

Scrutiny committee

Date: Thursday, 06 April 2017

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 Mancroft room before 16:30.

Committee members:

Councillors:

Wright (chair)
Maguire (vice chair)
Bogelein
Bradford
Coleshill
Davis
Fullman
Grahame
Haynes
Malik
Manning
Packer
Peek

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

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- | | | |
|-----------|--|----------------|
| 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 23 March 2017 | 7 - 14 |
| 5 | Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny update (to follow)
Purpose - To update members on the January and February meetings of the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee | |
| 6 | Food poverty in Norwich
Purpose - To consider the evidence provided at both the February and March meetings, to identify possible solutions and to consider any recommendations the committee may wish to make. | 15 - 16 |
| 7 | Annual review of the scrutiny committee 2016 - 17
Purpose - To recommend the annual scrutiny review for approval at the next available meeting of full council. | 17 - 42 |
| 8 | Exclusion of the public
Purpose - Consideration of exclusion of the public. | |
| *9 | Asset and investment strategy (paragraph 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This report is not for publication because it would disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as in para 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. | |

Date of publication: **Wednesday, 29 March 2017**

- 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

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

16:35 to 19:00

23 March 2017

Present: Councillors Wright (chair), Maguire (vice chair), Bogelein, Coleshill, Davis, Fullman, Grahame, Herries (substitute for Packer) Malik and Peek

Apologies: Councillors Bradford, Haynes, Manning and Packer

Also present: Rosie Ogleby, Feeding Britain and Caroline Seaman, food literacy practitioner

1. One minute silence

As a mark of respect for those killed and injured in the attack in London on 22 March 2017, the committee held a one minute silence.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Public questions/petitions

The chair reported that two questions had been received from members of the public and that the issues that they had raised would be addressed under item 6 (below), an investigation into food poverty

4. Minutes

Subject to noting that at page 8 of the agenda:

paragraph 4, should read:

‘Hannah Worsley explained that emergency boxes were provided to families and individuals for 72 hours before social services and other support is made available’.

At paragraph 5, replace ‘...and a meal at schools...’ with ‘...and a meal at different venues around Norwich...’

that the reference in paragraph 5 to 'ten centres' should reference 'ten clubs'; and

at paragraph 8, the sentence ending...food poisoning concerns were not considered' should read ...food poisoning concerns were less important'

It was:-

RESOLVED to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2017.

5. Scrutiny committee work programme 2016-17

Members gave suggestions for groups to be invited to take part in the scrutiny committee meeting on 22 June regarding city accessibility including:

- University of East Anglia accessibility taskforce
- Royal National Institute of Blind People
- Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind
- Age UK
- MIND and Mencap
- The Hamlet Centre

RESOLVED to ask the strategy manager to review the suggested groups and report back to the committee at its meeting on 6 April 2017

(Councillor Bogelein left the meeting at this point)

6. An investigation into food poverty

The vice chair presented the item and reminded members that they would be looking towards suggestions for solutions to the problem of food poverty in Norwich.

The first public question was received from Clive Lewis MP:

"I am pleased to note Norwich City Council is making an in-depth inquiry into food poverty among its citizens.

Andrew Forsey (senior parliamentary researcher) tells us, in his report to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Hunger,

"The key underlying causes of hunger and food poverty in this country are to be found in the long-term erosion of poorer households' financial buffer, coupled for some, with a diminished ability to cope on a low income." (Forsey sa:50)

Norwich City Council's inquiry has therefore been correct to look at the underlying structural causes of this disturbing increase in food poverty. I'm aware this has involved assessing the current government's continued economic approach, one which has growing wealth and income inequality built into its core ideological underpinning.

It is striking that the witness from your Scrutiny Committee meeting last month (Joanna Mack of the Open University) told you that, "Most people in poverty are in work".

The government's own data tells us that in Norwich South 16% of men and women are in receipt of some sort of Universal Credit (in Norwich North this is 15%) compared to 13% for the Eastern Region of the UK (Source: ONS, 2017).

I've been informed your own Cabinet Member for Equality and Fairness, Vaughan Thomas, spoke eloquently of the problems claimants regularly face. In particular, the seeming ease (and resulting hardship) with which claimants are sanctioned by the government appointed oversight agency.

Most disturbing of all has been the testimony you have heard from some of those in Norwich who find themselves reliant on food banks in order to feed themselves and their children.

Clearly, it is both factually wrong and futile to blame those in food poverty; such blame does little to solve the plight of them and their children. What is needed is a much broader effort to rewrite the narrative of food poverty and lay the blame at the feet of the real culprits - those who designed and implemented a failing economic system in combination with an increasingly punitive social security safety-net.

Can I therefore ask Norwich City Council's Scrutiny Committee, "What does Norwich City Council currently do to help its citizens in food poverty? And what can the City Council do in a sustainable manner to begin to turn the tide of food poverty in our city?"

Councillor James Wright, chair of the scrutiny committee replied:

"Thank you for your questions Clive, and for the interest that you have taken in the work of our committee.

Like you, I found the testimony of some of those reliant on foodbanks particularly powerful. The committee was able to hear the audio supplied by Norwich Foodbank which gave an especially human dimension to the situation they face. These fellow citizens went from being nameless case studies on paper to real people that the committee could empathise with.

Dealing with your questions in turn, at present Norwich City Council has no specific strategy to help its citizens in food poverty. Work carried out around financial inclusion and the provision of allotments are, for example, two areas that can go some way to assist those experiencing food poverty but we recognise that more could and should be done.

In many respects, that fact that we are spending two meetings looking and the causes of, and potential solutions to, food poverty shows how important all members of the committee see this issue.

Turning to your second question, I hope that an outcome of this scrutiny work will be that the City Council has a sustainable strategy moving forward for how it can help reduce food poverty.

Whilst the committee is yet to suggest any recommendations, I hope that one may be that the council looks at creating a formal Food Poverty Strategy to act as an umbrella for existing services and partner relationships.”

