

Norwich City Council
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Item No 8

REPORT for meeting to be held on Thursday 16 July 2020

Setting of the scrutiny committee work programme for 2020/21

Summary:

The purpose of the report is to assist committee members in setting the work programme for 2020/21. A series of potential items have been listed in this report, which have been raised by the committee throughout the last year.

Conclusions:

Along with this report, standing items taken to the scrutiny committee are included in the annual work programme planning grid and items suggested by members for consideration for inclusion are attached as appendix A.

Attached at appendix B are the TOPIC forms received from members for consideration.

It is proposed that any discussion is as a whole committee using the TOPIC criteria. This will assist members in achieving the goal of an agreed work programme that is met by consensus.

Recommendation:

To consider the options and agree a realistic and deliverable scrutiny committee work programme for 2020/21. The programme is a standing item at each committee meeting and can be adjusted as necessary.

Contact Officers:

Emma Webster
Scrutiny liaison officer
emmawebster@norwich.gov.uk

1. Developing a work programme for the scrutiny committee

- 1.1 When the scrutiny committee considers which items to include on its work programme, it is useful to do so in the context of what the focus is for the council over the coming year and to look at how activity aligns to the council's corporate plan.
- 1.2 This is so that the scrutiny committee will be able to consider where and how it can add value to the work being carried out towards achievement of the council's priorities and ensure that resources are being focussed effectively.
- 1.3 The scrutiny committee has previously adopted the TOPIC flow chart as an aid to selection of scrutiny topics for its work programme. Members are encouraged to pay regard to this in ensuring that any topic that makes it onto the work programme has an agreed scope and will benefit from the scrutiny process.
- 1.4 Members have been asked to submit suggestions for the 2020-21 work programme to be considered by the committee. Those received before publication of the agenda are attached as appendices to this report. Additional topics may be considered by the committee at the meeting.

2. Recurring items

- 2.1 There are certain areas of work identified for the scrutiny committee that are of a recurring nature. Presently, these are the scrutiny committee work programme (each meeting), pre-scrutiny of the corporate plan and performance framework (December) Equality Information Report (December), pre-scrutiny of the proposed budget (February) and the annual review of the scrutiny committee (March).
- 2.2 Updates are received from the representative sitting on the Norfolk County Health and Overview Committee (NHOSC). The proposed dates for NHOSC along with suggested scrutiny report dates are outlined below in the annual work programme planning grid.
- 2.3 Updates are also received from the representative sitting on the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny sub panel (NCCSPSSP). The proposed dates for NCCSPSSP along with suggested scrutiny report dates are outlined below in the annual work programme planning grid.
- 2.4 Scrutiny committee may wish to keep some space free to be able to move items on and off the work programme as required.

3. Scope for scheduling items to the work programme

- 3.1 Although sometimes not possible to achieve, it was previously agreed that the committee should agree as few as possible substantive topics per meeting. The main reason for this is to ensure that there is enough time for the committee to effectively consider the issues and has a fair chance of reaching sound, evidence based outcomes. Ideally, one main item per meeting would be the aim.
- 3.2 Although setting the future work of the committee for this civic year, members will also have the opportunity on a monthly basis to revise the programme if and when required or due to changing events. This is done via the work programme standing item on the scrutiny committee agendas.

4. Annual work programme planning grid

- 4.1 Members may find this a useful tool to use during the meeting to allocate items for scrutiny in the next civic year, please see appendix A;
- 4.2 Reports from the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny sub panel are to be added when dates of the meeting are known.
- 4.3 The committee are asked to consider how to proceed or otherwise with topics that were agreed for the last civic year but were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These topics are;
 - visit from the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership
 - report back from the select committee on the growth of short term lettings
 - report back from the select committee on anti-social behaviour including fly tipping and city council processes
 - Young people and well-being.

Annual work programme planning grid

Date of meeting	Item
Thursday at 16.30	
2020	
10 June	Covid-19 recovery report
16 July	Work programme Annual scrutiny report
17 September	Work programme Report back from NHOSC meeting from 30 July and 3 September
15 October	Work programme Report back from NHOSC meeting from 8 October
19 November	Work programme
17 December	Work programme Report back from NHOSC meeting from 26 November Equality information report Corporate plan and performance framework
2021	
21 January	Work programme Corporate plan and performance framework
4 February	Work programme Pre-scrutiny of the budget 2021/22
18 March	Work programme Report back from NHOSC meeting from 4 February and 18 March.

