



# NORWICH City Council

**Committee Name: Scrutiny**

**Committee Date: 16/03/2023**

**Report Title: Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2022-23**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources

**Report from:** Executive director of community services

**Wards:** All Wards

## **OPEN PUBLIC ITEM**

### **Purpose**

To assist scrutiny committee members to review the scrutiny committee work programme 2022-23.

### **Recommendation:**

- 1) That members consider:
  - a) Whether to add the item on 'the purpose and efficacy of council consultations' as attached at appendix B, to the 2023-24 scrutiny committee work programme; and
  - b) If the format of an informal workshop to discuss work programming should be replicated on 25 May 2023
- 2) Members note the deadline of submission of TOPIC forms for the upcoming civic year of Friday 28 April 2023

### **Policy Framework**

The Council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
- Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.
- Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
- The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish.
- Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

This report meets the Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city corporate priority

## **Report Details**

### **Developing a work programme for the scrutiny committee**

1. Members had an informal work programme setting workshop on 26 May 2022, the work programme was then reviewed and ratified at the committee meeting on 9 June 2022. The work programme was further updated at the committee meetings on 14 July 2022, 13 October 2022 and 8 December 2022 and is attached as Appendix A.

### **Recurring items**

2. There are certain items that occur throughout the civic year that are programmed in. These are the scrutiny committee work programme (each meeting), Equality Information Report (December/ January), pre-scrutiny of the proposed budget (February) and the annual review of the scrutiny committee (March).
3. Updates are received from the council's representative on the Norfolk Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee (NHOSC) and the council's representative on the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub Panel (NCCSPSSP).

### **Scope for scheduling items onto the work programme**

4. It has been previously agreed that committee should agree as few as possible substantive topics per meeting. The main reason for this is to ensure that there is enough time for the committee to effectively consider the issues and make fair and evidence based recommendations. Ideally one substantive item per meeting would be the aim.
5. Members are able to revise the work programme on a month basis if and when required due to changing events. This is done through the work programme standing item at each meeting. Members therefore may wish to consider keeping some space on the work programme to facilitate this.
6. On 19 January 2023, the committee discussed the topic of Green Financing and concluded that recommendations on this item would be best considered after the CEEEP meeting on 14 February 2023.
7. An item has been added to this agenda for members to make recommendations on this item.
8. At its meeting on 17 November 2022, the committee considered a report on debt advice and support services. A number of recommendations were made, one of which was that council tax and housing benefit letters when revised are brought to scrutiny committee to be reviewed and that partners such as the tenant improvement panel, leaseholder group, Citizens Advice Bureau and Norfolk Community Law Service are consulted on changes.
9. An initial draft of a revision to the Housing Benefit notification letter, to include a summary letter and appeal rights, will be circulated to members of the committee by email for their comments and a final draft brought to a meeting of the scrutiny committee in the new civic year.

10. A TOPIC form for consideration has been received and is attached as appendix B to this report. Members are asked to consider the topic proposed - the purpose and efficacy of council consultations - and whether this should be programmed into the work of the committee in the next civic year.
11. In the last civic year, an informal workshop was held for members to discuss items for the work programme, which was finalised at the June meeting of the committee. Members are asked to consider if this is a format that they would like to replicate for the next civic year, with the workshop being held on Thursday 25 May 2023.
12. In preparation for the work programming for the upcoming civic year, members are asked to submit any TOPIC forms with suggested items by Friday 28 April 2023.

### **Consultation**

13. Members of the scrutiny committee were consulted on the attached work programme at the meeting on 13 October 2022. Members of the public are encouraged to submit topics for scrutiny via a form on the council's website. The portfolio holder will be briefed as part of the regular portfolio holder briefings.

### **Implications**

#### **Financial and Resources**

14. Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan and Budget.
15. Any impact on resources resulting from this report will be accommodated within existing budgets or the relevant approvals will be sought if additional budget is required.

### **Legal**

16. No specific legal implications of this report.

### **Statutory Considerations**

<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:</b>
Equality and Diversity	None
Health, Social and Economic Impact	None
Crime and Disorder	None
Children and Adults Safeguarding	None
Environmental Impact	None

## **Risk Management**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Controls Required</b>
None		

## **Other Options Considered**

17. There have been no other options considered for this report.

## **Reasons for the decision/recommendation**

18. This is a standing item on the scrutiny committee agenda to allow members to review the scrutiny committee work programme.

**Background papers:** None

**Appendices:**

**Appendix A – Scrutiny committee work programme 2022-23**

**Appendix B – TOPIC form**

**Contact Officer:**

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## Appendix A

Date	Report	Purpose	Portfolio Holder + Senior Officer + Report author
16/03/2023	Recommendations on 'Green Financing'	To consider recommendations following the item on Green Financing.	
16/03/2023	Welcoming refugees into Norwich and overcoming obstacles to their smooth integration	To consider a report on "welcoming refugees into Norwich and overcoming obstacles to their smooth integration"	Cllr Waters Lou Rawsthorne Leah Mickleborough
16/03/2023	Updates from NHOSC and NCCSPSSP	To receive a report from council's representative on NHOSC and NCCSPSSP	Cllr Kendrick Lou Rawsthorne Alex Hand
TBC June 2023	Levelling Up Agenda	To consider a report on the "Levelling Up agenda"	Cllr Waters Graham Nelson Ellen Tilney



# Scrutiny TOPIC form

Good governance and scrutiny helps reduce risk, increases resilience, improves decision making and delivers value for money. The information you give on this form will help shape the scrutiny work programme for the civic year 2022-23.

