



SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16:40 to 18:30

21 September 2017

Present: Councillors Wright (chair), Brociek-Coulton (vice chair) Bogelein, Bradford, Bremner, Coleshill, Grahame, Haynes, Jones (B), Malik, Packer and Thomas (Va)

Apologies: Councillor Manning

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2017

3. Scrutiny committee work programme 2017-18

The chair introduced the item. It was suggested that the October scrutiny committee meeting on health inequality could be held in a venue within the community to maximise public engagement. The chair asked for suggestions for speakers for that meeting and members proposed the following:

- a planning officer to give information on the GNLP and CIL

A representative from:

- the River Wensum strategy
- equal lives
- St Martins Housing Trust
- social prescribing,
- Sophie Church (UEA),
- Active Norfolk,
- Healthy Norwich partnership,
- Making it real, David Hines (consolidated charities),
- Rob Lancaster (MAP)

Members then discussed potential speakers for the November item on access to justice. It was proposed that representatives from the following areas be approached for availability:

- non-profit sector,
- private sector,
- judiciary (judge, magistrate, family court judges),
- law works,
- Norwich asylum seekers,
- refugee forum,
- red cross,
- new roots,
- Bridge plus,
- G4S,
- Boyd Taylor – Financial inclusion manager, Norwich City Council
- family contact centres,
- NCC revenues team,
- domestic violence organisation/women's charity (Leeway),
- UEA law school,
- NCLS,
- Unison

The chair reminded members that not all speakers could be accommodated in a single meeting and a member suggested that the committee needed to think carefully about matters that the council could have a meaningful impact on.

The strategy manager said that the work on the scope of the parks and open spaces review was moving forward and it was suggested that a small sub-group of the scrutiny committee be briefed by the head of citywide services on this and when the review was complete, the item be brought back to the scrutiny committee at an appropriate time.

RESOLVED to:

(1) Ask the scrutiny liaison officer to:

- a) Source an appropriate venue for the October scrutiny committee meeting
- b) Approach the following groups for representatives to speak at the October meeting of the scrutiny committee:
 - a planning officer to give information on the GNLP and CIL
 - a representative from:
 - the river Wensum strategy
 - equal lives

- St Martins Housing Trust
- social prescribing,
- Sophie Church (UEA),
- Active Norfolk,
- Healthy Norwich partnership,
- Making it real, David Hines (consolidated charities),
- Rob Lancaster (MAP)

c) Approach the following groups for representatives to speak at the November meeting of the scrutiny committee:

- non-profit sector,
- private sector,
- judiciary (judge, magistrate, family court judges),
- law works,
- Norwich asylum seekers,
- refugee forum,
- red cross,
- new roots,
- Bridge plus,
- G4S,
- Boyd Taylor – Financial inclusion manager, Norwich City Council
- family contact centres,
- Norwich City Council revenues team,
- domestic violence organisation/women's charity (Leeway),
- UEA law school,
- NCLS,
- Unison

(2) Appoint Councillors Bogelein, Brociek-Coulton, Haynes and Wright to the sub group to consider the scope for the parks and open spaces review.

4. Update of the representative on the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny committee

The representative said that the topic discussed at the last meeting was children's speech and language therapy. She had not received any comments or questions from the scrutiny committee but had taken forward three queries from parents with children on the waiting list for this therapy. The question had been put to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) asking why these children had been waiting for longer than the 18 month limit. After some thought the CCG representative said that they did have a budget for this and the backlog would be investigated.

The next meeting would be on 26 October 2017 and the committee would be briefed on the introduction of the primary care education and training tariff as well as ambulance response and return times.

Members asked the representative to query whether it was only ambulance response time that was taken into account as a measure or whether success of the call would also be a factor regardless of the response time. Members also thought that the entire patient journey should be taken into account.

RESOLVED to

- (1) note the update from the NHOSC representative; and
- (2) ask the representative to relay the committee's comments around ambulance response times to the next NHOSC meeting.

5. Pre-scrutiny of the proposed budget consultation

The head of strategy and transformation presented the report. She said that the aim of appointing an organisation to manage the consultation was to help to reach a broad audience and to gather information that could be fed into longer term budget proposals.

A member suggested that a sub group or Councillor representative could attend the focus groups as there was not enough detail on the content of the consultation. The head of strategy and transformation said that information would be brought back to members at various points throughout the consultation.

A member commented that the language within the budget consultations needed to be accessible and understandable to all. The head of strategy and transformation said that the council was aware of this need and appointing an external organisation would facilitate this.

RESOLVED to ask the head of strategy and transformation to:-

- (1) consider how best to involve members in shaping the budget consultation with an update brought back to scrutiny at appropriate time to allow changes to be considered ; and
- (2) include an 'easy-read' sheet to sit alongside the budget consultation

6. The co-operative agenda in local government

(Councillor Chris Herries was present for this item).

Councillor Coleshill presented the report and invited discussion.

In response to a member's question, the strategy manager said that with regard to involving co-operatives in the community asset transfer programme, the council was responsive to groups which approached the council. A robust process had been put in place so that when special opportunities arose, these would be advertised. He added that they need to think about whether preference could be given to co-operatives under the community right to challenge.

Members discussed holding an all-member briefing on the topic of co-operatives. Suggestions for the scope of the briefing included what other local authorities offer in terms of working with co-operatives, what services were available to Norwich City Council and what it meant to be a co-operative council. A member also suggested that the briefing could inform the scrutiny committee work programme going forward.

Discussion ensued around procurement and social value. The strategy manager said that the council worked with a range of social enterprises and gave grants in kind to some of these. There was ongoing work taking place in conjunction with this sector to ensure that social enterprises had a chance to compete for procurement opportunities.

RESOLVED to ask the democratic and elections manager to arrange an all members briefing on co-operatives to include examples of how co-operatives have worked with other local authorities and what services were available to Norwich City Council.

(Councillor Bradford left the meeting at this point).

7. Call in - Kitchen and bathroom replacements delegated decision

The chair introduced the item and said that he had called in the decision as he had concerns around how such delegated decisions were published in the public domain. He clarified that he had no concern with the contractor identified but he was concerned about how members would find out which contractor had been appointed.

The director of business services said that there was a specific definition of what constituted a key decision and these, along with other items to be considered by cabinet, were published 28 days prior to the meeting. The minutes of the meeting would also be published which satisfied transparency.

With regard to delegated decisions, once an officer had taken the decision, this should be published to members and the public to allow for call in. This was done until two years ago but had lapsed due to staff absence. A re-organisation had been taking place within democratic services which was implemented in February 2017 with a vacant post and two members of the team leaving the council. As of August 2017, the team was fully staffed with one of their areas of work being the publication of cabinet decisions and key decisions, along with progress on motions passed at council. A new member of staff had picked up the delegated decisions and was working on getting these published. The director of business services said that the call in was timely as the team was already working on these areas.

A member commented that she also had concerns around recommendations from the scrutiny committee not being taken to cabinet and that some councillor enquiries were not being answered within the five day service standard.

The director of business services said that a motions tracker was being updated and letters that had been sent as a result of a motion would be published going forward retrospectively wherever possible. He added that cabinet could consider items informally but this would be captured in some commentary on the motions tracker.

With regard to the councillor enquiry system, the director of business services said that he would liaise with the head of customer services to discuss the process.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) Endorse the delegated decision to appoint Roalco Limited for replacement kitchens, bathrooms and repointing in housing properties
- (2) Note the work being undertaken on publishing delegated decision and progress on motions to council ; and
- (3) Ask the director of business services to liaise with the head of customer services to discuss the Councillor enquiry system

CHAIR