Scrutiny TOPIC form

Good governance and scrutiny helps reduce risk, increases resilience, improves decision making and delivers value for money. The information you give on this form will help shape the scrutiny work programme for the civic year 2019-20.

Please tell us what item you would like considered on the work programme and a brief scope. *For instance: Air bnb type properties: To consider the growth of short term lettings and the impact on income for the council and wellbeing of local residents.*

YOUR ITEM: Progress on the Safer Neighbourhoods Initiative (SNI)

BRIEF SCOPE: The SNI was introduced in 2019 to focus the council's efforts in addressing crime and ASB, and there have been continued or even increased reports of crime and ASB affecting communities during lockdown. Given that crime and ASB have significantly affected many of our communities, and this is such a complex area, Scrutiny would be able to add value by assessing the results so far and evaluating whether there is more that could be done, including whether there has been adequate communication around the initiative.

Your item will be considered for inclusion on the work programme on the following 5 criteria. Please give any further information for each criteria below:

TIME	<p>is this the right time to review the issue and is there sufficient officer time and resource available?</p> <p>The SNI is a significant piece of work and it has not yet undergone formal scrutiny. It is therefore appropriate to assess progress for the year past and ahead of further implementation. This is especially important in the light of potential budget shortfalls as a result of covid – it is therefore vital to ensure now that money is spent effectively.</p>
OPPORTUNITY	<p>what would be the objective of the scrutiny?</p> <p>To review the effectiveness of the SNI, how areas have been selected as focus areas, communications around the initiative, how residents have been engaged, and the value for money.</p>

PERFORMANCE	<p>Can performance in this area be improved by scrutiny input?</p> <p>Performance for the council's output performance on ASB (including percentage of respondents satisfied service provided to deal with ASB, percentage of tenants feeling safe, and percentage of respondents satisfied with the outcome of their ASB case) has consistently been below targets. While this is partly due to staff shortages in the ABATE team, the SNI is a major part of the council's response and has the potential to significantly improve the council's performance in regard to crime and ASB.</p>
PUBLIC INTEREST	<p>What would be the public interest in placing this topic onto the work programme?</p> <p>Crime and ASB are among the public's major concerns in many wards, and it is appropriate to evaluate the value for money of the SNI. There have been continued or even increased reports and complaints of crime and ASB during the lockdown period.</p>
CONTRIBUTION	<p>will any scrutiny activity on this matter contribute to the councils activities as agreed in the corporate plan?</p> <p>ASB measures are part of the council's performance indicators for People living well.</p>

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YOUR ITEM: The benefits of extending the existing PSPO when it is due for renewal.

BRIEF SCOPE: Residents have requested that the existing PSPO which covers street drinking in the city centre area be extended, in particular to the Rosary Road and Heathgate areas to cover kerb crawling. This is also an opportunity to assess the efficacy of the existing PSPO.

Your item will be considered for inclusion on the work programme on the following 5 criteria. Please give any further information for each criteria below:

TIME	is this the right time to review the issue and is there sufficient officer time and resource available? The existing Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) is due for renewal in 2020, and it is therefore appropriate to review its success and what benefits there might be to extending it. It is a time-sensitive matter.
OPPORTUNITY	what would be the objective of the scrutiny? To review the effectiveness of the existing city centre PSPO in reducing crime and ASB, and to consider the potential benefits to extending it to other areas where residents have requested a PSPO.
PERFORMANCE	Can performance in this area be improved by scrutiny input?

	<p>Performance for the council's output performance on ASB (including percentage of respondents satisfied service provided to deal with ASB, percentage of tenants feeling safe, and percentage of respondents satisfied with the outcome of their ASB case) has consistently been below targets. While this is partly due to staff shortages in the ABATE team, a PSPO can help the police to have greater powers to address crime and ASB. In particular it could be used to prevent kerb-crawling.</p>
PUBLIC INTEREST	<p>What would be the public interest in placing this topic onto the work programme?</p> <p>Residents in the Rosary Road area and in the Heathgate area have requested a PSPO to prevent kerb-crawling. ASB is a major issue in the city centre and residents are keen to ensure that it is addressed/</p>
CONTRIBUTION	<p>will any scrutiny activity on this matter contribute to the councils activities as agreed in the corporate plan?</p> <p>ASB measures are part of the council's performance indicators for People living well. The topic of a PSPO was referred to Scrutiny by Cabinet.</p>

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YOUR ITEM: Reducing waste in Norwich

BRIEF SCOPE: Norwich's performance on waste and recycling has shown room for improvement. Recently there has been public concern about the efficacy of recycling and the amounts of waste going to landfill. Our waste system could come under further strain if there is a second outbreak of coronavirus. Reducing amounts of waste is key to reducing costs for the council as well as meeting environmental targets. Scrutiny could evaluate the measures taken by the council and compare recommendations from other councils and partners such as Biffa.

