



**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**16:30 to 18:50**

**26 January 2017**

Present: Councillors Wright (chair), Maguire (vice chair) Bogelein, Bradford, Coleshill, Fullman, Grahame, Haynes, Malik, Packer and Peek

Also present: Councillors Gail Harris (deputy leader and cabinet member for council housing) and Mike Stonard (cabinet member for resources and business liaison)

Apologies: Councillors Davis and Manning

**1. Public questions / petitions**

No public questions or petitions were received.

**2. Declarations of interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

**3. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2016

**4. Scrutiny committee work programme 2015 -2016**

The chair reminded members that an additional meeting of the scrutiny committee had been agreed for Thursday 6 April to look at the city accessibility item. He said that this meeting would also be the most appropriate to take the scrutiny annual review item to.

In response to a member's question, the vice chair said that he had compiled a list of speakers for the two meetings covering the topic of food poverty and these would be circulated to scrutiny committee members.

**RESOLVED** to:

- 1) agree to move the annual review item to the 6 April 2017 meeting; and
- 2) ask Councillor Kevin Maguire to circulate a list of speakers on the food poverty item to all members of the scrutiny committee

## **5. Environmental Strategy 2015 – 18 – progress update**

The director of regeneration and development presented the report. He said that a progress reporting piece of work was published on a bi-annual basis which was taken to the sustainable development panel. This was the members opportunity to look at progress against the Environmental Strategy throughout the year.

He reminded members of the funding cuts the council was being faced with and said that this may impact investment in low carbon initiatives going forward. Within this landscape however, Norwich City Council was meeting the targets set out in the strategy.

The environmental strategy manager said that the Environmental Strategy was a reflection of other strategic policies and was monitored bi-annually through the Environmental Statement which would next be produced in September 2017. In response to a member's question, he explained that the Environmental Strategy set out the long term vision and the Environmental Statement reviewed the ongoing work and progress against the strategy. A member commented that it would be helpful to link the priorities between the Environmental Strategy and the Environmental Statement to allow easy cross-referencing.

Members discussed priority 1 – To reduce the city's CO2 emissions. The strategy manager said that the performance management system used to produce the graphs only included the most recent data and not historical data. The environmental strategy manager said that a national dataset was used to create this graph and he would send a link to members to this dataset.

(Councillor Fullman arrived at this point.)

In response to a member's question, the strategy manager said that overlaying NHS England data with data in the Environmental Strategy to identify correlations between respiratory problems and weather conditions would need to be a piece of collaborative work with Norfolk County Council and NHS colleagues to identify health needs in the city. The chair suggested that this could be looked at for next year's scrutiny work programme.

Members discussed the point that the air quality across the area had remained broadly unchanged and how this could be improved. The director of regeneration and development said that the work within the local plan needed to be reviewed and that strong representations had been made to partners to prioritise climate change. A review of the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (now known as Transport for Norwich) would also look at reducing emissions.

In response to a member's question, the environmental strategy manager said that a target for priority seven – to support a low carbon economy in Norwich – was in development using a national dataset and this would shortly be added to the Environmental Strategy.

The environmental strategy manager explained the process for consultation on the draft Environmental Strategy which had included member workshops with an expert panel and a public consultation. A member suggested that this could be a topic for an all member workshop. The director of regeneration and

development agreed that it was appropriate for the draft strategy to come to the scrutiny committee for comment before going to cabinet.

**RESOLVED to:**

- 1) note the Environmental Strategy 2015 – 2018 progress update,
- 2) ask the environmental strategy manager to:
  - a) consider linking the priorities in the Environmental Strategy and the Environmental Statement to allow for easy cross referencing of the documents; and
  - b) send a link to scrutiny committee members to the national dataset for carbon emissions
- 3) ask the director of regeneration and development to bring the draft environmental strategy 2018 – 2021 to the scrutiny committee at an appropriate time; and
- 4) to consider using a member briefing session for a workshop on the draft environmental strategy 2018 – 2021 to allow all councillor input.

## **6. Pre-scrutiny of the proposed budget for 2017 - 18**

The chief finance officer presented the report appendix 7a on the general fund. She highlighted information in the report on the New Homes Bonus and the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The cabinet member for resources and business liaison said that the smoothing of savings over several years allowed consistent levels of service. Frontline services as well as the ability to provide services to those most in need had been protected wherever possible.

Members discussed the complexity of the budget papers and the need for a process that was accessible by the public. The cabinet member for resources and development reminded members that the budget papers were a technical working document and were produced with high level information. The chief finance officer said that as a two year strategy had been developed, there would be more opportunities to look at next year's public consultation before it went live.

In response to a member's question, the chief finance officer said that expert advice was being sought on acquiring new assets to generate income. The aim would be to hold a self-maintaining property portfolio.

Discussion ensued on the integrated impact assessment on the papers, particularly on the 'advancing equality of opportunity' section. Members were reminded that the section in question related to equality of opportunity around the nine protected characteristics as set out in the Equalities Act 2010. The strategy manager agreed to review the integrated impact assessment for the budget papers in consultation with the chief finance officer, prior to the report being taken to cabinet.

The chief finance officer presented report 7b on the Housing Revenue Account.

In response to a member's question, she said that she would need to gather more information on exactly what the decrease in community safety and environment was and circulate this information to members.

**RESOLVED** to:

- 1) ask the strategy manager to:
  - a) to review the integrated impact assessments for the budget papers prior to the report being taken to cabinet, in consultation with the chief finance officer,
  - b) circulate to all members, information on the purpose of impact assessment for committee reports
- 2) ask the chief finance officer to:
  - a) circulate information to scrutiny committee members on the decrease in community safety and environment
  - b) review the communication strategy and consultation timing around the budget papers to council to ensure the citizens of Norwich can engage effectively in the process
  - c) consider using the summer edition of Citizen magazine to publish an accessible summary of the 2017 – 18 budget
- 3) note the importance of parks and facilities in Norwich

**7. Exclusion of the public**

**RESOLVED** to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of item \*8 below on the grounds contained in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

**\*8. Pre-scrutiny of the proposed budget for 2017 – 18 – exempt appendices (paragraph 3)**

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

**RESOLVED** to note the pre-scrutiny of the proposed budget for 2017 – 18 – exempt appendices.