



**Scrutiny Committee**

**16:30 to 17:20**

**21 March 2019**

Present: Councillors Wright (chair), Fullman (vice chair), Carlo, Hampton, Fulton McAlister(M), Manning, Raby, Sands (S), Smith, Stewart, Thomas (Va) and Thomas (Vi)

Apologies: Councillor Coleshill

(On behalf of the committee, the chair thanked Councillors Coleshill and Raby for their work on the scrutiny committee as both councillors would be standing down at the election in May.)

**1. Public questions/petitions**

There were no public questions or petitions

**2. Declarations of interest**

Councillor Carlo declared an other interest in item 7 below, Norwich Highways Agency Agreement, as she was a member of the Norwich Highways Agency Committee.

**3. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings held on 7 and 14 February 2019.

**4. Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2018-19**

**RESOLVED** to note the scrutiny committee work programme 2018-19

**5. Update of the representative on the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor Fullman referenced the third paragraph of his report and said that he had received an email to say that the chief executive of the Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust was leaving his post. This highlighted his point that management seemed to be renewed on a regular basis.

There had been a 30% increase in funding for the speech and language therapy service for children, however, the service was underfunded by 45%. Parents were being involved as consultees, which was a great step forward but would judge the success of this as they continued to raise issues.

The chair thanked the NHOSC representative and substitute for their work throughout the civic year.

**RESOLVED** to note the update of the representative on the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny committee.

## **6. Annual review of the scrutiny committee 2018-19**

The chair presented the report and said that his foreword would be included in the review when the final report was taken to council in June 2019.

A member asked whether within section 9 of the review, joint scrutiny bodies, a sentence could be added to say that there had been regular updates back to the scrutiny committee from both of the NHOSC representatives.

The representative on the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub Panel said that he had submitted a report which had been omitted from the agenda. It was agreed that this report would be circulated to scrutiny members outside of the meeting.

**RESOLVED** to:

- (1) recommend the annual scrutiny review for approval at the council meeting in June 2019, subject to the addition of a sentence in section 9 to read "There had been regular updates brought back to the scrutiny committee from both of the NHOS representatives" ; and
- (2) ask the scrutiny liaison officer to circulate the report of the representative on the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub Panel to members of the scrutiny committee.

## **7. Norwich Highways Agency Agreement**

(Councillor Carlo had declared an other interest in this item).

The chair said that recommendation 1(c) should read 'four county council members' and not three county council members.

The director of regeneration addressed the committee. He said that there had been a resolution by Norfolk County Council's Environment, Development and Transport (EDT) committee to not renew the Norwich Highways Agency Agreement. This decision had come at a critical time as funding had been awarded by Transforming Cities and was an opportunity to maximise investment into sustainable transport for Norwich and Norfolk. Cabinet had recommended that the agreement should be renewed or significant alternative arrangements should be made which would benefit both county and city and continue to develop the strategic partnership. Officers and

elected members were looking at how to continue this work, ensuring joint working so that schemes had the best possible content.

The head of city development services presented the report. He highlighted the appended reports from the county council's EDT committee and Norwich City Council's cabinet which gave context to the papers the scrutiny committee were considering. The decision not to renew the Highways Agreement had been confirmed by Norfolk County Council and the city council had received notice in writing that the agreement was ending. The aim of the discussion at scrutiny committee was about how to deliver alternative arrangements which in turn would deliver outcomes for both the county and the city.

There was the possibility of receiving significant funding over the next four years for the Norwich urban area. There had already been an award of £6.1 million to be invested in completing projects around the city; however, much higher sums of funding could be available in the future meaning the council could be more ambitious about the projects undertaken. It was important that the alternative arrangements were right as there was a drive to create a modern, sustainable city with a healthy economy and good transport system.

The head of city development services said that he was keen to ensure that the governance of the new arrangements was appropriate and these were set out in the recommendations that the committee was being asked to consider. He said that it was important that meetings continued to be held in public to ensure transparency and it was sensible that the committee be able to make decisions rather than simply recommendations to other bodies.