Your item will be considered for inclusion on the work programme on the following 5 criteria. Please give any further information for each criteria below:

TIME	<p>is this the right time to review the issue and is there sufficient officer time and resource available?</p> <p>Targets for performance on waste and recycling rates by 2020 were set in 2014, and are now due to be reviewed. This is a priority for the new CEO.</p> <p>The council has rolled out food waste collection to houses and to council-owned flats, and with the Government saying that food waste recycling should be available to all residents by 2023, it would be appropriate to review the success of this and how it could be better extended to private flats.</p> <p>The BID has obtained funding from the EU to undertake work with businesses aimed at encouraging a circular economy and reducing waste. Furthermore, there has been great public interest in reducing</p>
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	<p>plastic waste in recent years, and two zero-waste shops have opened in Norwich. Now is a time to build on that momentum.</p> <p>Furthermore, our waste system could come under strain if there is a second, worse outbreak of coronavirus.</p>
OPPORTUNITY	<p>what would be the objective of the scrutiny?</p> <p>To help in the aim to reduce amounts of waste in Norwich, at both supply-end and from consumers. To review Norwich city council's waste and recycling policies to that end, and to seek ways of further engaging with stakeholders to support the aim of reducing waste. To ensure that Norwich's waste disposal system is resilient in the face of potential pandemics and cuts to council services.</p>
PERFORMANCE	<p>Can performance in this area be improved by scrutiny input?</p> <p>Norwich's performance on waste and recycling is well below the targets that were set in 2014. The Integrated Waste Management Strategic Objectives Document approved by cabinet in February 2014 set targets including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To reduce the level of residual household waste per household to 90% of the 2013-14 level by 2016 and to 80% of the 2013 level by 2020, and d) To achieve a recycling rate of 50% and to seek to achieve a recycling rate of 60% by 2020 f) Through objectives a) to e), seek to increase landfill diversion rates year-on-year and reduce landfill tonnage to 80% of the 2013 level by 2020 <p>In 2012, the recycling rate in Norwich was 40.6%. The most recent figures that Norwich's recycling rate is at 38.3%. While it is hard to achieve high recycling rates in an urban area, Norwich is behind other urban areas such as Stockport, Trafford and Ealing.</p>
PUBLIC INTEREST	<p>What would be the public interest in placing this topic onto the work programme?</p> <p>Reducing carbon emissions from and the environmental impact of waste is essential to sustainability. Saving the council money through reduced waste collection and landfill charges would deliver greater value for money. There is also an opportunity to support the local economy.</p>

	It is vital that the council is able to maintain waste collection in the face of budget and staff cuts if there is further fallout from coronavirus.
CONTRIBUTION	<p>will any scrutiny activity on this matter contribute to the councils activities as agreed in the corporate plan?</p> <p>Waste figures are output and outcome measures for “Great Neighbourhoods, Housing and Environment” on the council’s corporate plan.</p>

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YOUR ITEM: Alternatives to car park revenue

BRIEF SCOPE: Norwich City Council received a gross income of £5.9m from off-street and multi-storey car parking, for the last financial year, making car parks one of the council's most significant sources of income. However this impact will have been severely impacted by the coronavirus lockdown, which is in addition to the longer-term need to reduce reliance on car parking revenue in line with the council's stated aim of reducing traffic in the city and encouraging more walking, cycling and public transport. It is therefore important to find alternative, sustainable sources of revenue.

Your item will be considered for inclusion on the work programme on the following 5 criteria. Please give any further information for each criteria below:

TIME	is this the right time to review the issue and is there sufficient officer time and resource available? Car parking income will have been severely affected by covid-19 and it is therefore an urgent priority to find alternative sources of income, especially in light of the need to rebuild post-covid.
OPPORTUNITY	what would be the objective of the scrutiny? To find alternative, sustainable sources of income to car parking revenue that may contribute to the council's vision for a cleaner, more liveable Norwich.
PERFORMANCE	Can performance in this area be improved by scrutiny input?

