

Scrutiny committee

Date: Thursday, 25 February 2016

Time: 16:30

Venue: Mancroft room, City Hall, St Peters Street, Norwich, NR2 1NH

All group pre-meeting briefing – 16:00 Mancroft Room

This is for members only and is not part of the formal scrutiny meeting which will follow at 16:30.

The pre-meeting is an opportunity for the committee to make final preparations before the start of the scrutiny committee meeting. The public will not be given access to the committee room before 16:30.

Committee members:

Councillors:

Wright (chair)
Maxwell (vice chair)
Bogelein
Coleshill
Grahame
Haynes
Manning
Packer
Peek
Raby
Ryan
Sands (S)
Schmierer

For further information please contact:

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Information for members of the public

Members of the public and the media have the right to attend meetings of full council, the cabinet and committees except where confidential information or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private.

For information about attending or speaking at meetings, please contact the committee officer above or refer to the council's website



If you would like this agenda in an alternative format, such as a larger or smaller font, audio or Braille, or in a different language, please contact the committee officer above.

AGENDA

1 Apologies

To receive apologies for absence

2 Public questions/petitions

To receive questions / petitions from the public (notice to be given to committee officer in advance of the meeting in accordance with appendix 1 of the council's constitution)

3 Declarations of interest

(Please note that it is the responsibility of individual members to declare an interest prior to the item if they arrive late for the meeting)

4 Minutes

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2016

7 - 10

5 Scrutiny committee work programme 2015 - 2016

Purpose - To note the scrutiny committee work programme and agree any potential topic(s) that may be tested against the TOPIC analysis for future inclusion onto the programme. For the assistance of members, the cabinet forward agenda and the tracker are also included.

11 - 32

6 Update of the representative of the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny committee

Purpose - To note the work of NHOSC and comment on any implications for Norwich residents for the representative to take back to the next meeting of NHOSC.

7 Council policies for the control of verge parking and A boards

Purpose - To make recommendations to inform the verge parking review and revised A board policy for consideration by cabinet.

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Date of publication: **Wednesday, 17 February 2016**

- T** is this, the right **TIME** to review the issue and is there sufficient officer time and resource available?
- O** what would be the **OBJECTIVE** of the scrutiny?
- P** can **PERFORMANCE** in this area be improved by scrutiny input?
- I** what would be the public **INTEREST** in placing this topic onto the work programme?
- C** will any scrutiny activity on this matter contribute to the council's activities as agreed to in the **CORPORATE PLAN**?

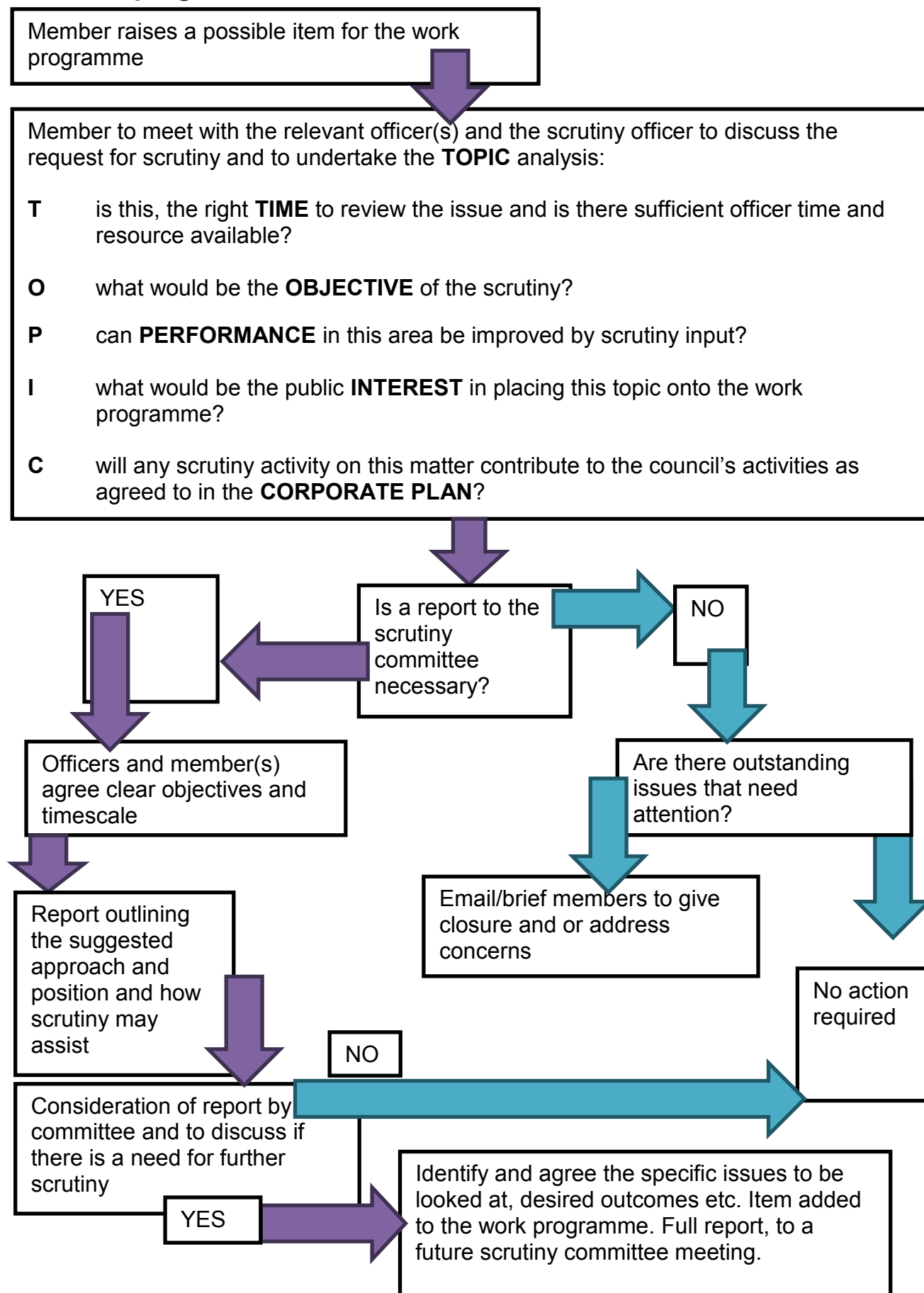
Once the TOPIC analysis has been undertaken, a joint decision should then be reached as to whether a report to the scrutiny committee is required. If it is decided that a report is not required, the issue will not be pursued any further. However, if there are outstanding issues, these could be picked up by agreeing that a briefing email to members be sent, or other appropriate action by the relevant officer.

If it is agreed that the scrutiny request topic should be explored further by the scrutiny committee a short report should be written for a future meeting of the scrutiny committee, to be taken under the standing work programme item, so that members are able to consider if they should place the item on to the work programme. This report should outline a suggested approach if the committee was minded to take on the topic and outline the purpose using the outcome of the consideration of the topic via the TOPIC analysis. Also the report should provide an overview of the current position with regard to the topic under consideration.

By using the flowchart, it is hoped that members and officers will be aided when giving consideration to whether or not the item should be added to the scrutiny committee work programme. This should help to ensure that the scope and purpose will be covered by any future report. The outcome of this should further assist the committee and the officers working with the committee to be able to produce informed outcomes that are credible, influential with SMART recommendations.

Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound

Guidance flow chart for placing items onto the scrutiny committee work programme



Working style of the Scrutiny committee and a protocol for those attending scrutiny

- All scrutiny committee meetings will be carried out in a spirit of mutual trust and respect
- Members of the scrutiny committee will not be subject to whipping arrangements by party groups
- Scrutiny committee members will work together and will attempt to achieve evidence based consensus and recommendations
- Members of the committee will take the lead in the selection of topics for scrutiny
- The scrutiny committee operates as a critical friend and offers constructive challenge to decision makers to support improved outcomes
- Invited attendees will be advised of the time, date and location of the meeting to which they are invited to give evidence
- The invited attendee will be made aware of the reasons for the invitation and of any documents and information that the committee wish them to provide
- Reasonable notice will be given to the invited attendee of **all** of the committees requirements so that these can be provided for in full at the earliest opportunity (there should be no nasty surprises at committee)
- Whenever possible it is expected that members of the scrutiny committee will share and plan questioning with the rest of the committee in advance of the meeting
- The invited attendee will be provided with copies of **all relevant** reports, papers and background information
- Practical arrangements, such as facilities for presentations will be in place. The layout of the meeting room will be appropriate
- The chair of the committee will introduce themselves to the invited attendee before evidence is given and; all those attending will be treated with courtesy and respect. The chair of the committee will make sure that all questions put to the witness are made in a clear and orderly manner

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**16:30 to 18:20****28 January 2016**

Present: Councillors Wright (chair), Maxwell (vice chair), Bogelein, Coleshill, Grahame, Haynes, Herries (substitute for Manning), Peek, Packer, Raby, Ryan, Sands (M) (substitute for Sands (S)) and Schmierer

Apologies: Councillors Manning and Sands (S)

Also present: Councillors Waters and Stonard
Richard Balls, communications manager

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2015.

3. Scrutiny committee work programme 2015 -2016

Members discussed the upcoming item on the Push the Pedalways scheme, which was added to the work programme for the meeting on 17 March 2016. The chair said that various groups would be invited to send a representative to the meeting and each representative would be given five minutes to address the committee. The public would be invited to submit questions in advance of the meeting in order to identify common themes.

In response to a member's question, the cabinet member for resources and income generation said that an itinerant meeting to view sections of the pedalway would need to take in both areas that are doing well and not so well. This would ensure that the committee could have a balanced discussion. It was agreed that the viability of an itinerant meeting prior to the 17 March meeting would be considered.

RESOLVED to:-

- 1) Note the scrutiny committee work programme 2015 – 16; and
- 2) Ask the chair to provide members with an update on the co-operatives briefing.

4. Pre-scrutiny of the Environmental Strategy 2015 – 18

The environmental strategy manager presented the report. He said that this strategy was more public facing than the previous two environmental strategies. He highlighted some of the points in the report and advised members that there had been a 30% decrease in Norwich City Council's carbon emissions.

As the report involved many service areas, it was decided that any questions on specific details in the report would be emailed to the environmental strategy manager in the first instance, who would collate responses from the appropriate head of service.

RESOLVED to:

- a) Note the Environmental Strategy 2015 -18; and
- b) To ask members to forward any detailed questions in the first instance to the environmental strategy manager for inclusion on the scrutiny tracker.

5. Pre – scrutiny of the proposed budget for 2016 - 17

The chair agreed to take items 7(a) and 7(b) separately.

The chief finance officer presented item 7(a).

The cabinet member for resources and income said that there were still unknowns at this time. Raising council tax by 1.95% showed a good balance between being aware of financial pressures on residents and raising income. Smoothing of savings was very important to ensure that the council did not lose services in the future.

The leader of the council said that the local government financial settlement figures had still not been received by local councils which led to a degree of uncertainty. He reminded members that the recommendations to council may change before the meeting as the financial landscape was constantly shifting.

The communications manager gave members some information around the public budget consultation. He said that around 260 responses to the consultation had been received and the majority of these had been online. Many questions had been open questions in line with member's feedback around consultations. A general overview of the comments received had identified some common themes including:

- Transport and the Pedalways
- Sharing services with other authorities
- Council tax reduction scheme

Discussion ensued in which the chief finance officer answered member's questions. In 2017 – 18 the council would be using reserves because of reductions in grant funding, which would take them down towards the minimum, prudent level. She explained that some councils would find themselves in the position of having negative Revenue Support Grant (RSG) due to the way RSG has been calculated in the provisional settlement.

The chief finance officer presented item 7(b). She said that the budgets had been built on the basis of accommodating the 1% rent reduction. The determination figure for high value voids was still an unknown. This could mean an amended budget being taken back to council later in the year.

Members discussed the right to buy legislation. The chief finance officer said that she thought it was unlikely that the council would be able to recoup costs by buying back properties sold under the right to buy legislation. She said that the council did have some protection around new build properties.

In response to a member's question, the chief finance officer said that there was a baseline standard of housing that the council had to provide but Norwich City Council had the Norwich Standard which was above this. The strategy manager said that legislation was being considered around the lowest SAP rating that private rented accommodation could have. He agreed to find this information and circulate it to scrutiny committee members.

RESOLVED to note the pre – scrutiny of the proposed budget 2016 - 17

6. Exclusion of the public

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of item *7 (below) on the grounds contained in the relevant paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

(The committee officer left the room at this point. The strategy manager recorded the minute for the item below.)

***7. Pre – scrutiny of the proposed budget 2016 – 17 Appendix 5**

The chief finance officer presented the report and answered member's questions.

RESOLVED to note the pre – scrutiny of the proposed budget 2016 – 17 Appendix 5

CHAIR

DATE OF MEETING	TOPIC FOR SCRUTINY	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER, CABINET PORTFOLIO COUNCILLOR or ORGANISATION	SCOPE - REASON FOR TOPIC REQUEST AND OUTCOME SOUGHT
6 July 2015	Quarter 4 performance monitoring (14/15)	Cllr Alan Waters, Russell O'Keefe and Phil Shreeve	Identification of any causes for concern and note successes arising from this 6 monthly review of performance monitoring data
6 July 2015	Establishing a local housing company	Cllr Bert Bremner and David Moorcroft	Pre-scrutiny of the report going to cabinet that outlines arrangements for the council towards establishing a local housing company to allow the council to take forward housing development in Norwich.
6 July 2015	Update from May meeting of the Norfolk county health overview and scrutiny committee	Steve Goddard	For the committee to note the work of NHOSC and comment on any implications for Norwich residents for the rep to take back to the next NHOSC meeting.
16 July 2015	Update of the rep for the Norfolk county health overview and scrutiny committee	Cllr Sandra Bogelein	A brief Oral update of the meeting of NHOSC that was held earlier in the day at county hall. (A written update will be available at the September meeting along with the September update)

ITEM 5

16 July 2015	Overview of DWP sanctions	Phil Shreeve	To look at how the council can work with partners to help those who may be affected with a particular focus on young people and the homeless.
DATE OF MEETING	TOPIC FOR SCRUTINY	RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATION OFFICER CABINET PORTFOLIO COUNCILLOR	SCOPE - REASON FOR TOPIC REQUEST AND OUTCOME SOUGHT
16 July 2015	Benefits processing times	Anton Bull, LGSS and Cllr Alan Waters	To address the performance levels towards improving the average processing time for new housing benefit and council tax reduction scheme claims.
17 September 2015	Update of the rep for the Norfolk county health overview and scrutiny committee (July & Sept report)	Cllr rep and Steve Goddard	For the committee to note the work of NHOSC and comment on any implications for Norwich residents for the rep to take back to the next meeting of NHOSC
17 September 2015	Looking at the co-operative agenda in local government	Cllr Alan Waters, Russell O'Keefe and Phil Shreeve	Looking at co-operative innovations and solutions and suggestions for how Norwich might benefit. (Subject to final agreement over scope)
15 October 2015	Assessment of the corporate plan against the programme of the new government	Cllr Alan Waters, Russell O'Keefe and Phil Shreeve	To gain an overview of the new governments programme and any implications this may have for the council's corporate plan

