

Norwich City Council
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Item 9

REPORT for meeting to be held on 6 June 2013
Setting the scrutiny committee work programme

- Summary:** The topics listed in the report have been raised as possible scrutiny topics by the scrutiny committee members in their meetings over the past year.
- The scrutiny committee sits once a month and it is advised that most effective scrutiny takes place when the agenda is not overloaded, as this allows a much more effective scrutiny towards achieving recommendations that are specific measurable achievable relevant and timed.
- Conclusions:** By considering this report, the committee will be able to select future topics that impact on the delivery of the corporate plan and council priorities for future scrutiny that are relevant and achievable.
- Recommendation:** To consider the options identified and agree;
- a)** A scrutiny committee work programme for 2013 to 2014
 - b)** One substantive item per scrutiny meeting with the exception being to add an item to those meetings scheduled for performance monitoring reports
 - c)** The principle of achieving Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant and Timed recommendations
 - d)** The frequency of scrutiny consideration of performance monitoring reports
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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 corporate plan.
- 1.2 This means that the scrutiny committee will be able to consider where and how it can add value to the cabinet's forward agenda, and that the council's resources are being focussed on priority issues.
- 1.3 It is also important to scan for any likely developments coming the way of local government. The idea behind this is to assist in planning ahead in order to help the council adapt accordingly.

2. One substantive item per meeting

- 2.1 Scrutiny topics such as quarterly performance monitoring and annually the review of the council's budget, and community right to challenge are automatically scheduled in as soon as dates are agreed. This year it is proposed that the committee should agree "just one substantive topic per meeting" with the only exception to the rule being those meetings that already have one of the cyclical reports. The main reason for one major topic a meeting is to more easily achieve outcomes that are specific measurable achievable relevant & timed - **SMART**.
- 2.2 Other topics may be more suited to being task & finish groups and for achievability, one task & finish group running at any given time is preferable.
- 2.3 Although setting the future work of the committee for the next 12 month period, members will have the opportunity on a monthly basis to revise the programme as and when events dictate. This is done via the work programme standing item on the scrutiny committee agendas.

3. The topics suggested by members of the scrutiny committee

- 3.1 Throughout the year, members have made suggestions for the areas of work that they may wish to look at and these are listed below.

- 3.2 The list of potential topics includes some areas of work that deal with a number of the major issues that will have biggest impact on the city, its residents and the way in which the council continues to shape itself in the mid to long term.

- **Welfare reform**
- **City deal**
- **Scrutiny of the healthy city programme**
- **Council tax reduction scheme**
- **Benefits improvement plan and performance**
- **Switch and save**
- **The social barometer**
- **Role of the ward councillor**
- **Normandie tower lifts**
- **Annual housing report and housing review**

- 3.3 A meeting of those members wishing to look at the possible welfare reform work that the scrutiny committee might wish to focus on will be held in advance of this committee meeting. Those members attending may wish to advise and make suggestions to the committee as a whole towards which specific areas of work on welfare reforms that the scrutiny committee might best be able to comment and advise the council on.

4. Cyclical items

- 4.1 Also there are certain areas of work identified by the scrutiny committee that are of a cyclical nature and there will be a need to program them at the appropriate stage. These are items such as; budget and performance monitoring, community right to challenge and assets of community value.
- 4.2 The scrutiny committee may identify topics for prioritisation through considering the performance monitoring reports for the council as the year progresses.
- 4.3 Pre scrutiny of the budget and corporate plan will as per this year need to be programmed so that overview and comments relating to the corporate plan can take place prior to pre budget scrutiny. This will assist the committee in assessing the ability of the proposed budget to deliver the aims as set out in the corporate plan. It is therefore suggested that the

committee meets to consider the corporate plan near the end of the calendar year and then set aside one of the scheduled meetings early in the New Year for pre scrutiny of the budget.

