



Scrutiny Committee

16:30 to 18:05

18 March 2021

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

Apologies: Councillors Carlo, Giles, Manning and Sands (S)

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 4 February 2021

4. Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee update

The NHOSC representative presented the update. The committee had received a verbal update from the Care Quality Commission on the progress of the Queen Elizabeth hospital which was showing significant improvement.

The committee had a workforce update from the Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning group which had received a £2million investment from the government for recruitment and retention of staff.

Work had been undertaken with children's services to promote working in health and social care for school leavers.

A member asked for an update from the previous meeting around the compatibility of records between the health and prison services. The representative said that the records were not compatible and the committee had asked for further information around improving this.

RESOLVED to note the update of the NHOSC representative.

5. Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub Panel (CCSPSSP) update

Councillor Giles, CSSCSP representative had given his apologies for the scrutiny committee meeting. The chair asked that any questions be emailed directly to Councillor Giles.

A member commented that it would be useful for members to have a briefing in the new civic year on safeguarding for both members and officers.

RESOLVED to note the update of the CSSCSP representative.

6. Scrutiny committee work programme 2020-21

The chair thanked the committee for the engagement in the work programme over the last year. He reminded members to complete TOPIC forms for suggested work programme items for the next civic year. No items would be carried over and a TOPIC form would need to be submitted for each suggested item.

RESOLVED to note the scrutiny committee work programme 2020-21.

7. Draft Procurement and Contract Management Strategy 2021-24

The chair welcomed Annabel Scholes, interim director of resources, Tracy Woods, procurement manager and Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources to the meeting.

The interim director of resources presented the report. The committee was invited to pre-scrutinise the report before it was taken to cabinet in April. Report authors had engaged with the Corporate Leadership Team and senior managers on the strategy. The document outlined the direction of travel and would be a journey that took a few years.

A member commented that the draft strategy had good principle with emphasis on social value but asked what weighting it was being given. The interim director of resources said that it would be part of the implementation for the strategy and clear guidance would be given to managers. The draft strategy did not have that level of detail.

A member referred to the management of the commercial lifecycle of the contract and asked if officers had any more detail around this. The interim director of resources said that with regards to relationship management, some contracts may require quarterly contract meetings whilst others would simply be drawn down on, whilst still checking that the service was being delivered.

A member asked what support was in place for smaller contractors who may struggle with meeting the objectives. The interim director of resources said that the council

was working with the business community to understand the barriers to local businesses tendering for contracts. There would be a workshop set up to discuss how smaller businesses could work with the council to meet the criteria set out. Once this work had started, she would be happy to discuss how elected members could contribute. The strategy manager said that there was a piece of work on considering how the city could become a more positive space for social enterprises to flourish which included procuring contracts.

In response to a member's question, the interim director of resources said that the council was working with EELGA on the next steps in measuring social value for contracts. It was not anticipated that there would be included a minimum set of standards for businesses to meet. The strategy manager said that there were existing frameworks to measure social value and after doing some research, it was thought that the best starting point would be to take an 'off the shelf' model and then use this to fit the corporate priorities.

The chair asked whether work was being undertaken with larger companies to sub contract to smaller businesses which may not feel that they met the criteria for tendering. The business relationship and procurement manager said that there was a need to get into the market early which would give larger contractors time to engage with local suppliers. She had been speaking to representatives from each of the service areas within the council to understand how they worked with contractors so that there could be some engagement within the supply chains. The team was also looking at how contracts were packaged to see if some could be broken down to allow smaller suppliers to fulfil them.

In response to a member's question about the impact of Covid-19 on the council's procurement processes, the interim director of resources said that the existing procurement strategy had not been a barrier as the council had been given exemptions to deal with contracts.

A member asked what processes were in place to ensure that there was an even level of service throughout the life on the contract. The business relationship and procurement manager said that the council had appropriately trained contract managers to deal with those relationships.

A member said that he would encourage sustainability to be considered as part of the strategy. A major area that local authorities could control was the reduction of carbon and that pathways to achieve this should be set out in the strategy.

A member commented that they were concerned with the lack of minimum standards as a goal needed to be set to ensure that the contract was heading in the right direction. The interim director of resources said that there could be some contracts with specific standards. There was a need to be mindful about what the council was trying to procure when setting minimum standards as services needed to be cost effective and efficient. The strategy was looking at principles and the next steps would be how to embed this.

Members discussed councillor involvement in contracts. The interim director of resources said that the structure in place was to approve the strategy and then officers

would undertake the implementation. Feedback from members of the public should be channelled through ward councillors and this input was valued.

RESOLVED to make the following recommendations to cabinet:

- 1) Following the recommendation of the committee on climate change ensure that net zero-carbon pathways are built into contracts.
- 2) To consider a 20% social value weighting in the procurement assessment criteria and when going out to tender.
- 3) Set a minimum standard for expected net zero-carbon reduction pathways.
- 4) Ensure standards of service are maintained for the life of the contract.
- 5) To record whether or not a company is able to offer to apprenticeships and other social value elements such as biodiversity and if not, why not.

CHAIR