admin Assistant – Corporate Support                       |

## **IN**

### **ATTENDANCE:**

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Mr O Hemsley | Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Growth, Trading Services and Resources (except Finance) |
| Mr T Mathias | Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Places (Highways, Transport and Market Towns)      |

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### **NOMINATION OF CHAIR**

Mr Lammie announced that he would be unable to remain and Chair the meeting due to sickness.

Nominations were invited for a Member to Chair the meeting.

Mr Cross nominated Mr Baines, this was seconded by Mr Stewart.

No further nominations were received.

Mr Baines took the Chair.

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**564 RECORD OF MEETING**

The Record of the Meeting of the Places Scrutiny Panel held on 24 November 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**565 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mr Oxley declared an interest in item 10 of the agenda as he owned a holiday let and so would leave the meeting should debate lead to discussion regarding holiday let properties.

Mr Cross declared an interest in item 10 of the agenda as he owned a bed and breakfast business.

**566 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS**

No petitions, deputations or questions were received from members of the public.

**567 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS**

No questions were received from members.

**568 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS**

No notices of motion were received from members.

**569 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE PANEL FOR A DECISION IN RELATION TO CALL IN OF A DECISION**

No matter was referred to the Panel for a decision in relation to a call-in of a decision in accordance with Procedure Rule 206.

**570 HIGHWAY INSPECTION POLICY**

Report No. 45/2017 was received from the Director for Places.

The Portfolio for Finance and Places (Highways, Transport and Market Towns), Mr Mathias introduced the report, the purpose of which was to consider a revised Highway Inspection Policy as attached at Appendix 1 to Report No. 45/2017 which was due to be presented at Cabinet on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- i. Amendments should be made to ensure that the section of London Road which is within the town centre was included on the map of Uppingham Town Centre;
- ii. There was some concern regarding repair for areas of York Stone slabs in Uppingham Town Centre and it was confirmed that where slabs needed replacing they would be replaced with like for like materials. There may be a

- period of temporary repair with other materials in order to ensure safety pending the final repair, which would use the original materials;
- iii. Mr Oxley was invited to provide a list of areas within Uppingham Town Centre where temporary repairs had been present for some time, in order for Mr Tomlinson, Senior Highways Manager, to investigate further;
  - iv. Heavy lorries parking on the pavements in Uppingham was identified as being a cause for some of the damage;
  - v. Rutland County Council (RCC) were only able to enforce parking restrictions in relation to loading and unloading, the Police had additional powers to enforce other offences such as obstruction of the highway. A discussion with the Town Council and local businesses may assist with coming to some compromise regarding loading and unloading in order to minimise damage to footways and pavements;
  - vi. Mr Cross raised that moving from 6 monthly inspections to 12 monthly inspections seemed to leave a long gap between inspections. Mr Tomlinson explained that where usage was higher, inspections would take place more frequently and where faults were reported they would be looked at within 5 working days;
  - vii. It was confirmed that although not directly related to this report, RCC carried out an annual programme of Street Cleaning and litter clearance at a cost of approximately £500,000;
  - viii. Damaged Street Signs would be removed where they were no longer required, but the sign cleaning and repair budget had reduced over the years and so those signs causing a safety issue would be prioritised; and
  - ix. The Road Inspector was thanked for doing a good job with issues arising in Whissendine over recent months.

**AGREED:**

The Panel **CONSIDERED** the draft policy and provided feedback to the Director for Places (Environment, Planning & Transport) and the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Places (Highways, Transport and Market Towns).

## 571 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE

A verbal update was received from Mr Bird, in Mr Lammie's absence.

The working group was set up in October 2016 and had been working towards a step-by-step guide, with support from Mr C Dunigan, Planning Officer (Neighbourhood Plans). The toolkit was now in its final form. Within the guide were hyperlinks to relevant documents and Mr Dunigan had included a jargon busting section within the toolkit. A questionnaire had been worked on that would go to Neighbourhood Plan Groups who had already completed their plans requesting feedback. Following the original draft, the working group believed, that the Neighbourhood Plan toolkit provides useful guidance. The working group requested feedback from the panel, whether it is brought back to scrutiny or whether it is published in its current state as approved by the working group. The working group were looking to get the toolkit published in parallel with the new website.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- i. Mr Oxley suggested that the toolkit be sent out to the members of the panel to review;

- ii. Mr Stewart noted that the working group had already put the toolkit through scrutiny and didn't feel it necessary to bring it back to the full Places Scrutiny Panel;
- iii. Mr Bird noted that he would like to see all the officers involved with the toolkit to get recognition for their input and hard work;
- iv. Mr Phillipson, Director for Places (Development and Economy), requested that the Senior Management team reviewed the toolkit before its publication to ensure that all aspects of governance had been fully considered;
- v. It was confirmed that the resources available would allow the post held by the Neighbourhood Plan Planning Officer to remain with the Council;
- vi. It was hoped that there would be a phased approach to Neighbourhood Plans coming forward; and
- vii. A Neighbourhood Plan policy would be useful and this was being looked into.

**AGREED:**

The Neighbourhood Plan toolkit would be circulated to members of the Scrutiny Panel and reviewed by the Senior Management Team before being published on the RCC Website.