ITEM 5

15 October 2015	Transformation programme for the Council	Cllr Alan Waters and Russell O'Keefe	For the scrutiny committee to comment on and make suggestions towards the development of the council's programme for transformation
DATE OF MEETING	TOPIC FOR SCRUTINY	RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATION OFFICER CABINET PORTFOLIO COUNCILLOR	SCOPE - REASON FOR TOPIC REQUEST AND OUTCOME SOUGHT
12 November 2015	Quarter 2 performance monitoring (15/16)	Cllr Alan waters, Russell O'Keefe and Phil Shreeve	Identification of any causes for concern and note successes arising from this 6 monthly review of performance monitoring data
12 November 2015	Review of community space - update on progress	Cllr Keith Driver, Russell O'Keefe and Bob Cronk	A report back to the scrutiny committee on how work has progressed since the task and finish group.
12 November 2015	Update of the rep for the Norfolk county health overview and scrutiny committee (Oct report)	Councillor rep and Steve Goddard	For the committee to note the work of the HOSC and comment on any implications for Norwich residents for the residents for the rep to take back to NHOSC
12 November 2015	Update on the delivery of the work plan for the building social inclusion and capital in Norwich project	Cllr Keith Driver and Russell O'Keefe	For the committee to receive and note a briefing paper as an update on progress at this early stage in the work.

17 December 2015	Transformation programme for the Council	Cllr Alan Waters and Russell O'Keefe	Ongoing scrutiny to consider the development of the transformation programme.
17 December 2015	Annual equality information report	Cllr Vaughan Thomas and Phil Shreeve	Pre scrutiny of the report before it goes to cabinet
DATE OF MEETING	TOPIC FOR SCRUTINY	RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATION OFFICER CABINET PORTFOLIO COUNCILLOR	SCOPE - REASON FOR TOPIC REQUEST AND OUTCOME SOUGHT
17 December 2015	Update of the rep for the Norfolk county health overview and scrutiny committee (Dec report)	Councillor rep and Steve Goddard	For the committee to note the work of the NHOSC and comment on any implications for Norwich residents for the rep to take back to NHOSC
28 January 2016	Pre-scrutiny of the proposed policy and budget frame work	Cllr Alan Waters, Russell O'Keefe and Justine Hartley	To make suggestions to cabinet regarding the proposed budget's ability to deliver the council's overarching policy and look into how tenants can use communal areas
28 January 2016	(Environmental strategy) Yearly update on the progress statement	Cllr Bert Bremner, Richard Willson and David Moorcroft	Identification of any issues to consider and note successes and progress reported in the progress statement
25 February 2016	Verge and pavement issues	Cllr Bert Bremner, David Moorcroft and Andy Ellis	To make recommendations to inform the verge parking review and revised A board policy for consideration by cabinet.

ITEM 5

25 February 2016	Update of the rep for the Norfolk county health overview and scrutiny committee	Councillor rep	For the committee to note the work of the NHOSC and comment on any implications for Norwich residents for the rep to take back to NHOSC
17 March 2016	Annual review of scrutiny	Cllr James Wright and Steve Goddard	To agree the annual review of the scrutiny committee's work 2015 to 2016 and recommend it for adoption of the council
17 March 2016	Push the Pedalways	Andy Watt	
TBC	Academies		(Subject to final agreement over scope)

FORWARD AGENDA: CABINET, COUNCIL, SCRUTINY AND COMMITTEES and MEMBER BRIEFINGS 2015 – 2016

ALLOCATED ITEMS							
Meeting	Report	Purpose	Portfolio holder + Senior Officer + Report author	Date report signed off by	Management clearance	Cabinet or portfolio holder briefing?	Exempt?
COUNCIL 23 FEB 2016	General Fund revenue budget 2016/17 and capital programme 2016/17 to 2020/21	To propose for approval the budget and budgetary requirement, council tax requirement, level of council tax, and non-housing capital programme, for the financial year 2016-17 and the non-housing capital plan 2016-17 to 2020-21	Cllr Stonard Justine Hartley chief finance officer EXT 2440		Justine Hartley	PH	NO
COUNCIL 23 FEB 2016	Housing rents and budgets 2016-17	To propose for approval the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2016-17, council housing rents for 2016-17, the prudent minimum level of HRA reserves 2016-17, the housing capital plan 2016-17 to 2020-21; and the capital programme 2016-17	Cllr Stonard Justine Hartley chief finance officer EXT 2440		Justine Hartley	PH	NO
COUNCIL 23 FEB 2016	Treasury Management Strategy 2016-17	To outline the council's prudential indicators for 2016-17 through to 2018-19 and set out the expected treasury operations for this period.	Cllr Stonard Justine Hartley chief finance officer EXT 2440 Philippa Dransfield chief accountant EXT 2562		Justine Hartley	PH	NO

ALLOCATED ITEMS							
Meeting	Report	Purpose	Portfolio holder + Senior Officer + Report author	Date report signed off by	Management clearance	Cabinet or portfolio holder briefing?	Exempt?
SCRUTINY 25 FEB 2016	Verge and pavement issues	To make recommendations to inform the verge parking review and revised A board policy for consideration by cabinet.	Cllr Bert Bremner, and Andy Watt		David Moorcroft		
SCRUTINY 25 FEB 2016	Update of the rep for the Norfolk county health overview and scrutiny committee	For the committee to note the work of the NHOSC and comment on any implications for Norwich residents for the rep to take back to NHOSC	Councillor rep and Phil Shreeve				
CABINET 9 MAR 2016	Revenue budget monitoring 2015-16 period 10	To provide an update on the current financial position, the forecast outturn for the year 2015-16, and the consequent forecast of the general fund and housing revenue account balances.	Cllr Stonard Justine Hartley chief finance officer EXT 2440 Hannah Simpson Group accountant EXT 2561		Justine Hartley	PH	NO
CABINET 9 MAR 2016	Proposed write off of bad debt	To provide an update regarding the write off of non- recoverable debt.	Cllr Stonard Justine Hartley chief finance officer EXT 2440 Carole Jowett revenues and benefits operations manager EXT 2684		Justine Hartley	PH	NO
CABINET	Managing Assets -	To consider the disposal of individual	Cllr Stonard		Dave	PH	YES

ALLOCATED ITEMS							
Meeting	Report	Purpose	Portfolio holder + Senior Officer + Report author	Date report signed off by	Management clearance	Cabinet or portfolio holder briefing?	Exempt?
9 MAR 2016	KEY DECISION	property assets currently held by the council.	Andy Watt Head of city development services EXT 2691 David Rogers Client property and parking manager EXT 2463		Moorcroft		
CABINET 9 MAR 2016	Security guarding at NCC's three multi storey car parks – KEY DECISION	To agree to award the relevant contract.	Cllr Joanne Day Richard Buckenham				
CABINET 9 MAR 2016	Local Development Scheme	To agree the content of the revised Local Development Scheme (LDS).	Cllr Bert Bremner Mike Burrell planning policy team leader				NO
CABINET 9 MAR 2016	Award of contract for the Passivhaus development of Goldsmith Street – KEY DECISION	To award the contract for the Passivhaus development of Goldsmith Street	Cllr Bremner Andy Watt Head of city development services EXT: 2691 Andrew Turnbull Senior Housing Development Officer EXT: 2778		Dave Moorcroft		NO
CABINET	Three Score phase 2:	To approve the development	Cllr Harris		Dave		NO