Clive Lewis asked the following supplementary question:

“How capable is Norwich City Council of implementing a food poverty strategy, bearing in mind current resources and the potential resources available through the changes to the business rates systems?”

Councillor James Wright, chair of the scrutiny committee replied:

“With the current state of local government finances the council would not be able to do this alone and would rely on organisations being willing to work with us on such a strategy. We would need to work collaboratively with the third sector to provide such provisions.”

The second public question was from Emma Stopford of FarmShare:

“Norwich FarmShare is an eco-award winning Community Supported Agriculture project based in Norwich. Our members pay a monthly subscription in order to receive a weekly share of seasonal, locally and ecologically grown produce and we also provide educational visits for youth groups and school children, volunteering opportunities and social events which are open to all.

We would like to develop the ways in which we can make this produce available to people on lower incomes/suffering from food poverty. We would like help to be able to accept Healthy Start Vouchers and to look into how we can offer vegetables at a reduced rate if people are able to help us through volunteering roles like other similar Community Supported Agriculture schemes across the country. We would also like to make sure that healthy, local, ecologically grown produce is celebrated in Norwich and that people know where they can access it.

We are in the final negotiations with Matt Hewes at the Council about moving onto an underused allotment site on Valpy Avenue and so would be well placed to provide these kinds of opportunities. We would like to do a lot of awareness raising around us moving onto this new site and engagement sessions with the local community.

One of the main methods of support which would help us to proceed with these strategies would be to secure funding for a Volunteer Co-ordinator, perhaps initially for one year. This person could further develop the volunteering opportunities we offer and manage volunteer learning on site as well as running healthy and seasonal cooking and eating sessions to raise awareness about the importance of healthy, local produce.

Could the Committee give a view on how Norwich FarmShare can be best included in the Council’s strategy to end food poverty - including the suggestions above and

other ideas the Committee may have and could the Committee help ensure that Norwich FarmShare is to be formally included in this strategy?"

Councillor James Wright, chair of the scrutiny committee replied:

"Thank you for your question Emma, and for including some very helpful information in your question about the work that Norwich FarmShare does around ensuring that good quality seasonal food is available locally to your members.

As you will have heard in my previous answer, at present the council has no specific strategy to end food poverty but I hope that one outcome of this meeting is that we go some way into identifying a course of action that Cabinet could take in order to establish one.

Whilst I cannot guarantee anything ahead of our discussions, I am sure that members of the committee will look on the notion of a Community Supported Agriculture scheme in a positive light as one of the tools available to the council to help potentially reduce food poverty."

Emma Stopford asked the following supplementary question:

"One reason for Farmshare moving to the allotment site on Valpy Avenue is that it is currently underused and people living in the area could utilise this resource. How could sessions be run in this area without spending a lot of money?"

The strategy manager replied;

"This will be one of the challenges the council faces as we develop a community enabling approach which will look to residents to help with such activities. Savings from other services could then be channelled into setting up community led projects."

Rosie Ogelby from Feeding Britain gave a presentation to the committee (available on the council's website) and explained the work of Feeding Britain. She said that Feeding Britain was an independent charity set up by members of an All Party Parliamentary Group on Hunger. The aim of the group was to consider why a country such as the UK was reliant on the work of foodbanks. The current work of Feeding Britain included twelve local pilots being run around the country which brought together a range of local groups already working on food poverty. These twelve pilots would be drawn together into a national framework which would share evidence to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Hunger. She added that Feeding Britain would be very happy to have a pilot group in Norwich.

The pilots were not just about food, they looked to address the issue of poverty as a whole. Debt advice was being offered at food bank sites as well as credit vouchers for a two week top up for a prepaid electricity meter being included in food parcels.

She said that the key message was the importance of collaboration between government, businesses and the third sector.

Caroline Seaman gave a presentation to the committee (available on the council's website) and explained her work around food literacy. She said that the rise in foodbank use meant that foodbanks had become more visible to the public.

She said that food literacy levels were low in Norfolk, partly due to the loss of skills from one generation to the next. Those having families at a young age had increased the speed of this loss between generations.

She said that there were accessibility problems with people eating five portions of fruit and vegetables each day. Often, the fruit and vegetables in convenience stores were of a low grade and farm shops were not as accessible to those without a car. People needed skills to be able to take advantage of the range of produce available in supermarkets and often needed their own transport to carry food home.

She explained the Healthy Start voucher system and said that recipients need support to make the best use of their vouchers. Healthy eating needed to start as early as possible so that children could gain the knowledge and skills to continue this way of eating and for parents to raise healthy children.

Until issues were addressed around food literacy, those in food poverty would not have the ability to make use of the food available to them and this would need to start within communities.

Discussion ensued in which Rosie Ogleby, Caroline Seaman and the strategy manager answered member's questions.

In response to member's questions, Caroline Seaman said that there were some issues in Norfolk about where Healthy Start vouchers could be redeemed. She said that a minimum spend for online shopping could be a barrier for people but she said that there was evidence of communities building resilience by putting together a Healthy Start club and shopping online as a group. Market traders were keen to accept the Healthy Start vouchers but there was some difficulty around the redemption of the vouchers. Rosie Ogleby said that market traders could think about collecting the vouchers together to reduce the bureaucracy around the redemption of them.

Members sought more information on Feeding Britain. Rosie Ogleby said that Feeding Britain was not looking to set up a national infrastructure but instead was focused on coalitions of local groups. These groups were housed in different ways across the country including in local government and MP's offices. She said that it was about finding local projects that add value to each other.

The strategy officer gave members some information on the projects that the council already undertook which help tackle the causes of food poverty. He said that although free school meals were under the remit of Norfolk County Council, Norwich City Council had written to families in receipt of housing benefit and the take up of these meals had increased in specific schools. The council maintained a council tax reduction scheme that ensured that the most vulnerable households pay no council tax. Advice hubs were being piloted in communities, such as at the holiday hunger events. Although there was no formal food poverty strategy, support was already in place for many people.