**572 POVERTY IN RUTLAND PROJECT - TRANSPORT**

Report No. 43/2017 was received from the Director for Places.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Places (Highways, Transport and Market Towns), Mr Mathias introduced the report, the purpose of which was to consider Transport Poverty in order to feed into the Scrutiny Project on Poverty in Rutland.

During Discussion the following points were raised:

- i. Although the report noted that there was rural transport network connecting the smaller market towns in Rutland, there was little or no evening and Sunday services;
- ii. Demand during the evenings and Sundays was low and dispersed, which made it difficult to address within existing budgetary constraints;
- iii. Call Connect was being considered as part of the Transport Review, but this service was very expensive form of public transport;
- iv. Dr R Johnson, Senior Transport Manager, agreed to provide further detail regarding bus usage, subsidised services and types of user;
- v. Raising awareness of the issues and promotion of volunteers helping within their own communities may alleviate some of the issues;
- vi. There were several successful "Good Neighbour Schemes" running within the County including in Whissendine, Market Overton and Greetham;
- vii. The promotion of "Good Neighbour Schemes" would be prioritised as a subject for the Parish Council Forum;
- viii. Non-emergency medical transport was not well publicised, this service allowed people to access transport to hospital appointments as long as had a medical need;
- ix. It was difficult to measure the level of Transport Poverty in Rutland, it was probably a low risk and dispersed, but that did not negate from the impact on those that suffered from Transport Poverty; and

- x. The RCC Travel Survey carried out earlier in the year had seen high response levels which could provide further information regarding issues around transport poverty, some further evaluation of the responses would be done.

#### AGREED

1. The Panel **CONSIDERED** the topics and related issues/questions covered in this report;
2. The Panel **IDENTIFIED** any further information wished to undertake; and
3. The Panel **AUTHORISED** the Chair to produce a written report of findings to feed back into the overall project.

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Dr R Johnson left the meeting and did not return.

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### 573 HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2017-2022

Report No. 40/2017 was received from the Director for Places.

The Portfolio Holder for Growth, Trading Resources and Resources (except Finance) Mr Hemsley, introduced the report the purpose of which was to consider the draft Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2017-22 as part of the consultation process.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- i. There were around 40 people per year registered as homeless in Rutland, these people would have become homeless for a variety of reasons and would have been accepted as homeless subject to satisfying specific criteria. These people were placed in temporary accommodation, whilst the authority looked for permanent residence and should be distinguished from rough sleepers;
- ii. The cost for staffing the operational Housing Service was approximately £100,000 and there were some accommodation costs for temporary accommodation, in Bed and Breakfast for example, of £15,000 per year;
- iii. There was some differences between the figures quoted for new homes targets in this strategy, between the short term figures quoted from the Corporate Plan and the long term average to 2036 proposed in the most recent consultation on the Local Plan. It was explained that the two documents referred to covered different time periods and that construction rates would vary over time, but would average to out to be roughly the same over the Local Plan period;
- iv. There are occasions where rough sleepers move through the County and the Council can be made aware these quite quickly, there have been occasions where RCC has been approached and can offer support and access to services. The law regarding support for these people was about to change and further support may need to be offered where this was sought. The Bridge Project also offered support for rough sleepers;
- v. Mr Faircliffe, Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer, confirmed that in some cases it was possible for a person in shared ownership housing to increase their share of the property and even buy outright, but in villages this was usually limited by planning / regulatory restrictions. Where a shared ownership house was sold outright it would usually have benefited several previous owners of the property and the housing association would get the benefit of the release of equity to invest in further affordable housing;

- vi. Members requested some further information in the strategy regarding provision for Travellers;
- vii. The Director for Places (Development and Economy), Mr Phillipson, confirmed that RCC had some funding to incentivise developers to build affordable housing and to make it more cost effective for social landlords to increase the level of these types of rental properties. Economies of scale and value for money are achieved through working with developers and social landlords, which would be difficult for the Council to achieve should they wish to build their own affordable housing, this was however, kept under review and should a viable opportunity arise it would be looked into;
- viii. Any funding provided for rental properties to meet affordable housing demand would be received back should the property be sold at a later date, there was an option to convert shared ownership properties into full rented properties, but this was still considered affordable housing;
- ix. There was a shortage of one-bedroom properties; and
- x. The Self-Build and Custom House Building Register had only recently been established following a recent change in legislation, being on the list did not provide entitlement for a plot, it merely allowed for comparison and evaluation of plots becoming available. The wording in the strategy would be amended to reflect that; and
- xi. There was work ongoing regarding “work/live” units as part of the work on the Local Plan.

**AGREED:**

That the Panel **CONSIDERED** the draft Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2017-22 at Appendix A and comments would be reported to Cabinet as appropriate.

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Mr J Faircliffe left the meeting and did not return.

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**574 SCRUTINY PROGRAMME 2016/17 & REVIEW OF FORWARD PLAN**

The forward plan was reviewed.

Mr Oxley requested at the A1 England Report be brought before Places Scrutiny Panel before being considered by Cabinet. Consideration of how Scrutiny of this item might be timetabled was requested.

**575 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

**576 DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday, 20 April 2017 at 7pm

Q3 Financial Management Report  
Q3 Performance Management Report  
Localism Report  
Integrated Transport Report  
Community Safety Strategy  
Local Plan Consultation

Sustainable Growth Strategy  
Poverty in Rutland – White paper

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**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.47 pm.**

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