ALLOCATED ITEMS							
Meeting	Report	Purpose	Portfolio holder + Senior Officer + Report author	Date report signed off by	Management clearance	Cabinet or portfolio holder briefing?	Exempt?
9 MAR 2016	development agreement for affordable housing	agreement for the provision of affordable housing at Three Score phase 2	Andy Watt Head of city development services EXT: 2691 Gwyn Jones City growth and development manager EXT 2364		Moorcroft		
CABINET 9 MAR 2016	Three Score phase 2: development agreement for affordable housing – financial appendices	To consider the appendices to the Three Score phase 2: development agreement for affordable housing report	Cllr Harris Andy Watt Head of city development services EXT 2691 Gwyn Jones City growth and development manager EXT 2364		Dave Moorcroft		YES (Paragraph 3)
CABINET 9 MAR 2016	Planning pre-application advice – review of charges and service standards	To review the existing planning pre-application charging structure and service standards and recommend changes.	Cllr Bremner Graham Nelson, Head of planning Ian Whittaker Planning development manager EXT 2528		Dave Moorcroft		NO
CABINET	Procurement of Works	To review the procurement process	Cllr. Harris		Bob Cronk		NO

ALLOCATED ITEMS							
Meeting	Report	Purpose	Portfolio holder + Senior Officer + Report author	Date report signed off by	Management clearance	Cabinet or portfolio holder briefing?	Exempt?
9 MAR 2016	for the Housing capital and revenue programmes 2016-17 – KEY DECISION	for various work programmes and schemes and consider approval to place orders.	Bob Cronk Carol Marney Head of operational property services NPS Norwich Ltd 01603 227904				
SCRUTINY 17 MAR 2016	Annual review of scrutiny	To agree the annual review of the scrutiny committee's work 2015 to 2016 and recommend it for adoption by the council	Cllr James Wright and Phil Shreeve				
SCRUTINY 17 MAR 2016	Push the Pedalways		Andy Watt				
COUNCIL 22 MAR 2016	Appointment of Monitoring Officer	To consider the appointment of the monitoring officer	Cllr Stonard Anton Bull Executive head of business relationship management and democracy EXT 2326		Anton Bull	PH	No

Scrutiny committee tracker

2015 – 2016

Date	Topic	Responsible officer	Scrutiny request	Outcome(s) or current position
11 June 2015	Verge and pavement issues	Andy Watt	For the scrutiny committee members to receive an update on progress regarding verge and pavement issues raised at earlier meetings.	Members received an email update from the head of city development services on 12 June reporting on the current position. The scrutiny committee will also be pre scrutinising a report that will cover the review of verge and pavement issues at the 25 February 2016 meeting.
11 June 2015	Best practice in tackling transphobic hate crimes	Bob Cronk	For the head of neighbourhood services to provide an update and information as an email briefing to the scrutiny committee	Members can find update on e-councillor under the e-bulletin section or be clicking here
11 June 2015	The council's consultation process	Nikki Rotsos	For a briefing paper to be circulated, for scrutiny members to gain an overview and understanding of the council's current work in this area.	Ongoing

Date	Topic	Responsible officer	Scrutiny request	Outcome(s) or current position
11 June 2015	The communications approach of the scrutiny committee	Chair of scrutiny and Nikki Rotsos	To make this an ongoing piece of work with a view to make suggestions on how members advertise and publicise their work.	Ongoing
6 July 2015	Self-esteem and aspirations task and finish group; annual update	Russell O'Keefe	Future updates on the progress being made with the work programme, as a result of the self-esteem and aspirations task and finish group.	Expected to be in spring 2016.

Date	Topic	Responsible officer	Scrutiny request	Outcome(s) or current position
6 July 2015	Quarter 4 performance monitoring (14/15)	Tracy John and Chris Haystead	HCH5 states that our target is to prevent 50% of people who contact us to become homeless: Could it be clarified why this target is so low?	We needed to factor in the challenging environment for homelessness and prevention. While current performance is good, we are working at our optimum within existing resources. As such, shifting external factors (further welfare reform, effect of cuts to services by partner organisations etc) will potentially limit our effectiveness and performance. Therefore, the 50% target is both realistic and challenging. In addition, this would be very good performance compared to most local authorities.
		Chris Haystead	HCH8 the target has reduced from 87% to 77% why is that? Has satisfaction with the housing service gone down?	Satisfaction with the housing service has actually improved considerably. It has increased by over 11% between our survey in 2013 and the one carried out this year, taking overall satisfaction to 81%. This puts us the 3rd best in the country in terms of large local authority landlords. However, the previous target of 87% was unrealistic and we need to ensure targets strike the right balance between being realistic and challenging. As you will be aware, targets are then reviewed each year.

Date	Topic	Responsible officer	Scrutiny request	Outcome(s) or current position
6 July 2015	Quarter 4 performance monitoring (14/15)	Russell O'Keefe	VFM3 – the target has reduced why is that?	As set out above we need, to ensure targets strike the right balance between being realistic and challenging and 85% had gone beyond challenging to unrealistic.
		Anton Bull	VFM6: how has this measure been revised?	This is a composite of the 4 main elements of council income collected - council tax, NNDR, housing rent and sundry income. Prior to 2012 we had “in-year” collection targets for council tax and NNDR of 96.5% and 98.2%. In measuring the “% of income owed to the council collected” for the 2012-15 corporate plan the amount of council tax and NNDR we had actually collected was taken as a percentage of the amount we expected to collect. In that regard it was actually a percentage of the target percentage not a percentage of the “total amount”. For the new corporate plan we have aimed to simplify this. So now, the % of council tax and NNDR collected are as a percentage of the total amount not the expected amount. (N.B. In year the monthly “amount due” still has to be estimated as there isn't an actual monthly amount due. This is modelled based on typical collection rates from previous years. However, this builds

Date	Topic	Responsible officer	Scrutiny request	Outcome(s) or current position
6 July 2015	Quarter 4 performance monitoring (14/15)	Adrian Akester	VFM6: how has this measure been revised? (continued) With regards to the effect of the waste officers door knocking: has there been a pre/post comparison with regards to uptake of recycling, general waste reduction and use of food waste, thus a comparison of numbers before the door knocking and afterwards?	towards a percentage of the total amount due for the year).The target for this has therefore been reduced from 96% to 95% as the change has resulted in the denominator (amount due) getting bigger. Door knocking was one small part of a much wider and concerted strategy to increase recycling etc. However, pre – implementation of this overall strategy recycling rates were 18% and are obviously now 36%.
17 Sept 2015	Review of cooperative innovations and solutions, and suggestions for how Norwich might benefit	Phil Shreeve	The current offer (both supported by and being offered independent of the council) for new co-operative business start-up and Support Officers to consider supporting an event to facilitate flow of information of advice to support new and existing co-operative business models	Ongoing Ongoing

Date	Topic	Responsible officer	Scrutiny request	Outcome(s) or current position
17 Sept 2015	Review of cooperative innovations and solutions, and suggestions for how Norwich might benefit		<p>To make members aware of national or regional evidence on the impact of co-operative models on supporting local economies.</p> <p>(Recommend to cabinet) that the LEP be approached to support use of development funds to support cooperative within the Norwich economy</p>	Ongoing

Date	Topic	Responsible officer	Scrutiny request	Outcome(s) or current position
15 October 2015	Scrutiny Work Programme 2015 -2016	Phil Shreeve and James Wright	Interest was expressed in setting up a task and finish group to examine creative ways to develop income streams for the city council (it was stressed this would be member-led)	This was dropped at the scrutiny meeting 12/11/2015 following difficulties securing enough members to create a full task and finish group - it was agreed that the chair and councillor Bogelein may wish to consider carrying out some work in this area themselves.
		James Wright	Discussion of income generation led to the suggestion of involving cooperatives in this work. Idea to hold a half-day seminar for senior staff and officers to provide clarification around the way in which they work	Ongoing work by chair
15 October 2015	Assessment of the corporate plan against programme of new government	Phil Shreeve	Invite constituents of Norwich to attend a future meeting of the scrutiny committee to explain the impact of on their lives of the changes to housing funding Convene a briefing session (after the Spring 2016 budget) for all councillors regarding the issue of housing funding cuts	