	<p>Despite significant efforts by the city council to reduce traffic in the city, there are still considerable amounts of cars entering and parking in the city. Combined with a brutal series of cuts to council budgets that have forced local authorities to turn to commercial sources of income, this has made car parking income one of the most significant sources of income for the city council. That source of income is vulnerable, as shown by the effects of coronavirus, and it may become more vulnerable if traffic into the city is further reduced. Currently, relying on cars coming into the city for income, in particular for short-stay parking for shopping and tourism, means that the council's income is generated from a source that actively damages its environmental and social aims, and is financially vulnerable. There is therefore a need for alternative sources of income.</p>
PUBLIC INTEREST	<p>What would be the public interest in placing this topic onto the work programme?</p> <p>There is a public interest in establishing a sustainable source of income so that the council can continue to deliver vital services. In addition, there could be scope for alternative sources of income to dovetail with positive interventions to improve for residents. The city council owns 16 car parks, which make up a significant portion of land. This land could be put to use in ways that enhance quality of life.</p>
CONTRIBUTION	<p>will any scrutiny activity on this matter contribute to the councils activities as agreed in the corporate plan?</p> <p>Ensuring a sustainable income would contribute to the council's "Healthy Organisation" goal. In addition, reducing traffic in the city would contribute to the council's environmental objectives, and positive use of car parking spaces could contribute to the council's social and environmental objectives.</p>

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Please tell us what item you would like considered on the work programme and a brief scope.

YOUR ITEM: COUNCIL FINANCES

BRIEF SCOPE: How the council is going to fix the hole in its finances caused by the pandemic and the lockdown? This could be anything between £7m and £14m. With reduced car parking revenue and business rates and council tax relief extended, together with the extra money we are having to find to help the vulnerable, how do we go forward?

Your item will be considered for inclusion on the work programme on the following 5 criteria. Please give any further information for each criteria below:

TIME	is this the right time to review the issue and is there sufficient officer time and resource available?
OPPORTUNITY	what would be the objective of the scrutiny? What difference can scrutiny make?
PERFORMANCE	can performance in this area be improved by scrutiny input?
PUBLIC INTEREST	what would be the public interest in placing this topic onto the work programme?
CONTRIBUTION	will any scrutiny activity on this matter contribute to the councils activities as agreed in the corporate plan?

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Please tell us what item you would like considered on the work programme and a brief scope.

YOUR ITEM: THE ECONOMY

BRIEF: How do we create a sustainable, inclusive new Norwich economy following Covid-19? This is an important opportunity to review the steps we can take to develop a better economy in the city to meet the challenges of the recession to follow the lockdown.

Your item will be considered for inclusion on the work programme on the following 5 criteria. Please give any further information for each criteria below:

TIME	is this the right time to review the issue and is there sufficient officer time and resource available?
OPPORTUNITY	what would be the objective of the scrutiny? What difference can scrutiny make?
PERFORMANCE	can performance in this area be improved by scrutiny input?
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Please tell us what item you would like considered on the work programme and a brief scope.

YOUR ITEM: Social inclusion agenda following Covid-19

BRIEF SCOPE: What steps to mitigate the rising poverty and impact. This can also include the council's community development agenda and how current work by the council is supporting the recovery plan.

Your item will be considered for inclusion on the work programme on the following 5 criteria. Please give any further information for each criteria below:

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OPPORTUNITY	what would be the objective of the scrutiny? What difference can scrutiny make?
PERFORMANCE	can performance in this area be improved by scrutiny input?
PUBLIC INTEREST	what would be the public interest in placing this topic onto the work programme?
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Please tell us what item you would like considered on the work programme and a brief scope.

YOUR ITEM: Enhancing community development following Covid-19

BRIEF SCOPE: The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic witnessed communities in many parts of the city support each other like never before. Hundreds of groups have emerged which continue to contribute to significant outcomes for Norwich residents including some of the most vulnerable. This investigation would examine what was achieved and where, how best to support, enhance and develop existing and new community groups, and ensure such work is not lost in the future.

