



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP.

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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, 24th November, 2016 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Mr J Lammie Mr N Begy
Mr O Bird Mr W Cross
Mr A Mann Mr M Oxley
Mr K Thomas

ABSENT: Mr E Baines Mr J Dale
Mr A Stewart

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mr D Brown Director for Places (Environment, Planning and Transport)
Mr P Phillipson Director for Places (Development and Economy)
Mr A Merry Finance Manager
Mr J Faircliffe Housing Strategy & Enabling Officer
Mr H Crouch Community Safety Manager
Miss S Bingham Governance Coordinator

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr O Hemsley Portfolio Holder for Resources (excluding Finance), Culture, Sport & Recreation, Tourism and Housing
Mr T Mathias Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Places (Highways, Environment, Transport and Community Safety) and Market Towns

411 RECORD OF MEETING

The Record of the Meeting of the Places Scrutiny Panel held on 15 September 2016, copies of which had been previously circulated were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

412 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 2 – Mr Bird declared a non-pecuniary interest as his daughter is opening a coffee shop at Oakham Enterprise Park shortly.

413 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

414 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions were received from members.

415 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

No notices of motion were received from members.

416 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 call-in of a decision in accordance with Procedure Rule 206.

417 QUARTER 2 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT

Report No. 191/2016 from the Director for Resources was received.

The Portfolio Holder, the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Places (Highways, Environment, Transport and Community Safety) and Market Towns - Mr Mathias, invited members to ask questions on the report.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- i. The shortfall in the Waste Management Budget was due to the following factors:
 - Increased levels of green, residual and recycled waste.
 - Inflation in the waste contract, this has been taken into account within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- ii. Previously the Council received payment for recycled waste; however, as the recycling industry has developed this was no longer the case.
- iii. The increase in green waste is mainly due to the weather conditions over the summer, which resulted in increased grass cutting. This may therefore, decrease in future years.
- iv. The shortfall in the Commercial and Industrial Properties Budget was due to the increased work carried out at Oakham Enterprise Park (OEP) to ensure that all units met building control specifications. Complex work was required regarding fire regulation compliance, erection of water tanks and works to the road network for access by the Fire Service have now been completed.
- v. It was confirmed that the Civic Amenity Sites in Rutland do not take commercial waste; there has been no change of policy on this matter. Both sites use an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system, therefore, checks could be carried out to investigate any commercial waste disposal. Civic Amenity Sites were not obliged to take rubble waste. The impact of making changes to the Civic Amenity Sites refuse was considered very carefully as this may lead to an increase in fly tipping within Rutland.
- vi. Confirmation was given to the Panel that works at Oakham Castle were still to be completed. The following were outstanding:
 - Works to the Whipper Inn car park wall.
 - Works to pathways. These had not been concluded, however, Western Power will be funding the cost.

- vii. Oakham Castle:
- Feedback had been received on the low level of light on pathways at Oakham Castle during the evening. This had been reviewed and the Council were planning to try to invest in this being an evening setting.
 - Wedding income has been in line with predictions, more investigation was to be done into further income streams, this would be completed by Mr Steels, Castle Marketing Officer.
 - Uncovering of the wall at Cutts Close was not planned and was not part of the Castle Programme.
- viii. The Council were in constant dialogue with Western Power regarding assurance in the development of solar power at OEP. Any reduction in the cost implementation could result in an increase in units being fitted with solar panels. Consideration would be given to any surplus energy created being used for electricity or hot water generation.

AGREED:

That the contents of the Report be **NOTED**.

418 QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

Report No. 194/2016 from the Chief Executive was received.

The Portfolio Holder, the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Places (Highways, Environment, Transport and Community Safety) and Market Towns - Mr Mathias, invited questions / observations from the Panel.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- i) Affordable Housing:
- The target of 33 homes to be delivered had not been met. Further properties in Greetham were due to be delivered in February 2017, with more coming on stream in the next few years.
 - There was a direct link to Government policy. The Council has received £250,000 for affordable housing to date; this was expected to rise to £1 million by the end of the financial year. This would allow the Council to work with developers to increase the number of homes. This work would be reported back to the Panel at a future meeting.
 - There were currently 300 people on the Councils housing register. Local residents and people employed locally were allocated homes first.
 - The Strategic Housing Market Assessment had identified that 40 affordable homes are required per annum. Affordable housing could be defined in many different ways, for example Shared Ownership (up to 80% owned, 20% rental).

AGREED:

That the contents of the report be **NOTED**.

419 SCRUTINY PROJECT: POVERTY IN RUTLAND

Report No. 214/2016 from the Director for Places was received.

The Chair - Mr Lammie introduced the item to the Panel. The Poverty Project is working across all 3 Scrutiny Panels and all Members attended the Poverty Workshop on 13 September 2016.

The following areas were identified for the Places Scrutiny Panel to take forward:

- Housing/Homelessness
- Domestic Abuse
- Transport – to be covered at February's 2017 Places Scrutiny Panel

During discussion the following points were noted:

i) Housing/Homelessness:

Portfolio Holder for Resources (excluding Finance), Culture, Sport & Recreation, Tourism and Housing – Mr Hemsley gave a brief introduction to the item and invited Mr Faircliffe – Housing Strategy & Enabling Officer to present appendix A of the report to the Panel.