Date	Topic	Responsible officer	Scrutiny request	Outcome(s) or current position
15 October 2015	Draft new blueprint and transformation programme		A member suggested that it was important to engage the public to reach possible solutions in relation to the transformation programme. It was felt vital to encourage participation in public consultation and it was also suggested that the scrutiny committee have a view of the consultation document prior to its release. Resolved to ask the communications team to publish articles in citizen magazine which highlight and explain the many tough choices the council faces in light of continued cuts.	Member of communications team attending scrutiny committee meeting 28/01/2016
12 November 2015	Scrutiny Committee Work Programme		<p>Invite a member of the communications team to the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to be held on 28 January 2016</p> <p>Circulate work carried out so far pertaining to educational equalities</p>	Completed

Date	Topic	Responsible officer	Scrutiny request	Outcome(s) or current position
12 November 2015	Community Space Review	Bob Cronk	It was agreed a website containing a centralised tool for room bookings across all community centres would be worthwhile	Ongoing
17 December 2015	*Transformation Update	Lee Robson	Discuss with the communications team about publishing the changes to the Housing and Planning Bill Provide information on annual turnover/vacancy rates as well as estimated pay to stay impacts and a copy of our submissions to Housing and Planning consultations	Ongoing From April 2015 to Feb 2016 97 sheltered homes relet and 733 general needs. In regard to pay to stay impacts, "We are keeping this policy under review as the Housing and Planning Bill makes its way through Parliament. At this stage we cannot be sure how many tenants would be affected" A copy of the submission to the Housing and Planning consultations can be found on the e-bulletin section of e-councillor

Date	Topic	Responsible officer	Scrutiny request	Outcome(s) or current position
17 December 2015	Quarterly Performance Report	Phil Shreeve	Ask the strategy manager to liaise with the relevant portfolio holder and head of service to investigate whether an alternative measure for HCH3 (the number of empty homes brought back into use) could be introduced that the council had more active control over	Officers have begun to look at possible options around HCH3 and how different measures could be reported and what that told us about performance. However given uncertainties about future finance and the possible need to revisit the Corporate Plan after the national budget in Spring this would be considered along with a wider discussion on targets and priorities (see Item 4 on the Council agenda for 23 Feb 2016)
	Quarter 2 performance monitoring (2015 – 2016)	Bob Cronk	VFM8: How is this measured? If it is measured by surveying people who got in contact or is it surveyed more widely?	Performance is measured by way of a quarterly survey. Callers to the Council are asked if they'd be prepared to take a short survey. Quarterly performance is reported and a rolling year % is also provided in the commentary. Performance on this measure is determined by response to the following question: How much would you agree or disagree that Norwich City Council seeks people's views about issues that affect your local area? (Local area is the area within 15-20 minutes walking distance from your home.) Answer options: Very satisfied/ satisfied/ neither satisfied nor dissatisfied/ dissatisfied/ very dissatisfied

Date	Topic	Responsible officer	Scrutiny request	Outcome(s) or current position
17 December 2015	Quarter 2 performance monitoring (2015 – 2016)	Bob Cronk	SCL12: How exactly is resident satisfaction with their local environment measured? Who is surveyed and what is the question?	Performance is measured by way of a quarterly survey. Callers to the Council either telephone or in person, are asked if they'd be prepared to take a short survey. The specific question for this performance measure is: "Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local neighbourhood as a place to live?" (N.B. Local neighbourhood defined as "the area within 15-20 minutes walking distance from your home"). Response options: Very satisfied/ Fairly satisfied/ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied/ Fairly dissatisfied/ Very dissatisfied/ Don't know
		Andy Watt	The homelessness strategy shows that Norwich is way below the average with regards to preventing homelessness by keeping people in their own homes. How does that relate to the target of preventing homelessness? Would it be worth having a new target to help increase the number of people staying in their own home?	Ongoing
		Andy Watt	SCL07: What is the work that is underway to try and address road casualties?	Ongoing

Norwich City Council
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
ITEM 7

REPORT for meeting to be held on 25 February 2016

Council policies for the control of verge parking and A boards

- Summary:** The report sets out the council's existing verge parking policy and a draft revised policy for the control of A boards. Work to review the former will commence shortly, whereas public consultation is being carried out on the new A boards policy. It is proposed that revised policies for each will be recommended to cabinet in due course.
- Conclusions:** Scrutiny committee are asked to make recommendations to inform the verge parking review and revised A board policy for consideration by cabinet.
- Recommendation:** To determine any recommendations scrutiny would wish to make to cabinet.
- Contact Officer:** Andy Watt, head of city development services
Jonathan Hughes, transport planner
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Report

Control of verge parking policy

1. The council's existing approach to the control of verge parking was agreed by the then Executive in 2006. A copy of the report is appended.
2. After the policy was adopted a number of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) to prevent verge parking were introduced following public consultation. In recent years, pressure on funds has not allowed any further areas to be controlled in this manner as with limited funds TROs have been focussed on providing waiting restrictions in areas where there are safety issues or problems with access to premises. During this time 37 requests for verge parking controls have been received.
3. It is intended to review the council's policy taking account of likely future budgetary constraints and other circumstances. It had been hoped to have commenced this work earlier but staff resources required on capital projects has not meant this has been possible. In addition it is understood that the government will publish revised guidance for local authorities on tackling verge parking in the spring. It would be sensible to wait for this guidance, therefore, before recommending any revisions to the present approach.
4. The views of the scrutiny committee are now sought to inform review of the council's approach to verge parking.

Control of A board policy

5. Officers have recently carried a review of options to control A boards and a revised approach is out to public consultation. A fuller description of the options considered and the recommended way forward is appended to this report. Please note that throughout this report the term 'A' board refers to any advertising feature on the highway.
6. The results of the public consultation will be analysed with a view to recommending a new policy for adoption by the cabinet early in the new civic year. To help shape the new policy, the views of scrutiny committee are sought.

Report for Resolution

Report to	Executive	Item
	20 September 2006	10
Report of	Strategic Director - Regeneration and Development	
Subject	Verge Parking	

Purpose

To review verge parking issues in the City and recommend solutions.

Recommendations

The Executive is recommended to:

- (1) support the use of Traffic Regulation Orders to control verge parking where alternative parking exists either on the carriageway, in adjacent streets or off-street;
- (2) note that where alternative parking does not exist verge reconstruction is the most feasible way to address verge parking problems;
- (3) consider the provision of funding towards verge reconstruction as part of future capital planning; and
- (4) support the use of bollards, ankle rails or other physical measures to address problems caused by motorists driving over verges; and
- (5) ask officers to report the Executive's views to Norwich Joint Highways Agency Committee.

Financial Consequences

The introduction of Traffic Regulation Orders and physical measures to control verge parking could be met from Norfolk County Council Highways Authority budgets although funding availability needs to be confirmed. Intervention to protect verges could save verge maintenance costs. Verge reconstruction works would require significant capital resources to provide a complete solution across the City.

Corporate Objective/Service Plan Priority

The report helps to achieve the corporate objective to make Norwich an exemplar of a modern, European, 'liveable' city, i.e. one that is clean, safe, attractive and able to manage transport issues effectively. The service plan priority is to review highway verge parking issues.