Members discussed community supermarkets and the viability of setting these up. Rosie Ogleby said that there were many models for this type of project. The most

well-known was the community shop which cost around £250,000 for the initial infrastructure or mobile food vans could cost around £60,000 to £80,000. Once the initial outlay had been sourced, the projects should sustain themselves through profits. She said that some councils had provided premises for free or for a peppercorn rent for community supermarkets.

In response to a member's question, Rosie Ogleby said that there was a very new social enterprise in Liverpool which bought surplus food and trained people to produce healthy ready meals for schools and meals on wheels schemes to use. Profits from these meals were then reinvested into food poverty groups.

(Councillor Peek left the meeting at this point)

Members broke into small groups to review the evidence they had heard and to discuss suggested solutions to food poverty. They presented their main points which included:

- Using charitable trust funding to resource projects such as social supermarkets
- Developing a food poverty strategy to act as an umbrella document for existing actions
- Increasing awareness of Discretionary Housing Payments
- Developing community led food literacy projects
- Increasing awareness of the Go4less cards which entitled residents to reduced allotment fees
- Linking older and socially isolated people with good food literacy skills with younger generations in need of such skills

These would be considered at the meeting of the scrutiny committee on 6 April 2017.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) thank Rosie Ogleby and Caroline Seaman for their presentations;
- (2) ask the scrutiny liaison officer to add an item to the work programme for the meeting of the scrutiny committee on 6 April 2017 to discuss solutions to food poverty; and
- (3) ask members to bring suggested solutions to the issue of food poverty to the meeting on 6 April 2017.

CHAIR

Norwich City Council
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Item No 6

REPORT for meeting to be held on 6 April 2017

Food poverty in Norwich

Summary:

This meeting will pull together recommendations on food poverty based on the evidence the members have received at the February and March meetings.

Members will find attached the table from the 23 March meeting that details suggestions around solutions.

Conclusions:

This table provides members with suggestions on the main drivers of food poverty and sustainable responses to these as identified at the meeting on 23 March.

Recommendation:

That the scrutiny committee considers the evidence provided at both the February and March meetings, to identify possible solutions and to consider any recommendations the committee may wish to make.

Contact Officer:

Adam Clark
Strategy Manager
Phone: 01603 212273
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Lead Member:

Councillor Kevin Maguire
Email: k.maguire@cllr.norwich.gov.uk

	Understanding the Causes	Sustainable Response
Structural	<p>Insecure work</p> <p>Low wage</p> <p>Welfare system that does not always prevent crises</p> <p>Distribution/accessibility of nutritious food</p>	<p>Charitable trust funding e.g. social supermarkets/pop up shops</p> <p>Increasing roll out of discount supermarkets?</p> <p>Opportunities coming from Sustainability and Transformation Plans to engage GPs and hospitals</p> <p>Surplus food projects based around food preserving skills</p>
Organisational	<p>Benefit delays</p> <p>Benefit sanctions</p> <p>Universal credit</p> <p>Debt recovery by landlords and others</p> <p>6 week gap prior to UC claim</p>	<p>Food poverty strategy – umbrella document</p> <p>Use of vacant HRA shops for social/enterprise use</p> <p>Widening knowledge of Discretionary Housing Payments</p> <p>Widening availability of apprenticeships e.g. NPS</p> <p>Improving information on availability of advice – signposting</p> <p>Free school meals take up</p> <p>Go 4 less – encouraging take up</p> <p>Social value in procurement</p>
Individual	<p>Food literacy/skills</p> <p>Knowledge of navigating benefit system</p> <p>Low financial capability</p>	<p>Role of crowdfunding for surplus food enterprises</p> <p>Food literacy activity – cooking, shopping, community led</p> <p>After school food clubs</p> <p>Opportunity for sharing/trading surplus food on allotments – schemes in community centres</p> <p>Skills sharing between generations</p> <p>Healthy start vouchers accepted by independent retailers</p> <p>Promote access of affordable credit</p>

Norwich City Council
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Item No 7

REPORT for meeting to be held on 6 April 2017

Annual review of the scrutiny committee 2016 - 17

Summary: This annual review reports on the work and progress that has been made by the scrutiny committee for the period 2016–2017.

Article 6d of the council's constitution (overview and scrutiny committees) states that the scrutiny committee will report annually to the council on its workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.

Conclusions: This snapshot view of outcomes as a result of scrutiny activity helps to reinforce that successful scrutiny is collaboration between the scrutiny committee, the cabinet, residents, partners and the officers of the council.

Scrutiny not only produces outcomes in terms of feeding into the decisions that are made but it can also play a valuable role to inform and develop knowledge for members.

Recommendation: That the scrutiny committee recommends the annual scrutiny review for approval at the next available meeting of full council.

Contact Officer: Bethany Clark
Scrutiny liaison officer
bethanyclark@norwich.gov.uk
01603 212153

Annual review of the scrutiny committee 2016 - 2017

Introduction by **James Wright, the chair of the scrutiny committee**

This annual review of the scrutiny committee is aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the work done by the scrutiny committee at Norwich City Council for the civic year 2016– 2017.



NORWICH
City Council

I would like to begin by thanking all those who have been involved with the scrutiny process this year, particularly those people from groups who would otherwise not engage with the council and whose input has been invaluable in a number of areas of scrutiny.

Throughout the year, the committee has looked at various aspects of delivery of the Corporate Plan, including making regular comment on the quarterly performance reports and feeding into the transformation and budget setting process, with members making recommendations to cabinet that help shape and strengthen the work of the council.

Unfortunately, there have been a number of areas that members of the committee would like to have looked at, but due to pressures of time it has not been possible to address these. It is hoped to include these when the work programme for the next civic year is discussed.