Your item will be considered for inclusion on the work programme on the following 5 criteria. Please give any further information for each criteria below:

TIME	<p>is this the right time to review the issue and is there sufficient officer time and resource available?</p> <p>The community response, in many places, created a very significant enhancement to statutory interventions achieved during the pandemic. Coordination and support for this and other work was led by key officers at Norwich City Council. With the likelihood of further spikes of infection, real risks of local lockdowns and the impact upon people from recession and poverty, bolstering community resilience and strength will be a positive opportunity for the council not just by building on what is already there but by looking at areas where it appears there is little coordinated support on the ground.</p>
OPPORTUNITY	<p>what would be the objective of the scrutiny? What difference can scrutiny make?</p> <p>How best to imbed, enhance and develop community group development within the city council area to support those most in need.</p>
PERFORMANCE	<p>can performance in this area be improved by scrutiny input?</p> <p>While specific performance on this topic may be harder to potentially measure, the general promotion of physical and mental wellbeing and crisis preventative work achieved</p>

	through strong and sustainable communities is well established. Indicators for future performance might be developed through this investigation.
PUBLIC INTEREST	<p>what would be the public interest in placing this topic onto the work programme?</p> <p>Support for communities, helping neighbours and caring for one another has significantly increased since mid-March. The experience of collective support whether as a provider or recipient, is a shared experience for many Norwich residents, particularly those that were shielded or vulnerable. Appreciation of the work which the City Council might undertake to advance this further could be significant from both groups involved, activists, voluntary and other statutory organisations.</p>
CONTRIBUTION	<p>will any scrutiny activity on this matter contribute to the council's activities as agreed in the corporate plan?</p> <p>Creating sustainable and cohesive communities while enhancing physical and mental wellbeing is a key priority for the council. Community development as a proponent of this is accepted and vital.</p>

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Please tell us what item you would like considered on the work programme and a brief scope.

YOUR ITEM: Maximising opportunities to achieve zero rough sleeping following Covid-19.

BRIEF SCOPE: The government request to house rough sleepers on grounds of public health, together with necessary funding, allowed the city council to achieve significant and positive outcomes very quickly. The close relationship with housing charities, multi-agency working which has achieved success through Pathways, and other interventions during the pandemic, placed Norwich in a strong position. With the risk of significant rises in homelessness due to the forecast recession, removal of S21 bans on evictions and ending of the furlough scheme, the 'perfect storm' to drive homelessness and potential rough sleeping should be anticipated. Securing support from other statutory agencies with responsibility for this will be vital to future interventions in this area.

Your item will be considered for inclusion on the work programme on the following 5 criteria. Please give any further information for each criteria below:

TIME	<p>is this the right time to review the issue and is there sufficient officer time and resource available?</p> <p>Significant success, through close partnership working, was achieved in providing housing for people who often experience significant and multiple needs. With government support ending, there is now a risk of significant rises in homelessness due to the recession, removal of S21 bans on evictions and ending of the furlough scheme. Reviewing the work achieved but considering options to reduce rough sleeping in the future seem opportune.</p>
OPPORTUNITY	<p>what would be the objective of the scrutiny? What difference can scrutiny make?</p> <p>To examine the opportunities to embed good practice, to reduce and eliminate rough sleeping particularly around partnership working with responsible statutory agencies.</p>
PERFORMANCE	<p>can performance in this area be improved by scrutiny input?</p>

	<p>Yes, rough sleeping is a concern for a large section of our communities and the very visible increases since 2010 have rightly provoked alarm. Scrutiny committee can help facilitate the continued practical support from statutory agencies ensuring we close down our homelessness numbers by providing a joined up service which address not just the physicality of a safe place to sleep but also the wellbeing of the homeless person as an individual.</p>
PUBLIC INTEREST	<p>what would be the public interest in placing this topic onto the work programme?</p> <p>Rough sleeping has remained a significant concern for a large section of the community and the very visible increases since 2010 have rightly provoked alarm. This topic has been discussed on multiple levels from a wide variety of councillors indicating the seriousness it deserves. There is risk of more people in vulnerable housing situations becoming homeless through the forthcoming recession.</p>
CONTRIBUTION	<p>will any scrutiny activity on this matter contribute to the councils activities as agreed in the corporate plan?</p> <p>Achieving sustainable housing solutions for Norwich people remains a core corporate priority and action to prevent rough sleeping has been a significant part of this. Learning from the best practice achieved through the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic and incorporating opportunities into future service delivery would be advantageous.</p>

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