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

YOUR ITEM: The purpose and efficacy of council consultations

BRIEF SCOPE: The scrutiny committee will consider the council’s overall strategy and approach in relation to consultations and how this could be improved. The committee will look at the general strategy in relation to when consultations are held, how they are being held and how responses are supposed to be used. The scrutiny committee will also consider this strategy and the general approach to consultation as well as specific examples of Norwich City Council consultations against best practice. The scrutiny committee will consider recent council consultations such as those on the proposed Hackney carriage licence fee increase, council budget, and proposed parking charges at Eaton Park. The committee will ask what the purpose of council consultations was and how different responses to the consultations would have led to different policy outcomes. The committee will go on to ask how the consultations were put together, how respondents were sought, whether the forms of communication used were appropriate and what the value of the consultation was overall.

Your item will be considered for inclusion on the work programme on the following criteria and reviewed by senior officers for the availability of officer and financial resources. Please give as much information as possible for each criteria below:

TOPIC	Rationale	Implications/resource requirements to Norwich City Council
<b>TIME</b> Is this the right time to review the issue?	The council carries out a number of consultations each year and it is important that these consultations give value for money and help provide better services for Norwich residents. In addition, the peer	Good use can be made of the first scrutiny meeting of the civic year by taking this substantive item.

	<p>review has highlighted that improved community engagement is an aspect where the council needs to improve, and consultations are part of this two-way engagement.</p>	
<p><b>OBJECTIVE</b>  What would be the objective of scrutiny?  How do you feel scrutiny could make a difference?</p>	<p>This scrutiny will identify the value of recent consultations and recommend ways in which they could be improved which would offer better value for money for the council. Expectations of residents and councillors will be considered and this scrutiny will enable a closer match between these expectations and reality in future. In addition, the committee will look more broadly at the general strategy and approach of the council in relation to consultations and how this form of engagement data is being used. The objective is to make recommendations in relation to the council's approach to consultations in line with feedback and best practice.</p>	<p>Information about the use and success of different types of consultation may be required for scrutiny members. However, using this information would improve council consultations and this could save money in the medium term.</p>
<p><b>PERFORMANCE</b>  Can performance in this area be improved by scrutiny input?</p>	<p>Better consultations would be created if the outcomes of this scrutiny were considered when new consultations were being written and advertised. These new consultations would lead to better council services and better value for money. Residents would feel more included in the council's activity, so this would be good for the reputation of the council as well as the wellbeing of residents. It would help address one of the</p>	<p>Additional training for staff may be required, but this expenditure would be recouped through better consultations.</p>

	areas of improvement highlighted in the peer review.	
<b>PUBLIC INTEREST</b> what would be the public interest in placing this topic onto the work programme?	The public interest would be served through the improvement of council services. Members of the public would be invited to participate in better consultations which would be of more value to them and result in their interests being clear.	Improved services.
<b>CONTRIBUTION</b> How would a scrutiny review contribute to achieving our corporate aims?	This scrutiny review would clearly contribute to achieving two of the main aims of the corporate plan: Aim 1 – people live independently and well in a diverse and safe city – <i>Listen to communities and use their views in decision making</i> Aim 5 – Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city. – <i>Be open and transparent, with accessible data and decisions which are subject to public scrutiny</i>	

### Practical Considerations:

<b>Undertaking the review</b>  Have you got any thoughts about how the scrutiny committee could undertake their review?	The committee would consider the council's general approach to consultations and how consultation responses are used. The committee will also consider best practice in relation to local government consultations. The committee would apply a set of questions to recent consultations to ascertain how they were carried out, what the value of them was, and how the expectations of residents and other participant in the consultations were met.
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<p>Would there be specific individuals, such as outside organisations, who could provide evidence or would need to be engaged in the review?</p>	<p>Experts on best practice consultation could be invited, e.g., researchers on elements of successful consultations or LGA experts. People who had participated in recent consultations could also be asked for their views. .</p>
<p>Do you believe consultation with particular groups would be helpful to support the review?</p>	<p>People that it would be useful to include would be:  Respondents to recent consultations, council officers who are responsible for the overall approach on the council's consultations, officers who created the consultations, and councillors.</p>
<p>If the scope of your review is potentially quite broad, do you believe there are ways to narrow it down or areas that you would like particular focus on?</p>	<p>The review could consider just one recent consultation, but it would be better to consider more than one.</p>
<p>Have you discussed the potential scope of this review with lead officers or the portfolio holder? Did they have any thoughts on the review, its scope, timing etc?</p>	