

Norwich City Council
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Item No 7

REPORT for meeting to be held on 21 September 2017

Pre-scrutiny of the proposed budget consultation

Summary: A briefing note is attached to this report detailing the methods of consultation used at the council and what the council uses consultation to achieve with the public and stakeholders.

The document also explains how the public are kept informed about the consultation policy of the council and the different channels these updates are published on.

Conclusions: This meeting is a chance for the scrutiny committee to scrutinise the existing policy regarding the consultation process and ask the relevant officer questions and then possibly make recommendations.

Recommendation: That the scrutiny committee notes the consultation process of the council and considers specific ways of enhancing this.

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Background

1. Norwich City Council will soon be holding a range of consultations, including on the Budget for 2018 – 2019.

Approach to consultation

2. This year there are three interrelated strands to the consultation which will help inform the budget setting process, these are:
 - Commissioning qualitative and quantitative research to help inform a new vision for the city and a delivery model for the Council from 2019/20 onwards,
 - Undertaking statutory consultation on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) for 2018/19,
 - And consulting residents, stakeholders and businesses on key aspects of the proposed 2018/19 budget.

New vision and operating model

3. Norwich City Council is commissioning a programme of qualitative and quantitative research to help inform our next steps in developing and delivering a new vision for the city and priorities and a delivery model for the council.

Through this we will gain:

- validated resident and stakeholder input into a new city vision
- validated resident and stakeholder input into how Norwich City Council might make changes to our priorities to support the new city vision
- an evidence base to help us shape our transformation and budget setting for future years

This approach will enable us to:

- gather, analyse and interpret the views of residents and stakeholders on a long term vision for the city of Norwich
- gather analyse and interpret the views of residents and stakeholders on how they see the council's role in contributing to

that vision.

- test perceptions and understanding of the work of the council, and some service specific proposals.

Statutory consultation 2018/19

4. There are also a number of statutory items that we will need to test. We will need to gather views on:
 - the council tax reduction scheme
 - setting council tax
 - any changes to housing rents and service charges

Consulting on specific proposals

5. We will also need to consult on any specific service reductions or savings which would affect residents or particular groups of residents

How we will do this

6. We will be working with a professional research company to determine the best most appropriate consultation, but it is envisaged these will include:
 - Focus groups
 - Workshops
 - Stakeholder meetings
 - Surveys

Proposed timescales

7. We will begin qualitative research in October and quantitative from the end of November, closing in January to enable the information gathered to inform budget setting in February.