Contact Officers

Linda Abel, Senior Planner Transport

01603 212190

Background Documents

None

Appendix A – Executive report on verge parking from 2006

Report

Background

1. Parking and driving over grass verges on a regular basis destroys the grass causing unsightly mud patches and uneven ground in the highway. This can present a hazard to pedestrians. In addition, the erosion of grass verges damages street trees through either ground compaction or the uncovering of tree roots.
2. The Council receives frequent complaints about the state of grass verges. In the last three years, officers have logged such complaints at 71 different locations from residents and Councillors.
3. Previously these problems have been addressed with a variety of solutions. This includes the use of physical barriers (bollards or ankle rail) or repairs involving filling in potholes and mud areas with granite chippings. The former allows the verge to be repaired and reseeded; however, the latter is temporary as the chippings soon disperse and as parking continues, verge repair is not worthwhile. Remaining grass areas become difficult to cut.
4. The Norfolk County Council Highways Authority budgets fund these repairs. This leaves less money for carriageway and footway maintenance. In the recent years, the implementation of physical barriers has been limited. The budget for repairs has varied between £5 – 10,000.
5. In addition to the above maintenance, grass-cutting costs in 2005/06 were £153,600 with an extra £10,000 spent on other verge maintenance.
6. The majority of damaged verges are in residential streets. In areas built before car ownership was common houses often do not have drives or space to provide off street parking. Where the carriageway is too narrow to accommodate parked vehicles motorists will often park partly or wholly on the verge. This prevents obstruction.
7. In other streets, the need to park on the verge is less great either because there is sufficient off-street parking or because the carriageway is wider. However, motorists may still choose to park on the verge perhaps thinking that they are helping other motorists and not realising the damage it causes. It appears that such locations generate the greater number of complaints.
8. In a handful of locations, there are problems with motorists driving over verges on a regular basis, for example, to cut a corner or avoid on-coming traffic.

Potential Solutions

9. Three options for protecting the verges have been examined as follows:

Driving over verges

10. Where motorists drive over a verge on a regular basis it may be because of parked vehicle limit manoeuvrability, vehicles are travelling too fast for the conditions or the motorist has misread the road geometry. In the former, the use of yellow lines or other waiting restrictions offers a solution by preventing

Appendix A – Executive report on verge parking from 2006

unsuitable parking.

11. In other situations, as it would be very difficult to prevent motorists driving over verges using enforcement (the motorist needs to be seen committing the offence) is impractical. Therefore, the use of physical protection such as timber bollards or ankle rail is appropriate. Such measures are relatively expensive to implement (£4,000 /100m) and represent a future maintenance liability. Therefore extensive use of this approach is not realistic.

Verge Parking – Traffic Regulation Orders

12. Verge parking can be prevented with Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO), which are enforced by the Council's parking attendants. These may either specifically prevent verge parking or may also ban carriageway parking (i.e. a yellow line). Both techniques have been tested as a solution to verge parking problems; the former on Earlham Road between the Outer Ring Road and Bluebell Road and the latter along Drayton Road between the Outer Ring Road and Whiffler Road. There is some evidence of motorists driving along Earlham Road, presumably to allow ambulances to pass, but otherwise the use of these Orders has proved successful.
13. This approach is relatively cheap. An individual site is likely to cost in the region of £2,000 but there are opportunities for significant cost savings if implementation of sites is grouped to minimise legal and advertising costs.

Verge Parking – physical reconstruction

14. The use of Traffic Regulation Orders is practical where motorists have reasonable alternative places to park, for example, on the carriageway, an adjacent street or off-street (a private driveway). However, as indicated in paragraph 6 there are many locations where alternative parking is not available. Whilst TROs could be introduced this is not considered to be realistic as it would have a major impact on car owning habits. Therefore, the alternatives are either to do nothing (other than undertake maintenance to maintain safety as currently carried out) or reconstruct the verges. The latter is preferable as it not only would enhance the streetscape but it would also provide a healthier environment for street trees.
15. Physical reconstruction may take a number of forms ranging from asphalt (e.g. as used on Woodcock Road) to a gravel surface (typically reinforced with polymer webbing and as used on parts of Bracondale). Use of material would depend on local circumstances. However, although asphalt is cheaper than other alternatives (at £38/m²), it is potentially more damaging to trees and would increase surface water drainage into sewers increasing the likelihood of flooding and pollution during storms. Only limited use could therefore be justified.
16. Gravel surfaces are less likely to damage trees and would reduce flood problems. The cost of gravel surfacing is £90/m².
17. The cost of physical reconstruction using gravel surfacing has been estimated for both an example location and across the City. On Drayton Road between Havers Road and Galley Road, the cost for verge reconstruction would be in

Appendix A – Executive report on verge parking from 2006

the region of £70,000. Across the City, this figure would rise to £3-4 million.

18. It is unlikely that the County Council as Highway Authority would contribute to major and widespread verge reconstruction. The present maintenance regime ensures safety and the County Council's Local Transport Plan prioritises other areas of expenditure. Cost would therefore fall to the City Council. Members would need to consider whether to make any provision as part of future capital planning. Members will be aware, however, that both the Council's 'housing' and 'non-housing' capital programmes are fully committed at present in other areas.
19. Should funds become available prioritisation of expenditure could be assisted by the information collected by the Council's housing stock survey
20. In a limited number of locations such as where there is an individual house with a relatively large front garden, it would be possible for residents to park on their own land. This would require, for example, a hard standing in the front garden and a vehicle crossover from the carriageway. These costs could be passed on to the residents affected thereby helping to reduce verge reconstruction costs to the Council. However, even if there is space for a vehicle off the highway such provision can be unsightly. This approach is therefore not likely to offer other than a limited solution in isolated circumstances.

Conclusions

21. The use of TROs and physical measures is to be recommended to Norwich Joint Highways Agency Committee in November as the basis of a verge parking strategy for use in the circumstances described. Members should be aware that decisions on such matters rest with this Committee.
22. As the report shows, such an approach leaves out a large number of locations that would continue to have verge parking problems. Where there is no alternative parking then the use of TROs is unlikely to be practical. Verge reconstruction is the preferred approach but this would require significant investment by the City Council.
23. Appendix 1 indicates a likely recommended approach for each of the 71 locations where complaints have been received.

Location	Condition	Recommendation
Appleyard Crescent	Isolated damage	Verge TRO
Barclay Road	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Barrett Rd	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Beecheno Road	Poor	Hard standing
Bignold Road	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Bowers Ave	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Brian Avenue	Isolated damage	Verge TRO
Bullard Road	Poor	Hard standing
Camberley Road	Isolated damage	Verge TRO
Cecil Road	Isolated damage	Verge TRO
Coleburn Rd	Poor	Hard standing
Colman Rd	Poor	Hard standing
Constitution Hill, Wall Rd to outer ring road	Isolated damage	Verge TRO
Cotman Road	Good	No action necessary
Cunningham Road	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Dereham Rd opposite Norwich Rd (access Rd for residents)	Poor	Verge TRO
Drayton Rd / Whiffler Rd	Isolated damage	No action necessary
Drayton Rd Galey Hill to Havers Rd	Poor	Hard standing
Elizabeth Fry Rd	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Elm Grove Lane	Isolated damage	Verge TRO
Friends Road	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Fugill Road	Isolated damage	Hard standing
George Pope Road	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Gilbard Road	Isolated damage	Hard Standing
Glenmore Gardens	Isolated damage	Verge TRO
Grove Ave	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Hall Rd o/s Hewitt School	Isolated damage	Hard standing and TRO
Hall Rd opposite livestock market	Poor	Hard standing

Appendix A – Executive report on verge parking from 2006

Location	Condition	Recommendation
Harwood Rd	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Hilary Avenue	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Jessop Rd	Isolated damage	Hard standing and TRO
Kirkpatrick Road	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Larkman Rd	Poor	Verge TRO
Lefroy Road	Good	No action necessary
Locksley Rd	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Maid Marion Road	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Mansfield Lane	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Margaret Paston Ave	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Milton Close	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Morse Road	Poor	Hard standing
Mottram Close	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Mousehold Ave	Poor	Hard standing
Mousehold Street	Good	No action necessary
North Park Avenue	Isolated damage	Verge TRO
Palmer Road	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Pilling Park Road	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Plumstead Road East	Isolated damage	Verge TRO
Romany Road	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Rye Ave	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Salhouse Road, Heartsease Lane to Watling Road	Poor	Hard standing
Sandy Lane	Isolated damage	Verge to be maintained
Sotherton Road	Isolated damage	Verge TRO
South Park Ave	Isolated damage	Verge TRO
St Clements Hill	Isolated damage	Verge TRO
Stanley Avenue	Isolated damage	Verge TRO
Stevenson Road	Isolated damage	Hard standing
Telegraph Lane East	Good	No action necessary
Templemere	Good	No action necessary
The Avenues inside outer Ring Road	Isolated damage	Verge TRO
The Avenues outside	Isolated damage	Hard standing

Appendix A – Executive report on verge parking from 2006

Location	Condition	Recommendation
Outer Ring Road Theobald Rd	Isolated damage	Hard standing

Appendix B – Proposed ‘A’ board policy

Discussion paper on options for A board policy

‘A’ boards have been a contentious issue in the city for some time and recent years have seen a proliferation in the number of ‘A’ boards – especially in the city centre.