At the September and October meetings, the committee had the opportunity to questions representatives from Norfolk County Council, the National Union of Teachers, and DNEAT as to how the current education system impacts on the outcomes of our young people in Norwich, both at school, but also the impact of education on social mobility.

The committee had recommendations around the additional interventions for vulnerable families who expressed disquiet around the lack of alternative provision in Norwich.

One of the concerns levelled at the Academies and Free Schools programme is the lack of link to local democratic institutions. It is therefore significant that one of the recommendations from this piece of scrutiny is that the City Council should seek to establish a cooperative academy chain.

Local government faces a generational change in what it can deliver, and the City Council is not immune from that change. The November meeting focused on the neighbourhood model and ward councillors, looking at how councillors can work as enablers in their community.

Following this meeting a highly successful workshop was held for all councillors, the outcomes of which have fed into further development of the neighbourhood model.

Perhaps the most significant piece of work has been to investigate the causes of food poverty in Norwich. The committee used the February and March meetings to take evidence from a range of experts, and following good coverage of the February meeting, a number of public questions were submitted.

At the time of writing this foreword, the committee has not met to produce formal recommendations, but these will be discussed at the meeting of April 6. However, areas that the City Council could have a positive influence would be around having an umbrella food poverty strategy – bringing together existing services, and consider the use of vacant council retail premises for social enterprise use.

We are also pleased to see that members of the public are engaging through the scrutiny process in the form of questions.

The committee has agreed a change to setting the work programme, with all members being asked to work up detailed items for scrutiny during April / May rather than using our first meeting for discussing ideas. It is hoped that this way we will be able to achieve more detailed scrutiny during the year.

I would like to continue to see the work programme for next year in part informed by public request, and to that end would encourage members of the public to contact me to suggest topics for scrutiny.

I commend this annual review and hope that members feel able to adopt it.

Councillor James Wright – Chair of the scrutiny committee

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

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The membership of the scrutiny committee 2016 – 2017

Councillors:

Wright (Chair)
Maguire (Vice-Chair)

Bogelein
Bradford
Coleshill
Davis
Fullman
Grahame
Haynes
Mailk
Manning
Packer
Peek

Other non-executive members also took part as substitute members as and when required

The scrutiny committee is politically balanced and is made up of councillors from the political parties of the council. Only non – cabinet members can be on the committee and this allows those councillors to have an active role in the council's decision making process.

What is scrutiny?

The Local Government Act 2000 introduced a structure within Local Government for decision-making and accountability and created a separation between the cabinet role and the non-executive member role.

Moving forward, subsequent acts of parliament have come in to extend the remit of scrutiny along with its statutory responsibilities. For example, local government scrutiny committees can now look at the work of partner organisations as well. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities to scrutinise other partners and agencies. This, along with other legislation relating to scrutiny powers has now been consolidated in the Localism Act 2011.

The cabinet proposes and implements policies and the non-executive members review policies and scrutinise decisions or pre scrutinise proposed decisions of the cabinet.

The Committee sets its own work programme via suggestions from councillors, the cabinet and council, or from other issues of public interest. Any scrutiny topic that is undertaken needs to add value, and in considering suggestions for scrutiny the committee will ascertain the reasons why the matter would benefit from scrutiny, and what outcomes might be generated from inclusion to the work programme or other scrutiny activity.

The scrutiny committee assists non-executive and cabinet members in accordance with the Act by:

- Acting as a critical friend by challenging performance and helping improve services
- Ensuring policies are working as intended and, where there are gaps help develop policy
- Bringing a wide perspective, from the city's residents and stakeholders and examining broader issues affecting local communities
- Acting as a consultative body

In carrying out its role, the scrutiny committee can request written information and ask questions of those who make decisions. The committee is also enabled to comment and make recommendations to decision makers. These decision makers include cabinet, partners and other statutory organisations. Successful scrutiny is collaboration between the scrutiny committee, the cabinet, residents, partners and the officers of the council.

4 Principles of Effective Scrutiny

The Centre for Public Scrutiny (www.cfps.org.uk) has produced a guide to effective public scrutiny, which provides 4 Principles of Effective Scrutiny:

Critical friendship to decision-makers

Engaging the public and enabling the voice of the public and communities to be heard in the process

Owning the process and work programme with non-cabinet members driving the scrutiny process

Making an impact through continuously looking for improvements in public service delivery

For this to happen the scrutiny committee and the processes that support it must be independent, robust and challenging. This is because scrutiny works best when it is part of a positive culture that supports and promotes the scrutiny process. The way in which the scrutiny process has the ability to engage with and involve the council's residents and service users can be a way to ensure that reviews take on the views of local communities.

The effectiveness of scrutiny is balanced on the need to ensure that any purpose and benefits it can provide are clearly understood. The following questions for reviewing the effectiveness of a scrutiny function could ask:

- Is it effectively holding decision-makers to account?
- Is it helping to improve services?
- Is it building links between the Council, its partners and the community?
- Is it helping to improve the quality of life for local people?
- Is it adding value?

In addition to the above questions; there should be a continued recognition from both officers and members of the value of effective challenge in helping towards continuous improvement. As Norwich city council has continuously strived to achieve, the friendly challenge of the scrutiny committee to decision makers needs to not only be informed by ward members but also evidenced by the experiences encountered of service users and residents.

The scrutiny year

Setting the work for the year – work programme

At the May 2016 meeting of the scrutiny committee, members discussed and agreed the work programme; the outcomes of which are detailed in this report and shown in the section, **the work of the scrutiny committee and outcomes for 2016 – 2017**. This section starts on page 10 of this review, and provides an overview of the work carried out by the scrutiny committee over the last 12 month period. The scrutiny committee's work programme varies in content, ranging from standing items, such as the yearly update on the environmental strategy to specific pieces of scrutiny work requested by the committee such as academies and educational attainment in Norwich.

