NORWICH
City Council

MINUTES

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16:30 to 18:40 **20 June 2019**

Present: Councillors Wright (chair), Ryan (vice chair), Brociek-Coulton (substitute for Councillor McCartney-Gray), Carlo, Driver (substitute for Councillor Fulton-McAlister (M)),Giles, Grahame, Manning, Maxwell (substitute for Councillor Sands (S)),Oliver, Osborn and Sarmezey

Apologies: Councillors Fulton-McAlister (M), McCartney-Gray, Sands (S) and Thomas (Vi)

1. Public questions/petitions

There were no public questions or petitions.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 30 May 2019.

4. Scrutiny committee work programme for 2019-20

The strategy manager presented the report. Members considered which topics to choose for the formation of select committees. It was noted that there would be an all member briefing on Universal Basic Income prior to March 2020 when it was scheduled to be on the work programme. The chair said he would seek an update from cabinet regarding the establishment of a climate and environment scrutiny committee as detailed in the corporate plan and agreed at the meeting of council on 26 February 2019.

Members discussed the item on the work programme for November, Young People and austerity and it was agreed to broaden the item to include mental health and austerity under the title of Young People and Wellbeing.

The strategy manager confirmed that Jeremy Wiggins, Norwich Area Transport Strategy, city agency manager would attend scrutiny committee for the meetings on 18 July 2019 and 19 September 2019.

In response to a member question the strategy manager said that a report on the council's performance was taken to cabinet quarterly which offered an opportunity to call in and scrutinise any particular area of performance if members wished. It was agreed to add a standing item to the scrutiny work programme on questions relating to the quarterly performance indicators which would to be tabled in advance of the meeting to enable officers to respond.

RESOLVED to:

(1) form two select committees as follows:

a) anti-social behaviour including fly tipping and city council processes; and

b) the growth of short term letting in Norwich with input from the Independent Hoteliers Group

(2) ask the chair to seek an update from cabinet on the establishment of a climate and environment scrutiny committee;

(3) ask the scrutiny liaison officer to amend the annual work programme as follows:

a) change the title of the November discussion item, Young people and austerity to Young People and Wellbeing;

b) move the item Practical steps to improve air quality in Norwich and climate change update from the scrutiny meeting in July to the meeting on 19 September 2019;

c) move the item Transforming cities fund from the September meeting of scrutiny to the meeting on 18 July 2019;

d) add a standing item on questions relating to the quarterly performance indicators; and

(4) ask democratic services to arrange an all member briefing on Universal Basic Income before the meeting of scrutiny on 19 March 2020.

5. Norwich Economic strategy 2019-2024

(Councillor Waters, the director of regeneration and development and the economic development officer attended for this item)

The economic development officer presented the report. She highlighted that the risk of doing nothing was that the economy of the city would decline. She noted that Exeter a city council which was compared with Norwich and one that Norwich was

ahead of five years ago was now out performing Norwich on a number of key indicators. In response to a member question she said that Exeter had received government investment into digital infrastructure and that a number of government organisations had relocated there. Discussion ensued regarding central government investment as a driver for economic change.

A member expressed disappointment at the small number of responses received from businesses during the consultation on the draft economic strategy and was concerned that those who had responded had a disproportionate influence on the strategy. The economic development officer said feedback from businesses on the strategy was also received at the leader's business reception. The strategy was changed to reflect feedback but the emphasis of the strategy had remained the same. Negative feedback received from some small businesses was in relation to the living wage and financial constraints were sighted.

In response to a member question the director of regeneration and development said where the criteria were met a bid was submitted for government contracts, funding or relocation of departments. The city council worked with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to promote sites in Norwich on a national scale, this was one of the priorities set out in the greater Norwich city deal. He noted that government research institutions for health and food had moved to the city. The director of customers and culture said that as part of the 2040 city vision, the city council worked with businesses to develop promotional materials to attract other businesses to the city.

Members discussed the role of transport within economic development. A member said that the growth of transport needed to be decoupled from economic growth and noted that the building of roads resulted in businesses moving out of the city to locations which could only be accessed by car. The director of regeneration and development said investment into roads was only one aspect of transport development. The Transforming Cities project looked at moving people onto public transport on key routes and expanding the take up of cycling and walking. The economic development officer said that 30,000 people commuted into Norwich to work daily and many lived in rural area with no access to public transport.

A member asked if it was possible to assess the impact of major investment into the city and how the benefit to the city was measured. The director of regeneration and development said investment opportunities were assessed against a number of criteria including jobs, business rates, supply chain and training opportunities. Most growth in Norwich was from indigenous business and it was important to support the growth of start up businesses. The city council worked in partnership with the LEP and private developers to encourage them to provide development opportunities.

(Councillor Manning left the meeting at this point)

A member said that whilst climate change was mentioned in the forward to the economic strategy a specific objective on how to move to a low carbon economy could be included. Councillor Waters said that it was a significant ambition of the LEP to move to a low carbon economy for the area and that the city council could not implement this unilaterally. Debate ensued on climate change, the role and establishment of a climate and environment scrutiny committee and the draft

environmental strategy. Councillor Osborn tabled a recommendation which was circulated at the meeting.

RESOLVED to:

(1) endorse the economic strategy; and

(2) ask cabinet to consider the following recommendation in relation to the economic strategy; how can Norwich transition to a carbon neutral economy.

6. Exclusion of the Public

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

*7. Call in – Award of contract for legal services (Para 3)

(The director of regeneration and development, the director of procurement and the head of planning attended for this item)

Following discussion it was:

RESOLVED to take no further action with regards to the award of a contract from legal services.

CHAIR