The large number of ‘A’ boards creates a hazard for disabled and visually impaired people and impact on the quality of the street environment. Certain streets in the city, for example, London Street and Gentleman’s Walk now have significant numbers of ‘A’ boards creating obstruction to pedestrians.

Broadly speaking, they are supported by local businesses (especially small businesses) who believe they encourage trade and are opposed by disability advocacy groups and civic society organisations who are concerned that they limit accessibility for disabled, visually impaired and elderly people and for those with pushchairs.

The council is keen to support local business whilst also ensuring that the city’s highways are fully accessible and pleasant to walk around. The issue of ‘A’ boards has been delegated to district councils by the county council.

Analysis of options considered

Several options were considered for tackling ‘A’ boards in the city centre.

Following on from preliminary research into various ‘A’ board policies and meetings with various stakeholders this document lays out and analyses several policy possibilities. We have identified seven policy options to be discussed in this document;

1. No Action
2. Complete ban – the complete banning of ‘A’ boards
3. A citywide policy applicable in all areas
4. Licensing – introduce a licensing system for ‘A’ boards
5. A street by street assessment
6. A city wide policy with exemptions for certain locations
7. Minimum highway width

These policy ideas are not necessarily mutually exclusive (although some are) and the final policy recommendation is a blend elements of several of these.

In assessing each of these possible policies a number of factors have been considered, including; legal requirement, cost, enforceability, impact on people with disabilities and impact on local businesses.

Policy Option 1: No action

One option is to allow the proliferation of ‘A’ boards. The council does, at the moment have the power to remove ‘A’ boards under the Highways Act 1980.

Appendix B – Proposed ‘A’ board policy

However, the lack of a clear policy means that local businesses would be unclear on the reasons for the removal of their ‘A’ board as well as the fact that this would lead to conflict between traders and the council as traders may feel that they are being victimised if their ‘A’ boards are removed when there are so many in the city centre. This option would have no financial cost unless there was an injury for which the council was considered liable. This policy option would obviously do nothing to improve accessibility in the city.

Policy Option 2: Banning all ‘A’ boards

This policy has been implemented by a number of councils including Hull City Council. This policy has the advantage of being simple to understand and enforce.

This policy would likely be popular with several stakeholders. However, given that a majority of ‘A’ Boards do not cause a problem and that small business believe they do help them it is suggested that this policy is overly punitive on small businesses. There is also a risk that in areas where ‘A’ boards actually add character to a street (such as in the Lanes) that this policy may result in an ‘overly sterilised’ street environment. It should also be noted that both accessibility groups and the Norwich Society accept that this option is not feasible.

Whilst this policy is easy to enforce in that it is obvious if a business is contravening the policy there are legitimate concerns over the amount of officer time (and therefore cost) of constant enforcement of the policy. A system based on reporting of ‘A’ boards rather than on council monitoring would leave the council open to allegations of unfair enforcement.

Policy Option 3: A citywide policy applicable in all areas

A citywide policy would enable an equitably applied policy. However, there remain concerns that the cityscape varies massively and what is reasonable in one area may be impractical in another. Also, potentially causes the issue where the Council’s policy is not the same as Broadland’s and South Norfolk’s causing confusion to business owners and members of the public.

There is also the point that a vast majority of the concerns raised about ‘A’ boards concern those in the city centre. There is also the difficulty of enforcing a citywide policy as opposed to one that applied, for example, only in the city centre.

Policy Option 4: An ‘A’ board licencing system

By consulting on what would be a reasonable charge we may be able to get a sense of a monetary value that businesses place on their ‘A’ boards, although this is doubtful. It could be seen as unnecessarily punitive on small businesses but on the flip side might enable the Council to recoup the costs of the policy and would prevent the accusation that businesses are getting to use public land (the highways) for free.

There is also the fact that licensing has been tried by several other councils with, at best, limited success.

Appendix B – Proposed ‘A’ board policy

Policy Option 5: A street-by-street assessment (similar to Nottingham’s policy)

At first glance could be difficult to implement. However, Nottingham appears to have done it relatively successfully. An advantage of this is that it recognises and factors in the fact that streets in Norwich are extremely varied and that what is most applicable in a medieval street is not necessarily appropriate for a modern shopping centre. An example of this system is shown below (a map from Nottingham’s policy).

However, this policy risks leaving the Council open to allegations of unfairness, would be difficult to enforce and could end up disproportionately impacting upon small businesses in some of the city centre (especially the Lanes). A better system may be to trial the policy in an area – probably the city centre (rather than a street by street basis).

Scale:
 0 10 20 metres
 Walking distance:
 It will take approximately 4 minutes to walk this far

KEY

- City Centre Boundary
- A Boards not automatically permitted.
- No A Boards permitted.

The map shows the City Centre Boundary as a grey outline. A-boards are not automatically permitted in the central area (blue lines) and are not permitted in the surrounding areas (red lines). The map includes various streets, landmarks, and a north arrow.

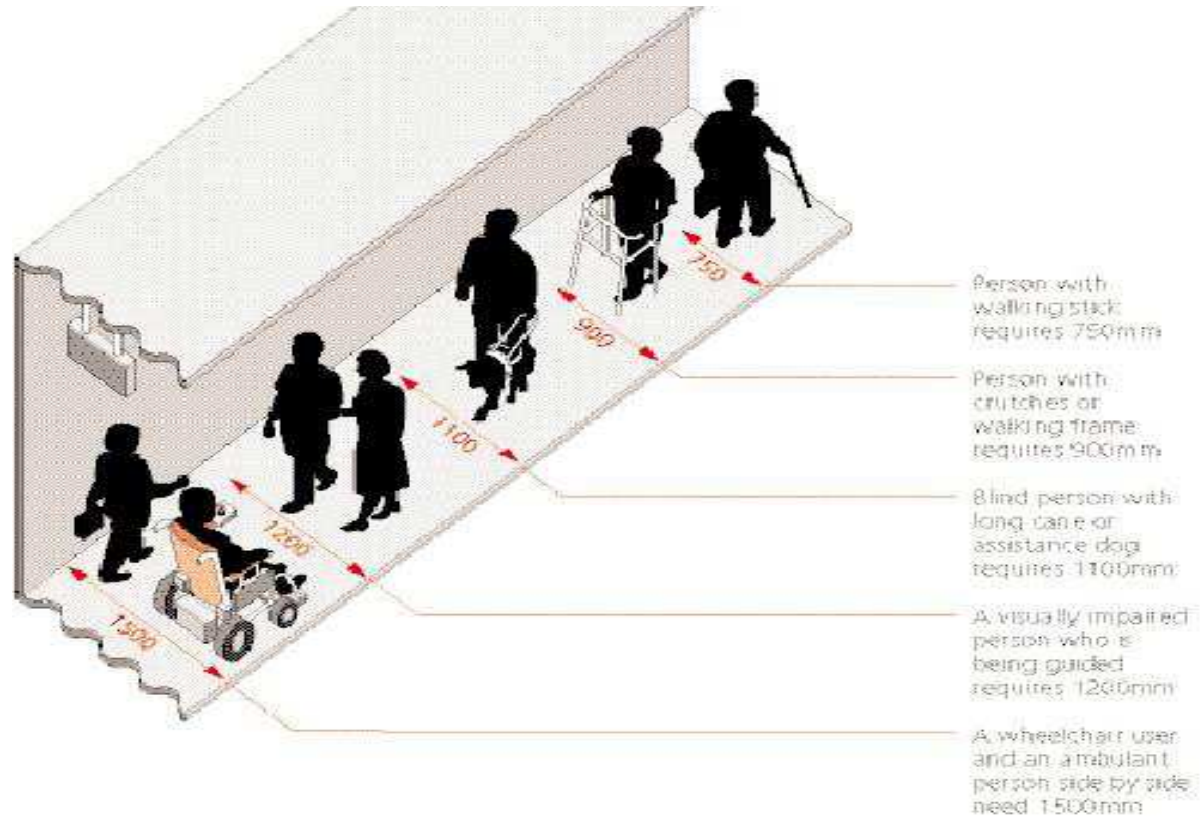
Similar to the idea of having different rules for different areas this idea would take the approach of implementing a particular citywide policy (for example a ban) and then exempting certain designated areas (e.g. The Lanes, the Market) where 'A' boards were considered by the Council to be beneficial.