Other standing items include:

Corporate plan review

Equality information report

Pre-scrutiny of the proposed budget

Annual review of the scrutiny committee

Also, verbal updates from the committee's NHOSC representation are brought to meetings as and when.

The work programme is also a standing item at every committee meeting, and members have the opportunity to add or remove items from the work programme if they wish.

Performance monitoring reports are an agenda item every six months, with members continuing to receive performance data every quarter for overview purposes.

The agenda papers and minutes of the committee meetings can be found on the council's web-site:

https://cmis.city.norwich.gov.uk/cmislive/Committees/tabid/62/ctl/ViewCMIS_CommitteeDetails/mid/381/id/4/Default.aspx

(At the time of this review's publication, work has already begun by the scrutiny liaison officer and the committee members around the work programme for 2017 – 2018 and this will be officially agreed by the scrutiny committee in May at the first meeting of the new civic year.)

Training

At the beginning of the scrutiny year in May, the committee took part in an afternoon of training. The aim of this session was to assist existing scrutiny members in gaining knowledge and building upon experience from previous training, and for the newly appointed members to be introduced to their scrutiny role.

The training consisted of a mixture of group exercises, discussions and presentations and was delivered by an external trainer.

The session contained the following content:

What overview and scrutiny is

Scrutiny trends over the past 10 years

The key skills required of members in scrutiny

Some pointers on the programming of scrutiny work

How to plan and scope your scrutiny work

Being tactical in the use of scrutiny

Following on from the discussion which ensued at the training and based on the working style of the committee throughout the following months, it seems the pre-existing protocols are working effectively for the scrutiny committee.

The members of the scrutiny committee also continue to come together for a pre-meeting in advance of the scrutiny committee so that they can plan the committee's approach for the topic being discussed at the committee meeting.

City council officers associated with the scrutiny committee also took part in a training event this year delivered by the same trainer. The aim of this session was to give officers support in their understanding of what scrutiny is and why it is important. The officer training session also considered the role of officers in scrutiny and techniques for work programming.

The work of the scrutiny committee and outcomes for 2016 – 2017

DATE OF MEETING	TOPIC FOR SCRUTINY	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER, CABINET, PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR, or ORGNISATION	SCOPE – REASON FOR TOPIC REQUEST and OUTCOME SOUGHT
30 June 2016	Market Consultation	Adrian Akester (Head of Citywide Services)	To update members on the outcomes of the consultation on Norwich Market.
30 June 2016	Grounds Maintenance Contract	Adrian Akester (Head of Citywide Services)	To gain clarification on whether efficiencies can be found in the budget regarding the Grounds Maintenance Contract.
30 June 2016	Publication of Traffic Regulation Orders	Phil Shreeve (Strategy manager)	To understand how the council will publicise information about Traffic Regulation Orders
30 June 2016	Quarter 4 Performance Review	Phil Shreeve (Strategy manager)	Identification of any causes for concern and note successes arising from this 6 monthly review of performance monitoring data
14 July 2016 MEETING CANCELLED	Communications and Consultation	Nikki Rotsos and portfolio holder (Cllr Waters)	The strategy manager circulated a briefing paper and the committee will look at this document at the meeting on 20 October
14 July 2016 MEETING CANCELLED	Devolution	Phil Shreeve and Cllr Wright	To discuss the council's position on the proposed East Anglian devolution plan.
14 July 2016 Evidence gathering meeting	City Accessibility Tour	Andy Watt and Cllr Wright	This scrutiny committee meeting was cancelled and instead some members took part in a tour of the city looking at accessibility around the city. Access groups were also invited to attend, including RNIB and NNAB.

DATE OF MEETING	TOPIC FOR SCRUTINY	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER, CABINET, PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR, or ORGNISATION	SCOPE – REASON FOR TOPIC REQUEST and OUTCOME SOUGHT
22 September 2016	Update from 21st July meeting of the Norfolk Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Maguire, NHOSC councillor rep	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.
22 September 2016	Update from 8th September meeting of the Norfolk Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Maguire, NHOSC councillor rep	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.
22 September 2016	Academies and education attainment	Cllr Wright, chair of scrutiny	To consider the current state of educational outcomes in Norwich with reference to changing school structures such as academies and free schools.
20 October 2016	Update from 13th October meeting of the Norfolk Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Maguire, NHOSC councillor rep	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.
20 October 2016	Educational outcomes for the young people of Norwich	Cllr Wright, chair of scrutiny	To consider the current state of educational outcomes in Norwich with reference to changing school structures such as academies and free schools.
20 October 2016	Consultation method	Nikki Rotsos (Director of customers and culture)	That the scrutiny committee notes the consultation process of the council and considers specific ways of enhancing this.

DATE OF MEETING	TOPIC FOR SCRUTINY	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER, CABINET, PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR, or ORGNISATION	SCOPE – REASON FOR TOPIC REQUEST and OUTCOME SOUGHT
24 November 2016	Greater Norwich Growth Board and Local Enterprise Partnership	Dave Moorcroft (Director of regeneration and development)	A briefing paper about the 'current state of play' in regard to GNGB and LEP.
24 November 2016	Education and Social Mobility	James Wright, chair of scrutiny	To provide members the opportunity to form recommendations following the evidence gathering meetings around academies at the September and October scrutiny committee meetings.
15 December 2016	Update from 8th December meeting of the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Maguire, NHOSC councillor rep	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.
15 December 2016	Corporate Plan Review	Adam Clark (Strategy manager)	To consider amendments to corporate performance KPIs
15 December 2016	Equality Information Report	Adam Clark (Strategy manager)	Pre scrutiny of the report before it goes to cabinet.
15 December 2016	Neighbourhood Model and ward councillors	Bob Cronk (Director of neighbourhoods)	Scrutinise the Neighbourhood Model to see how the public is engaged, how councillors are involved and how resources will be allocated

