

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15TH FEBRUARY 2023
AT 6:43PM IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES IN THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON

PRESENT: Councillors Stevens (Chair), Kilbride (Deputy Chair), Joyce, Tarasiewicz, Miah and Soan

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr John Crick (Volunteer and Member of the Climate Change Forum)

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mr S Carter (Town Clerk) and Miss F Barford (Democratic Services Officer)

The Environmental Services Committee meeting started at 6:43 pm as the Extraordinary Full Council meeting overran.

25. APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted by Councillors Ashraf, Alwahabi, Choudary, Haque and Meredith

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interests were submitted.

27. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED: That the Chair be authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting as a true and accurate record.

28. IMPROVEMENT TO ABINGTON AREA TRAVEL

The Chair explained that Mr Crick was part of Climate Change Forum as a Co-op member and merely here to present the information on the scheme as he had been following it very closely. Mr Crick stated the Abington Area Active Travel Scheme was formerly known as the Billing Road Corridor Scheme that would be funded by a Government grant to promote active travel and was cited biggest change to transport in 60 years by Government within their Gear Change Policy of 2020.

Mr Crick completed a presentation to attendees and highlighted the following points:

- The rationale behind the Gear Change Policy was that 40% of all journeys completed within a car were less than 2 miles and 70% were less than 5 miles therefore deemed walkable or cyclable.
- 1 in 6 deaths were caused by inactive lifestyles therefore active travel would be beneficial from a Public Health perspective.
- Through studies it was determined the biggest source of CO₂ amongst different means of transport within the UK was due to private vehicles.
- The Department for Transport deemed that changing infrastructure was the only way to encourage people to partake in active travel as many people have been discouraged due to safety concerns.
- The former Northampton Borough Council was successful in a £1.3 million bid for the Billing Road Corridor to enable an active travel link from the East of the Town into the Town Centre, according to figures of the current use of the pre-existing cycle lanes have not been taken up.
- The Billing Road Corridor project was paused due to local residents' objection through a local petition against the project.
- An independent survey of Northampton Residents was completed about walking and cycling and 60% of residents believe cyclists and pedestrians should be given more priority in town even if this makes things difficult for car users.

- On 28th January 2023 West Northamptonshire Council stated they were working on an alternative proposal with the Department of Transport.
- The Abington Area Active Travel Plan would start along Abington Park Crescent and continue on to Park Avenue South with the footpath, cycle lane and main road separated by kerbs in accordance to the requirement set out by the Department for Transport.
- Included within the plans the cycle lane would splinter off from Abington Park Crescent down Bridgewater Drive and Ellis Way to the Bridgewater Primary School.
- Just prior to the junction of Abington Park Crescent and Park Avenue South there would be a dual crossing for pedestrians and cyclists that would be raised inline with the height of the footpath/kerb.
- The traffic light controls on the junction of Park Avenue South and Billing Road East would be replaced with a diagonal crossing for pedestrians this would be facilitated by all vehicles being stopped via a red light.

In response to a question posed by a Councillor, Mr Crick explained from his overview of the proposed plans the filter light from Billing Road East to Park Avenue South would be removed.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Stevens formulate a response for the Billing Road Corridor Consultation on behalf of the Environmental Services Committee.

29. NORTHAMPTON IN BLOOM

Councillor Stevens highlighted the Northampton in Bloom report as featured within the agenda provided members with an update on the working of the Mrs L Hannam-Jones (Events and Project Officer) and her collaboration with the Bloom Working Group. He added that the issues with the Public House in Far Cotton in relation to the location of a planter had been resolved furthermore, the Coronation Planter had been arranged.

Councillor Stevens stated that a Big Clean-Up at St Katherine's Church Yard would take place as part of the Big Help Out project on the Sunday after the Coronation of HM King Charles III however, this is subject to approval and that the town council intended to work with IdvVerde and other partners to get this completed.

A Councillor requested an additional basket for his ward. The Chair explained in response that Idverde were at capacity with watering to fulfil an additional planter. The Town Clerk explained we do have the Northampton In Bloom Grant that could be awarded to a Community Group within your area to place an additional basket or planter however they would be responsible for its watering and maintenance.

NOTED

30. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES BUDGET UPDATE

The Town Clerk tabled the budget report as it was agreed at Full Council each Committee would have a reoccurring standing item to enable the Committee's budget expenditure be reviewed.

Councillor Stevens explained he would maintain communication with the Event and Project Officer to ensure the Climate Change Forum be continuously monitored.

NOTED

31. CLIMATE CHANGE FORUM REPORT

The Chair explained he had circulated an E-newsletter that enclosed the Bloom Report and the Climate Change Forum's recent work to keep Members up-to-date. In response to a question, the Chair explained he would publicise to Councillors any up and coming dates for Climate Change Forum's engagements.

NOTED

32. ALLOTMENTS

The Town Clerk explained that the Council had made connections with the allotment site representatives and continued to progress the policy of self-management especially the larger sites. He continued that the Finance Officer had been monitoring the metre readings and invoices to identify any patterns. In response to a question posed by a Councillor, the Town Clerk stated that Idverde manage the allotments on behalf of the Town Council in return for plot rents. The Chair explained that allotment management requires development.

NOTED

33. WOMAN'S CYCLE TOUR

The Chair stated a brief discussion was held with Mrs L Hannam-Jones (Events and Project Officer) regarding the Woman's Cycle Tour (stage start from Northampton on 8th June) as they had requested a representative to join their organising group. The Chair had put forward Mr Tom Burns, a local cycling enthusiast who had worked on areas of active travel and cycle engagement. It was noted that a female representative would be preferable given that it was the woman's tour, however at present there was not one forthcoming. It was noted that Mr Burns was active in the cycle community and that he would be a great bridge between them and the TC via the Chair. With no other volunteers it was agreed that Mr Burns be asked to serve on the organising committee and that he would give regular feedback to this committee.

The committee were very supportive of the Women's Tour and it was agreed that it would look to support it by getting involved in some form.

NOTED

34. CLOSED CHURCHYARDS

The Town Clerk explained that Churchyards were legally the responsibility of West Northamptonshire Council as previously there was no parish in the area to adopt them and that the Council could be approached to adopt these. In response to a question posed, the Town Clerk advised that the Council would have the right to decline any transfer of assets. The Chair posed a strategy could be developed on the adoption of Church Yards in case we are approached.

NOTED

35. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

A Councillor raised how e-scooters were implemented as part of the active travel plan within Northamptonshire and despite concerns from the general public regarding their safety they were here to stay. He added that he had visited other cities with e-scooters and rather than riders placing the e-scooters anywhere they must be parked in a specific location and posed whether representatives of Voi e-scooters could attend a future committee meeting.

MEETING CONCLUDED: 20:05PM