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Appendix B – Proposed ‘A’ board policy

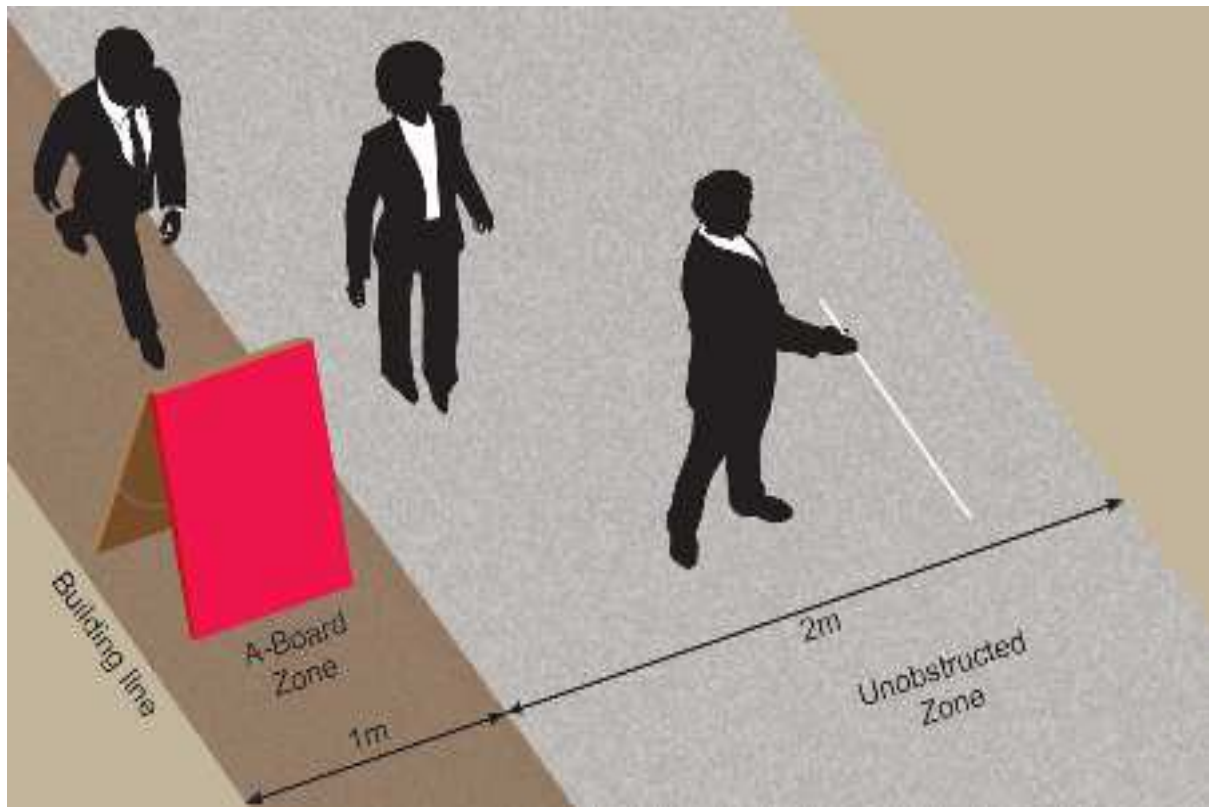
Policy option 7: Minimum highway width

The Department for Transport document ‘Inclusive mobility – a guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure’ gives best practice guidelines for the minimum footway width required by people with mobility difficulties (see below).



Several local authorities have integrated this recommendation into the ‘A’ board policy by making it a requirement that and ‘A’ boards a business has leave a minimum specified unobstructed zone. For example, Essex County Council requires that a 2m wide unobstructed zone is left free when ‘A’ boards are positioned (although they do include exemptions where this can be decreased to 1.8m).

Appendix B – Proposed ‘A’ board policy



There is a risk of adopting minimum standards to minimise the impact of obstruction e.g. stating that footways must be unobstructed by X metres or that junctions must be kept clear by Y metres due to wide differences in street geometry, capacity and traffic volumes and the characteristics of the object e.g. height or width. For example a single 'A' board on a wide pedestrianised street such as Gentleman's Walk may be considered de minimis but the same 'A' board on a narrow alleyway such as Back of the Inns may be considered to cause nuisance.

Recommendations

The policy recommendations are based on what is achievable, enforceable and acceptable to all groups. This section will also play out how the policy will be enforced and how the costs will be met.

1. The Council may require the immediate removal of any sign, board, display etc. if required by a Police Officer/ Police Community Support Officer or with other reasonable cause including the need for access to maintain the highway or if it is deemed an obstruction.
2. Each business will only be permitted one 'A' board in order to minimise the obstruction to pedestrians and other highway users.
3. All 'A' boards must adjoin directly to the premises.
4. 'A' boards must not exceed a specified size

Appendix B – Proposed ‘A’ board policy

5. Businesses that put out ‘A’ boards must have public liability insurance of a minimum of £5 million.
6. The ‘A’ board must be removed when the business is closed.
7. The signs or displays must be robust and self-weighted. The use of sand bags to stabilise signs will not be permitted.
8. ‘A’ boards will not be permitted to be tied/ chained or any anyway attached to other street furniture (lamp posts, trees etc.).
9. The ‘A’ board must be removed when the property is closed or when street cleansing/ street works are being carried out.
10. All ‘A’ boards must be temporary in nature and cannot be fixed into or on the highway and no excavation will be permitted to install or remove the item.
11. ‘A’ boards must not obstruct the sight lines of vehicle drivers.

Enforcement

Enforcement of the new rules on ‘A’ boards will be a dual enforcement mechanism;

1. Highways officers will monitor ‘A’ boards as part of their current duties monitoring the highway.
2. Reactive – we will respond to complaints about ‘A’ boards breaching the new regulations.

Shops that break the new policy will receive a written warning that their ‘A’ boards are in breach of the regulations and on a second occasion the sign will be taken away and the business will be charged– if the business does not want the sign back we will dispose of it.

Costs

The administrative costs of the new policy will be absorbed into streetworks. The total cost for the removal, storage and disposal of an ‘A’ board is £50 and businesses would be required to pay this if their ‘A’ board was removed.