



Scrutiny Committee

16:30 to 19:00

21 January 2021

Present: Councillors Wright (chair), Carlo, Fulton-McAlister (M), Giles, , McCartney-Gray, Oliver, Osborn, Ryan, Sands (S) Sarmezey and Thomas (Vi)

Apologies: Councillor Manning

1. Public questions/petitions

There were no public questions or petitions

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED, to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2020.

4. Scrutiny committee work programme 2020-21

The chair said that a proposal had been made at the previous meeting to look at the insourcing of the Joint Ventures at the March meeting of the scrutiny committee. He instead proposed that the topic be looked at six months after implementation. Officers would consider a scope around this item for the February meeting of the scrutiny committee.

RESOLVED to note the scrutiny committee work programme 2020-21

5. Corporate Plan and performance framework 2021-22

(Councillor Waters, leader of the council, was present for this item).

The strategy manager presented the report. The council published a Corporate Plan each year which set out the mission and vision of the council, alongside the budget which provided the resources. The council was currently at the end of the second year of a three year Corporate Plan. There had been a huge change in the external

landscape but the ambition of Norwich being a fine city for all, alongside the corporate priorities of great neighbourhoods, local environment and housing, people living well and an inclusive economy were all still key objectives for the council to achieve.

The Corporate Plan also included a narrative which although not required by the constitution, gave context to the document. For the 2021-22 Corporate Plan, a narrative report would not be produced and the council's Covid-19 Recovery Blueprint would give the necessary explanation of the council's focus on activities.

The performance framework needed to be clear and easy to understand so the metrics had been reduced to give the document clarity. Although the corporate key performance indicators (KPIs) had been reduced, there were still many other data sets being used by the council to monitor progress. For example, the Local Area Survey gave granular insight into how residents were experiencing the city. When taken together, the Corporate Plan and performance framework, along with the Covid-19 Recovery Blueprint showed what the council wanted to achieve.

A member asked if it would be possible to see where those KPIs that had been removed from the performance framework would sit so that members could continue to review the data. He also said that the previous performance framework had antisocial behaviour (ASB) metrics, and that there was a particular issue around council tenants reporting ASB. He wanted to see a measure on satisfaction on outcomes of these reports as it was a cross cutting issue which was about more than how safe people felt.

The strategy manager said that most of the metrics that had been removed would sit within the relevant service areas and would continue to be tracked, although not all of these would be published alongside the corporate performance framework as that document showed how the council was delivering the KPIs. The ASB response satisfaction was still being measured and in turn, being used to manage the service.

In response to a member's question, the strategy manager said that data on children in low income families was national data and was published by the county council through Norfolk Insight. A selection of that data was taken and put into a document called the State of Norwich. This gave context for the work of the council but was not in the gift of the city council to influence. Foodbank usage data was being gathered within the context of Covid-19 which gave a useful insight into patterns of demand.

A member referred to the measure around food premises inspections and asked for reassurance that the measure would not create an incentive to find subpar food premises in order to improve them. The senior strategy officer said that in the reporting, a commentary was given which gave context to the figures. The measure was a proportion of inspections made rather than a standalone target. The strategy manager said that food safety compliance was included as a measure as it was an area that the council had a statutory role in and could directly influence. It was also about the health and safety and wellbeing of citizens of Norwich which met the corporate priority of people living well.

A member commented that Covid-19 pandemic had changed the way the council worked. He considered that the KPIs were underselling the council's zero carbon ambitions and should be wider than just carbon dioxide emissions.

The strategy manager said that the purpose of the measure of CO₂ emissions from local authority operations was to measure how well Norwich City Council was contributing to the 2040 carbon vision. Work was being undertaken through the council's climate and environment emergency executive panel and data received from the Tyndall centre. The senior strategy officer added that there were also measures around insulation which were key activities that the council contributed to with other measures being covered by the Environmental Strategy.

A member commented that although he appreciated that citywide CO₂ emissions were not entirely within the council's gift to directly influence, the council had an important role in partnership working. The carbon budget was the most important measure on this and as data already existed on what this was, it would be straightforward to report on. It would also let the citizens of Norwich know what the direction of travel regarding CO₂ emissions was.

A member said that they appreciated the need to reduce the number of KPIs but some were still very internal facing. She questioned the inclusion of the percentage of properties with a gas safety certificate which also appeared in the housing service KPIs and also the inclusion of the percentage of planning applications determined in time.

She added that there should be more focus on climate change and the performance framework was missing an air pollution KPI relating to NO₂ and particulates.

The strategy manager said that data on air pollution and carbon emissions from the local area was still being gathered and would be reported under the Environmental Strategy. The senior strategy officer said that with regard to the planning applications, the council was accountable to central government around these figures so it needed to be monitored at a high level. The director of strategy and culture said that the council had a legal obligation around gas safety so the KPI was needed to ensure that the council was performing properly.