DATE OF MEETING	TOPIC FOR SCRUTINY	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER, CABINET, PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR, or ORGNISATION	SCOPE – REASON FOR TOPIC REQUEST and OUTCOME SOUGHT
26 January 2017	Pre scrutiny of the proposed budget	Justine Hartley (Chief finance officer)	To make suggestions to cabinet regarding the proposed budget's ability to deliver the council's overarching policy.
26 January 2017	Environmental Strategy – Yearly update on the progress statement	Richard Willson (Environmental strategy manager)	Identification of any issues to consider and note successes and progress reported in the progress statement.
26 January 2017	Update from 12th January meeting of the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Maguire, NHOSC councillor rep	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.
23 February 2017	Food Poverty	Adam Clark (Strategy manager) and Cllr Maguire	For the committee to identify and address the cause and effects around food poverty in Norwich.
23 March 2017	Summary of Food Poverty meeting	Adam Clark (Strategy manager) and Cllr Maguire	Following the first food poverty meeting, this committee meeting will aim to identify solutions and resolutions to recommend to cabinet for consideration
6 April 2017	Annual Review of the Scrutiny Committee	Beth Clark and Cllr Wright	To agree the annual review of the scrutiny committee's work 2016 to 2017 and recommend it for adoption of the council

DATE OF MEETING	TOPIC FOR SCRUTINY	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER, CABINET, PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR, or ORGNISATION	SCOPE – REASON FOR TOPIC REQUEST and OUTCOME SOUGHT
6 April 2017	Portfolio Disposal Transition Strategy	Andy Watt (Head of city development services) Justine Hartley (Chief finance officer)	Pre scrutiny of the strategy before it goes to cabinet.
6 April 2017	Food poverty	Adam Clark (Strategy manager) and Cllr Maguire	To discuss solutions to food poverty following on from evidence provided to members at the February and March committee meetings

Items brought forward to next civic year

June 22 2017	City Accessibility	Andy Watt (Head of city development services)	To make appropriate recommendations on how the council could ensure that people with visual impairments/disabilities can access the city safely and with confidence.
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An investigation into food poverty in Norwich

This civic year, when setting their work programme, the scrutiny committee chose to investigate the issue of food poverty in the city of Norwich. The committee decided to devote two meetings to this item to allow for meaningful and thorough work.

In the first session, the members would examine the problem, including a definition of the works, and examples of the breadth and depth of the causes of food poverty. Members suggested examining the problem at different levels; structural, organisational and individual, in order to be able to create accurate resolutions.

It was also agreed by the committee that they would need to hear from expert witnesses to understand the problem and to ultimately develop a Norwich-specific approach to a Norwich problem. Therefore, scrutiny members suggested that it would be useful for them to hear from those people living with the situation of food poverty and when examining the structural level, it was considered vital to invite an academic to provide context. It was advised that the committee should identify at least three main drivers of food poverty in Norwich, and identify possible solutions and recommendations based on these drivers at the March meeting.

Then, in the second investigation of the food poverty session, the committee would take an in-depth consideration of approaches and strategies about how to address the issues raised in the first session. The scrutiny members elected to invite speakers who could educate the committee on how what impact their organisation has had on food poverty. The committee could then consider this evidence provided to them when making their resolutions.

It was concluded by the scrutiny committee that valuable work could be achieved by following up the sessions with the Department for Work and Pensions and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

On 23 February 2017, the committee held the first of two food poverty meetings, with three speakers invited to provide expert witness. This included:

- Jo Mack, lecturer at the Open University, television producer and co-author of Breadline Britain: The rise of mass poverty
- Hannah Worsley, Norwich foodbank project manager. Foodbank provides emergency food supplies and support
- Councillor Vaughan Thomas, cabinet member for fairness and equality

Jo Mack gave a presentation to members outlining the national picture of food poverty, and she also highlighted that eating was a social activity as well as a necessity and therefore food poverty was not only a health issue, but also a social issue.

The committee then heard from Councillor Vaughan Thomas, cabinet member for Fairness and Equality at Norwich City Council. He put onus on the complex appeal process for benefit sanctions and individuals not being able to navigate this process. He suggested better awareness on this could aid those facing food poverty.

Finally, the committee then heard recordings, collected by Future Radio, of short interviews with Norwich Foodbank users explaining why they had to use the foodbank. The reasons varied from benefit sanctions to a delay in wages being paid. Hannah Worsley, the Norwich Foodbank manager, presented the recordings and explained that they saw a wide range of users from those on benefits to those who were in work but were still unable to make ends meet.

All of the minutes and materials used at this meeting can be found on the Norwich City Council website under:
Committees > Scrutiny committee > 23 February 2017

Or at this link: https://cmis.norwich.gov.uk/live/Committees/tabid/62/ctl/ViewCMIS_CommitteeDetails/mid/381/id/4/Default.aspx

Questioning and discussion ensued by the committee leading to the resolution that the members of the scrutiny committee would send their initial thoughts on the main drivers of food poverty to officers, who would collate these suggestions and then bring back to the March scrutiny committee meeting.

The table overleaf is a culmination of the suggestions submitted by some of scrutiny committee of what the main drivers of food poverty in Norwich are based on the evidence they heard from speakers at the 23 February meeting.

	Understanding the Causes	Sustainable Response
Structural	Insecure work Low wage Welfare system that does not always prevent crises Distribution/accessibility of nutritious food	
Organisational	Benefit delays Benefit sanctions Universal credit Debt recovery by landlords and others	
Individual	Food literacy/skills Knowledge of navigating benefit system Low financial capability	

On the 23 March 2017, the scrutiny committee held the final of the two food poverty meetings, and heard from the following speakers:

- Rosie Ogleby, National Director of Feeding Britain
- Caroline Seaman, Food Literacy practitioner

At this meeting, the chair of the scrutiny committee received two questions from members of the public.

A question from Clive Lewis MP, who asked, 'What does Norwich City Council currently do to help its citizens in food poverty? And what can the City Council do in a sustainable manner to begin to turn the tide of food poverty in our city?'