5. Draft work programme

- 5.1 A basic draft of the scrutiny committee work programme is attached to this report. This takes account of the cyclical topics that the committee will be dealing with, but all dates are provisional at this stage. However this will help illustrate the remaining scope for accommodating topics selected as a result of member consideration of this report.
- 5.2 Members may wish to revisit some topic areas through the year, but this would impact upon the number of topics that member and officer resource may be able to adequately cope with. In many ways this is no bad thing as quite often, 'less can mean more' in terms of reaching SMART outcomes.
- 5.3 The scrutiny officer will liaise with the cabinet and officers to schedule the topics selected by the scrutiny committee and produce a work programme for the period 2013 to 2014.
- 5.4 The next meeting of the scrutiny committee is on June 20th. As this is just two weeks after agreement will have been reached for topics there will not be enough time for officers and cabinet members to prepare for that meeting. However, the quarter 4 performance monitoring report will be available for a post cabinet scrutiny. Also, with the meeting of the Norfolk property services liaison group taking place before June, it would be possible for a report to be taken to the June 20th meeting of the scrutiny committee on the Normandie tower lifts issue.

6. Performance monitoring report - frequency

- 6.1 With the cyclical reports already on the work programme, this year's topic selection will need to make use of the remaining committee time available. Towards freeing up more committee time, members are asked if they might wish to consider making a change to the way in which the committee considers the (quarterly) performance monitoring reports. This could free up a little more committee space for dealing with scrutiny topics identified by members.
- 6.2 Currently members receive overview of the performance report in advance of the relevant meeting on a quarterly basis tying in with the reporting to cabinet. It is suggested that as all scrutiny members have access to the

monitoring reports quarterly via the cabinet papers and e-councillor that there is some scope for reducing the number of times a year this data is directly reported to scrutiny in order to ensure that performance monitoring work is not taking up too much of the work programme.

6.3 Options:

- Keep the current quarterly arrangement for scrutiny
 - Revise the current arrangements to six monthly
- Or
- An annual overview to inform on performance and direction of travel which could inform the formation of work programme topics

6.4 The undertaking of planned performance monitoring by the scrutiny committee is a valued and key part of the critical friend role and helps in the achievement of the council's aims and objectives by ensuring decision makers are held to account for the efficient delivery of services.

6.5 How ever the committee decides to proceed, the fundamentals of good scrutiny practice would not be compromised. It is recognised that performance monitoring, is a keystone to ensuring that the scrutiny committee has an overview of the council's performance/activity. Any chosen approach or revised arrangement will continue in helping to ensure that the work of the scrutiny committee is relevant to the work of the council and addresses the issues that affect the residents of Norwich.

6.6 Scrutiny Members will still be enabled to consider how performance monitoring links into the whole of the policy improvement and management system (not just scrutiny), link performance monitoring to scrutiny by focusing on strategic priorities for the council. Scrutiny committee involvement should continue to be targeted on any arising failing or poor performing services via the performance monitoring role along with key issues highlighted in the corporate plan.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2013/2014 – NORWICH CITY COUNCIL

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The work programme for the scrutiny committee is informed by a combination of what councillors' feel are important topics, gathered from their ward work and their activities across the whole council or members of the public highlighting issues for debate. Also requests by cabinet for scrutiny to undertake 'pre-scrutiny' before policies are taken to cabinet. Council officers can also request that scrutiny investigate and consider certain issues on their behalf. When raising a possible topic for the work programme it is advisable to make a formal request by using the **Request form to raise an item for Scrutiny Review** which can be obtained from the scrutiny officer or via e-councillor. Once a topic request for scrutiny has been received the topic will usually be required to be put through the following by the committee:

Picc Analysis for Prioritising Topics – YOU ARE ASKED TO USE THE PICC ANALYSIS AS A FILTER TO ASSESS THE APPROPRIATENESS FOR SCRUTINY OF TOPICS BEFORE INCLUDING THEM ON THE WORK PROGRAMME

TOPIC TITLE:

REASON FOR TOPIC REQUEST AND OUTCOME SOUGHT:

WHO/WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATION?

WHO ARE THE RESPONSIBLE CABINET PORTFOLIO COUNCILLOR(S) AND OFFICER(S)?

The council's FIVE main priorities are provided to assist members and can be used as a guide and reminder to draw links between the work of the scrutiny committee and the corporate plan:

- TO MAKE NORWICH A CITY OF CHARACTER AND CULTURE
- TO MAKE NORWICH A SAFE CLEAN CITY
- TO MAKE NORWICH A PROSPEROUS CITY
- TO PROVIDE VALUE FOR MONEY SERVICES
- TO MAKE NORWICH A CITY WITH DECENT HOUSING FOR ALL

P Public interest	
Is there sufficient public interest in the topic?	
Where is the evidence to support this?	
Is interest confined to the city or of broader interest?	
How would it be in the public interest to look at this topic?	