- The Rent Deposit Scheme was designed to help with the costs of private rental, which can often be 6 to 8 weeks rent upfront. Efforts were made to recoup this money, with payment plans set up, but often the full amount was not repaid.
- The Panel requested a breakdown of the reasons (hidden pressures) for housing allocation and homelessness, for example living with family as cannot afford to move out).
- Housing allocation worked on a points system, which helped to avoid the under occupation of homes, however, properties for older people often did not meet tenants aspirations.
- On page 13 of the report 'excluding staff' should be removed from paragraph 2.
- Housing at St Georges Barracks would still be used for forces accommodation once the base had been closed. Issues arise if families were to split, service personnel would stay in the home with the rest of the family potentially becoming homeless.
- The majority of the 67 cases where homelessness was prevented were achieved by being housed via the Housing Register, support from Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) with debt advice and changes in circumstances (safe for them to return home).
- The majority of homelessness cases in Rutland were due to:
 - Private Landlords
 - Parents / relationship breakdown
 - Social Housing issues
- The Panel agreed that the definition of poverty should include people that are asset rich but cash poor and that consideration could be given to reducing the Council Tax burden to these people.
- Concern was raised regarding reduced tolerances of Social Housing Landlords, which can result in repeat homelessness. The Chair – Mr Lammie will feed this back to the overall project.
- The Council did not currently have enough housing stock, particularly 4/5 bedrooms homes for larger families. The Council often challenge Private and Social Landlords to prevent people becoming homeless.

- A Social Housing marketing exercise was carried out 2 years ago. The result was that the number of people on the Housing Register increased as awareness increased. There is more the Council could do regarding communication.
- The Panel raised concerns regarding disruptive families with complex issues that may result in homelessness and what the options were, taking into consideration the rural nature of Rutland.
- Consideration should be given to the East of the County and Rutland residents that are drawn to services in Stamford, as this falls outside of Rutland.
- Bed and Breakfast accommodation was normally within Leicester and is mainly used for single individuals or vulnerable people where the use of self-contained temporary accommodation was not practicable; it is not generally used for families.
- Mr Phillipson - Director for Places (Development and Economy) commended the work that the Housing Options Team carries out, which is often complex and challenging. They worked with a 'One Council' approach and often worked closely with colleagues in the Adult Social Care team.
- The Panel thanked Officers for their work within housing and homelessness.

ii) Domestic Abuse (DA):

Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Places (Highways, Environment, Transport and Community Safety) and Market Towns – Mr Mathias gave a brief introduction to the item and invited Mr Crouch - Community Safety Manager to present appendix B of the report to the Panel.

- The Council changed the supplier of services in December 2015 to an LLR based procurement. This is a joint contract between Leicester City, Leicestershire and Rutland. Since then Rutland and other districts have seen an increase in the number of incidents reported.
- CAB provides help and advice on financial support, debt advice and information regarding benefits.
- The council promotes the Domestic Abuse services regularly on Rutland Radio.
- The Director for Places (Environment, Planning and Transport) - Mr Brown asked the Panel to consider that DA could be both the cause and the effect of Poverty.
- Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) heard on average 2-3 cases per month for the Rutland area.
- The Panel commented on how the service was much more comprehensive since the change to the LLR Joint Contract.
- The Council had access to 10% of the capacity of the LLR Joint Contract capacity, which was an increase in capacity from the former contract.
- The Ministry of Defence (MOD) had in-house services to deal with DA. The Council worked closely with the Army Support Service and MOD. The Panel commended the Chief Executive – Mrs Briggs on the substantial level of work she had undertaken with the MOD.
- The Panel requested a review of the LLR Joint Contract in 12 months with a report to Places Scrutiny Panel shortly after.
- The Council currently has no Perpetrator Programme in place. The Council are currently looking at a shared programme with LLR partners with potential support from De Montfort University for analytical related tasks. The Police to support a 2/3 day course for perpetrators on

conditional cautions with positive requirements. The Police and Crime Commissioner recently committed funding of £33,000 to this programme. The council has committed a further £2,000 with a possible extra £900 if required. A decision on this is expected by the end of the financial year. The MOD is trialling in-house Perpetrator Programme in the North of England and is hoping to roll this out in the autumn of 2017.

- CAB and multiple Council departments were attending DASH Risk Management refresher training in January 2017.

AGREED:

1. The Panel **DISCUSSED** the contents of the Report
 2. Housing/Homelessness:
 - The Chair – Mr Lammie to feedback that the definition of poverty should include individuals that are asset rich, but cash poor.
 - The Chair – Mr Lammie would include the reduced tolerances of Social Housing Landlords into the report to be fed back to the overall project.
- Domestic Violence:
- A review of the LLR Joint Contract in 12 months with a report to Places Scrutiny Panel shortly after.

420 SCRUTINY PROGRAMME 2016/17 & REVIEW OF FORWARD PLAN

Agenda items for the meeting to be held on Thursday 9 February 2017:

- Poverty in Rutland – Transport Item
 - Neighbourhood Plans Task and Finish Group Update
 - Revised Signs Policy
 - Highways Asset Management Plan
 - Parking Review
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- The Panel raised their concerns regarding clarity and description of items that appeared on the Forward Plan in particular Barleythorpe College Site Options and Barleythorpe College – expansion update.
 - The Panel were encouraged to ask questions of Officers and the relevant Portfolio Holders regarding items they require more information on. Any feedback from Members of the Panel would be welcomed as early as possible in this process.
 - The Panel commented that it was very difficult to locate the Forward Plan on the website.
 - The Panel requested that a copy of the Forward Plan is emailed to all Members weekly.
 - The Chair - Mr Lammie will feedback the Panels comments and suggested actions to the next Scrutiny Commission on 1 December 2016 and will let the Panel know the outcome.

421 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

422 DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING

- 18 or 19 January 2017 - Budget
- Thursday 9 February 2017

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 21.11

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