The other from Emma Stopford of Norwich FarmShare, who asked, 'Could the Committee give a view on how Norwich FarmShare can be best included in the Council's strategy to end food poverty - including the suggestions above and other ideas the Committee may have and could the Committee help ensure that Norwich FarmShare is to be formally included in this strategy?'

The full questions submitted and answers given can be found in the minutes of the meeting on the Norwich City Council website under Committees. Or at the following link:

<https://cmis.norwich.gov.uk/live/Meetingscalendar/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/268/Committee/4/Default.aspx>

Following the public questions, the committee then heard from the National Director of Feeding Britain, Rosie Oglesby who gave the members an overview of what Feeding Britain is and its role to helping those living in food poverty. She also spoke of the possibility of a pilot for Feeding Norwich, if it was something Norwich City Council was interested in pursuing.

The committee then heard from Caroline Seaman who is a food literacy practitioner. Caroline's presentation looked at food literacy and the need to build on this in order to help prevent food poverty. She spoke of various options the council could consider in order to help resolve the issue of food poverty, like the uptake of acceptance of Healthy Start vouchers by market stalls and independent shops.

After discussion and questions by the committee and the speakers, the members split off into two groups to begin thinking of solutions, all of which are in the table below:

	Understanding the Causes	Sustainable Response
Structural	<p>Insecure work</p> <p>Low wage</p> <p>Welfare system that does not always prevent crises</p> <p>Distribution/accessibility of nutritious food</p>	<p>Charitable trust funding e.g. social supermarkets/pop up shops</p> <p>Increasing roll out of discount supermarkets?</p> <p>Opportunities coming from Sustainability and Transformation Plans to engage GPs and hospitals</p> <p>Surplus food projects based around food preserving skills</p>
Organisational	<p>Benefit delays</p> <p>Benefit sanctions</p> <p>Universal credit</p> <p>Debt recovery by landlords and others</p> <p>6 week gap prior to UC claim</p>	<p>Food poverty strategy – umbrella document</p> <p>Use of vacant HRA shops for social/enterprise use</p> <p>Widening knowledge of Discretionary Housing Payments</p> <p>Widening availability of apprenticeships e.g. NPS</p> <p>Improving information on availability of advice – signposting</p> <p>Free school meals take up</p> <p>Go 4 less – encouraging take up</p> <p>Social value in procurement</p>
Individual	<p>Food literacy/skills</p> <p>Knowledge of navigating benefit system</p> <p>Low financial capability</p>	<p>Role of crowdfunding for surplus food enterprises</p> <p>Food literacy activity – cooking, shopping, community led</p> <p>After school food clubs</p> <p>Opportunity for sharing/trading surplus food on allotments – schemes in community centres</p> <p>Skills sharing between generations</p> <p>Healthy start vouchers accepted by independent retailers</p> <p>Promote access of affordable credit</p>

During this workshop, the committee members, with the support of officers and the invited speakers, began to pull together ideas for solutions to food poverty, and how they could form these solutions into recommendations. All of the suggestions made by the scrutiny councillors are detailed in the 'sustainable response' column of the table above.

The March committee meeting then came to an end, and the members resolved to consider the suggestions at the next meeting on April 6 2017 to produce formal recommendations. At the time of publication of this review, the committee had not yet met again, but the committee's resolutions will be available online in the minutes of this meeting:

<https://cmis.norwich.gov.uk/live/Meetingscalendar/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/365/Committee/4/Default.aspx>

These two sessions taken together show how the scrutiny committee has been able to take a rounded look at a complex issue and, using evidence from a range of stakeholders, play a valuable role in shaping the way that the city council seeks to address local issues.

Joint scrutiny bodies

Norfolk county health overview and scrutiny committee; Norwich City Council has a scrutiny member representative who sits on the Norfolk county health overview and scrutiny committee plus one substitute member. For the period 2016 – 2017 the member representative has been Councillor Kevin Maguire with Councillor Lesley Grahame being the substitute member.

The role of the Norfolk county health overview and scrutiny committee is to look at the work of the clinical commissioning groups and National Health Service (NHS) trusts and the local area team of NHS England. It acts as a 'critical friend' by suggesting ways that health related services might be improved. It also looks at the way the health service interacts with social care services, the voluntary sector, independent providers and other county council services to jointly provide better health services to meet the diverse needs of Norfolk residents and improve their well-being.

Please follow the link to the Norfolk county council website for papers and minutes concerning the above:

<http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/index.htm> and click on council and democracy then committee meeting dates, minutes, agendas and reports.

Norfolk countywide community safety partnership scrutiny sub panel; Norwich city council has a scrutiny member representative who sits on the Norfolk countywide community safety partnership scrutiny sub panel plus one substitute member. For the period 2016 – 2017 the member representative has been Councillor David Fullman with Councillor Lesley Grahame being the substitute member.

The role of the Norfolk countywide community safety partnership scrutiny sub panel is to:

- Scrutinise the actions, decisions and priorities of the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Crime and Disorder Partnership in respect of crime and disorder on behalf of the (County) community services overview and scrutiny panel
- Scrutinise the priorities as set out in the annual countywide community safety partnership plan
- Make any reports or recommendations to the countywide community safety partnership.

While the scrutiny sub panel has the duty of scrutinising the work of the CCSP the police and crime panel scrutinises the work of the police and crime commissioner. There is a protocol regarding the relationship of these two panels to encourage and exchange information and to co-operate towards the delivery of their respective responsibilities. The community safety partnership meets on a half yearly basis at county hall.