A member commented that the measure around people's feelings of community had been removed but it was an important indicator to determine how this had changed throughout the pandemic and also to see how the council was performing across many areas including ASB and reducing inequalities. He added that satisfaction around housing repairs and estate maintenance was often raised through councillor's casework and would be an important way of integrating the joint ventures into the council's KPIs. There was nothing in the performance framework around access to green space which although measured elsewhere, was important. Finally, he referred to the amended methodology for measuring planning applications and asked what this was.

The strategy manager said that community feeling was part of the Local Area Survey out of which some headlines would form part of the covering report to council. The senior strategy officer added that with regards to the Local Area Survey, this would be form part of service monitoring and would link to other surveys or strategies such as the Citizen Engagement Strategy. In terms of the planning applications methodology, going forward a trailing twelve month period would be used for data rather than reporting quarterly

A member said that although they agreed with the comments members had made, the inclusion of these within the performance framework would mean the production of a fundamentally different document which would require a lot of officer resource. The socio-economic factor for these would also need to be included for context. Metrics were given to cabinet members on a regular basis and to shadow portfolio holders.

A member commented that it would be possible to find a measure around climate change over which the council had a direct impact and suggested the addition of a measure of the number of new homes built to Passivhaus standards. Climate change was on the council's risk register in terms of flooding and overheating and local authorities had an important role to play in helping to cut carbon. Concerning waste measurements, she would want to see the percentage of waste sent to landfill and incineration within the KPIs. The senior strategy officer said that keeping only one waste measurement had been discussed and the percentage of refuse sent to landfill or incineration was still being measured at a service level.

A member questioned whether the majority of discussions had around the 2040 Vision would be brought to cabinet and council for members to consider. The leader of the council said that this was correct and that a report on the Towns Deal, which included a relevant section on the 2040 Vision, had recently been considered at cabinet. His introduction to the Corporate Plan would highlight the need for partnership working.

A member commented that he was disappointed to see so few KPIs in the Inclusive Economy priority. He wanted to see the inclusion of the percentage of council shop units that were vacant, Norwich Market occupancy rates, business rates relief given to non-profit organisations and the proportion of contractors that pay the living wage. The strategy manager said that the council was already an anchor institution with work being undertaken such as living wage work, the 2040 City Vision work, use of assets and spend on procurement staying locally. There was no mechanism to report on living wage being paid by contractors so there would have to be a separate piece of work to assess this and produce data.

A member asked whether something could be added to the inclusive economy metrics on managing existing assets. The strategy manager said that the social value of some assets had already been assessed, such as the percentage of community centre users that came from the local area. There was a want to better understand the opportunities of becoming an anchor institution, especially as a way of influencing stakeholders and to benefit the local economy. Information around this could be added to the requested all member briefing on the role of the council as an anchor institution.

A member questioned what was meant by underused land within the inclusive economy KPIs and said that she was concerned that the council would be looking at developing green land within council housing estates. The senior strategy officer said that the methodology did not suggest that this was the case but agreed to ask officers for further information around this.

The leader of the council said that the proposed KPIs focussed on services over which the council had a significant degree of control. The data that had been removed from the KPIs was reported at shadow portfolio holder meetings and as part of partnership working, but he agreed that it would be helpful to have a schedule of what had been

taken out and where the data could be found. He reminded members that the Equalities Information report with rich in data, as was the State of Norwich document. In terms of marking evidence of recovery, this was found within the Covid-19 Recovery Blueprint which had a significant schedule of actions and comments, so there were a number of documents in which performance data could be found.

(Councillor Waters, leader of the council, left the meeting at this point).

In response to a members question around the IT system availability metric, the director of strategy and culture said that this was around the increasing number of customers conducting business with the council online and how well this was working.

Members commented that there was an absence of any metrics around staff welfare. The strategy manager said that staff wellbeing was a very significant issue and was discussed frequently. It was difficult to measure wellbeing across a whole team. The corporate leadership team were presented regularly with HR metrics, but it would not be appropriate for these to be reported publicly.

Members discussed recommendations. On being put to a vote and with a majority voting against, it was resolved to not include a metric on citywide CO₂ emissions or the remaining carbon budget with considered targets.

RESOLVED:

- 1) To prepare a list of removed KPIs and where the data is held
- 2) under the 'people living well' priority to ask cabinet to consider including
 - a) a metric around satisfaction with estates management; and
 - b) response times to antisocial behavior complaints
- 3) under the 'great neighbourhoods, housing and environment' priority to ask cabinet to consider including a metric on the number of council houses approved for construction, built and retrofitted to a high environmental standard
- 4) Under the 'inclusive economy' priority to ask cabinet to consider including metrics to measure
 - a) the percentage of not for profit organisations that receive discretionary business rates relief
 - b) council owned shop occupancy rates; and
 - c) Norwich market occupancy rates
- 5) Under the 'healthy organisation' priority to ask cabinet to consider including metrics on staff welfare levels such as attendance statistics.

CHAIR