Representation was a concern as the proposal was for Norwich City Council to have equal representation with Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils, when the focus of the work would be in the Norwich city area. Therefore, there was a strong case for additional representation from the city whilst acknowledging that the county council would ultimately have the decision making power. It was hoped that consensus would be made on most decisions but there was a concern that the influences of neighboring districts could have sway over what happens within Norwich. Views of all representatives would be taken into account but it seemed unbalanced to potentially carry a decision on a neighboring authority vote.

In terms of practical arrangements, the agreement had been in place for many years so it would be difficult to unravel some processes. The city council had responsibility for parking but there was more to it than simply enforcement; it also included decisions on controlled parking zones and waiting restrictions for example. This needed to be given some thought as there may be a need to keep some staff working for Norwich City Council in areas like this. Another area which would be difficult to un-integrate was development control. Currently, those officers would work alongside colleagues in the planning department to ensure a collaborative approach to planning applications.

Transforming Cities was about improving productivity in Norwich and this was not just about building roads; it could be encouraging cycling or improving public transport which fitted with the ethos of building an inclusive economy. There was a link to the wider economic development function so there was a need to retain some

abilities in terms of officers. Air quality was one of Norwich City Council's statutory responsibilities but many of the issues with air quality were associated with transport which sat with Norfolk County Council. The city council wanted to keep a nucleus of capacity to continue work in specific areas so that the council could continue to satisfactorily deliver day to day highways function with some resilience.

A member commented that paragraph 15 of the report, relating to representation, was very important as the basic principle of democracy was that those areas with work happening in them should have a say in how these go ahead.

A member said that they agreed with the proposed levels of representation as they were not too dissimilar to the current membership of the Norwich Highways Agency Committee. He asked whether there was any 'plan B' in case the proposals were not accepted. The head of city development services said that functions had been delegated to the city council from the county council, therefore it was in the gift of Norfolk County Council to take back any of these. Technically, the agreement allowed for either party to withdraw. The discussions had had been productive so far and the report was aligned with those.

A member raised concerns that there was an emphasis on productivity rather than sustainability. She asked which body would have responsibility for issues such as street gully cleaning, street trees and Traffic Regulation Orders. The head of city development services said that he envisioned the parking service being more than enforcement as it would be difficult for members of the public to know who to contact about the different aspects of the function. Highways maintenance would include gullies and street trees and therefore would sit with the county council. The transportation and network manager said that although there was an emphasis on productivity, the key message regarding Transforming Cities was on sustainable transport, improving public transport and encouraging walking and cycling. The Department for Transport had said that all cities needed more walking and cycling in their bids for the Transforming Cities funding.

A member commented that the report showed a positive way forward with a workable model and that the alternative arrangements could be refreshed in a collaborative way.

A member questioned what these arrangements would mean for the Norwich Highways Agency Committee (NHAC) in the short term. The head of city development services said that NHAC would continue as it still had an important role. There had been the award of £6.1 million of Transforming Cities money and NHAC would oversee the spend of this. Some of the larger schemes in the second tranche of funding may see less of a role for NHAC as the implementation of these may not be in place until after the changes to the highways agreement were in place. He reassured members that there would be a programme of work for NHAC over the coming months.

**RESOLVED** to:

- (1) endorse the following recommended amendments to improve the proposed Transforming Cities governance:
  - a) Member group meetings are held in public;

- b) The proposed member group is constituted to make decisions rather than to make recommendations to an existing Norfolk County Council decision making body or individual;
  - c) The make-up of the member group reflects the impact that Transforming Cities Fund has within each area; i.e. four county council members, two city council members and one each from Broadland and South Norfolk
  - d) Where there is not a consensus agreement within the member group voting on a decision that is wholly within a specific district administrative area, the final decision should be made between the Norfolk County Council members and those of the district concerned; and
- (2) note that there is on-going discussion to confirm the detailed arrangements for transferring highway and traffic functions 'back' to Norfolk County Council which will seek to ensure the parking element that remains delegated can be satisfactorily delivered alongside other highly integrated areas; notably highways development control, air quality and economic development/regeneration and alongside the city council's own district council highway functions.

CHAIR