Guidance for placing items onto the scrutiny committee work programme

The guidance takes the form of a **flow chart** which outlines the process by which members and officers can discuss the merits of producing a report to the committee. Once a request for scrutiny has been received by the scrutiny officer; the process begins with a meeting between the member making the request, the scrutiny officer and the relevant responsible officer to discuss whether a report to the committee is necessary and justified while taking account of the TOPIC **analysis**:

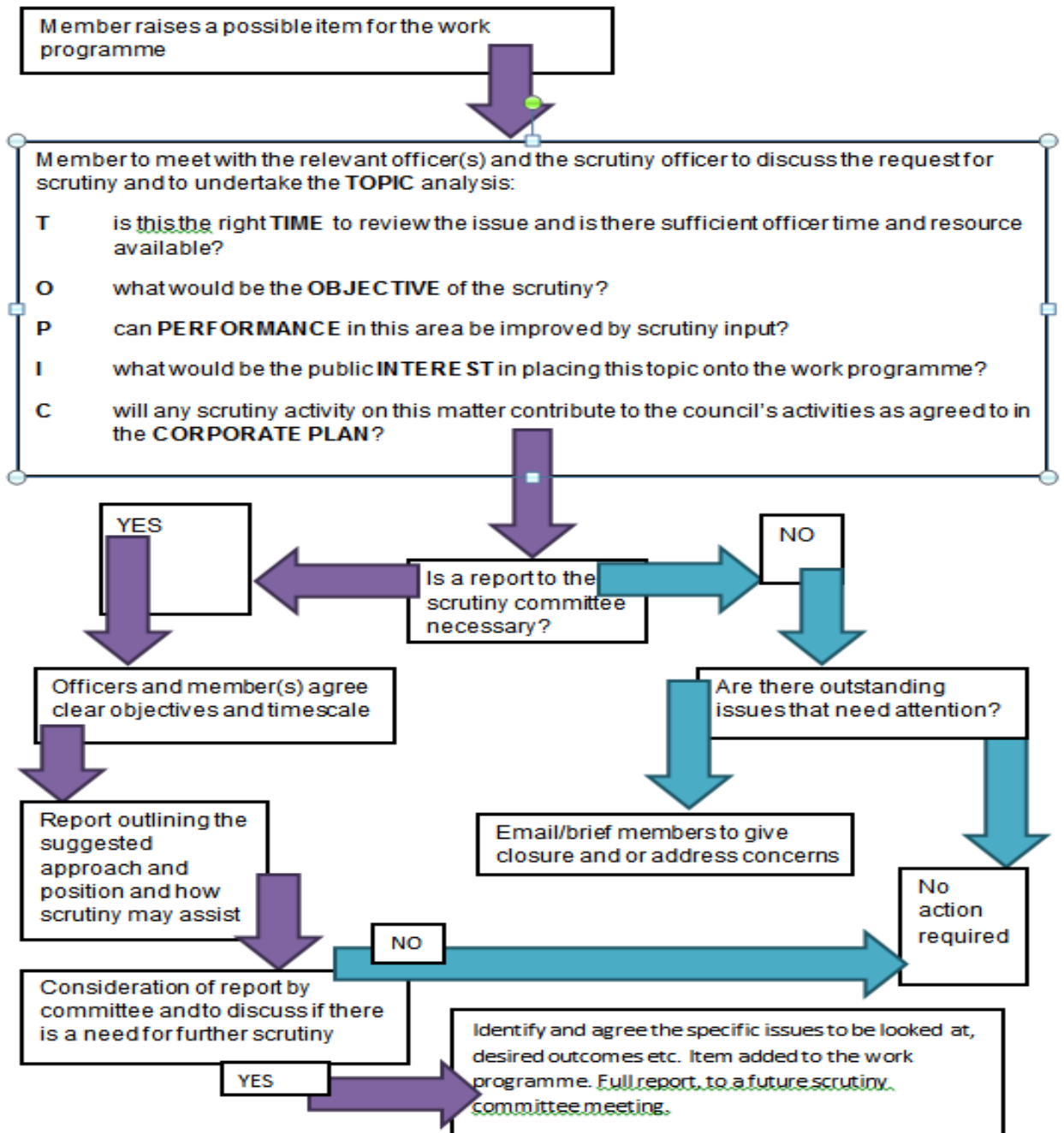
- T is this the right **TIME** to review the issue and is there sufficient officer time and resource available?
- O what would be the **OBJECTIVE** of the scrutiny?
- P can **PERFORMANCE** in this area be improved by scrutiny input?
- I what would be the public **INTEREST** in placing this topic onto 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 recommendations that are; **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound**.

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



Public involvement and getting in touch with scrutiny

Meetings of the scrutiny committee are usually as informal as possible and as well as scrutiny members, are attended by cabinet portfolio members, officers, partners and anyone else who can assist with the work and provide evidence for reviews.

Members of the public are also welcome to attend the scrutiny committee meetings and can participate at the discretion of the committee's Chair. If you do wish to participate regarding an agenda item at a scrutiny meeting you are requested to contact the committee officer who will liaise with the Chair of the committee and the scrutiny officer. Any questions for the committee have to be received no later than 10.00 am on the day before the meeting but in order for you to obtain a thorough answer it would be helpful if you could contact us as early as possible. To contact the committee officer please phone 01603 212416

Getting in touch with scrutiny

If you are a member of the public and wish to find out more about the scrutiny process and the committee or if you have any queries regarding this Annual Review, please feel free to contact the council's scrutiny liaison officer; If you have any topic suggestions for scrutiny please use the form attached over this page and send it to the scrutiny liaison officer or hand it in at the council's reception – for the attention of the scrutiny liaison officer.

Bethany Clark

Scrutiny liaison officer

Strategy and transformation team
Norwich City Council

01603 212153

bethanyclark@norwich.gov.uk

Request form to raise an item for Scrutiny Review

Councillors should be asked to carry out the following scrutiny review:

Please give your reasons (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Name:

Address:

Daytime Tel No

Email:

Date

Please return this form to Bethany Clark, Scrutiny Liaison Officer, Norwich City Council, City Hall, St Peters Street, Norwich NR2 1NH

Email: bethanyclark@norwich.gov.uk