I Impact	
Will the topic impact community well-being?	
To what extent will the topic impact on the community?	
How will the review bring value to community well-being?	

C Council & performance	
How is the council/organisation performing in this area?	
What is the performance data showing? (direction of travel?)	
Are there other performance comparisons or bench marks?	
Is there adequate performance measurement?	

C Keeping in context	
What else is happening in this area such as recent reviews or inspections?	
How does this rank within the context of other work or priorities?	

WHEN WOULD BE THE BEST TIME TO CARRY OUT SCRUTINY OF THIS TOPIC?

WHAT METHOD(S) SHOULD BE USED TO CARRY OUT THIS SCRUTINY? (task & finish group, topic on agenda at main meeting, themed meeting, consultation etc.)

WHO ELSE SHOULD BE INVOLVED/INVITED?

VENUE? (city hall, other venue, site visit etc)

DATE OF MEETING	TOPIC FOR SCRUTINY	RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATION OFFICER CABINET PORTFOLIO COUNCILLOR	REASON FOR TOPIC REQUEST AND OUTCOME SOUGHT	METHODS AND VENUE
6 June 2013	Annual scrutiny review	Councillor Claire Stephenson	To agree the annual review of the scrutiny committee's work 2012 to 2013 and recommend it for adoption of the council	Annual at committee
6 June 2013	Review of the work programme	Scrutiny committee, corporate leadership team, cabinet and the scrutiny officer	To identify the issues facing the work of the council for the civic year and agree the scrutiny committee work programme up to April 2014	Annual at committee
20 June 2013	Q4 performance and budget monitoring	Councillor Brenda Arthur, Councillor Alan Waters, Russell O'Keefe, Mark Smith and Phil Shreeve	Identification of any causes for concern and note successes	Quarterly at committee
20 June 2013	Normandie tower lifts	Councillor Alan Waters, Councillor Bert Bremner, Jerry Massey and Chris Rayner (NPS)	Follow up to a member request for scrutiny of the process and the contract for the installation and ongoing maintenance of the lifts and the outcome of consideration of the issue at the Norfolk property service liaison group	At committee
18 July 2013	Community right to bid	Councillor Alan Waters, Anton Bull and Robin Hare	Assessment of any bids	Annual at committee; none received this year so this will not be necessary.
26 Sept 2013	Q1 performance and budget monitoring	Councillor Brenda Arthur, Councillor Alan Waters, Russell O'Keefe, Mark Smith and Phil Shreeve	Identification of any causes for concern and note successes	Quarterly at committee
26 Sept 2013	Assets of community value	Councillor Alan Waters, Mike Stonard, Graham Nelson and Jerry Massey	Expressions of interest scrutiny (post contracts working party/pre cabinet)	Annual at Committee; none received this year so this will not be necessary

DATE OF MEETING	TOPIC FOR SCRUTINY	RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATION OFFICER CABINET PORTFOLIO COUNCILLOR	REASON FOR TOPIC REQUEST AND OUTCOME SOUGHT	METHODS AND VENUE
24 Oct 2013				
28 Nov 2013	Q2 performance and budget monitoring	Councillor Brenda Arthur, Councillor Alan Waters, Russell O'Keefe, Mark Smith and Phil Shreeve	Identification of any causes for concern and note successes	Quarterly at committee
19 Dec 2014	Overview of the corporate plan	Councillor Brenda Arthur and Russell O'Keefe	For the scrutiny committee to gain an overview and refresh their knowledge of the corporate plan prior to pre scrutiny of the proposed budget and policy framework in February	Annual at committee
30 Jan 2014	Pre scrutiny of the proposed budget and policy framework	Councillor Brenda Arthur, Councillor Alan Waters, Russell O'Keefe and Caroline Ryba	To comment on the proposed budget and make suggestions to cabinet regarding the proposed budget's ability to deliver the priorities of the council	Annual at committee
27 Feb 2014	Q3 performance and budget monitoring	Councillor Brenda Arthur, Councillor Alan Waters, Russell O'Keefe, Mark Smith and Phil Shreeve	Identification of any causes for concern and note successes	Quarterly at committee
20 March 2014				