



**Scrutiny Committee  
Informal online meeting**

**16:30 to 18:45**

**20 January 2022**

Present: Councillors Wright (chair), Matthew Fulton-McAlister (vice chair)  
Everett, Carlo, Driver, Galvin, Giles, Huntley, Manning, Osborn,  
Stutely, Thomas (Va) and Thomas (Vi)

**1. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. Corporate Plan 2022-26**

The strategy manager presented the report. The current Corporate Plan ran until March 2022 and the new Corporate Plan would run from 2022-2026 to align with the Medium Term Financial Strategy. It was a high level strategic document which was shaped by the 2040 City Vision and the council's response to the pandemic. It showed direction of travel with granular detail in the technical appendix. She highlighted the main change to the document which was the change of corporate priorities.

The draft would be discussed by the scrutiny committee and recommendations considered at cabinet on 9 February before being considered at full council.

The chair invited the leader of the council to comment on the draft report. Councillor Waters said that it was interesting to see how priorities had changed over the years and that this Corporate Plan would see an accumulation of a number of issues with Covid at the forefront and Brexit, climate change and increasing inequality becoming more prevalent. The organisation needed to have the right policies and people to be able to deliver services to the citizens of Norwich and with the new Corporate Plan, those additional priorities were tied in with tight timetables. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were in place to test whether those objectives could be achieved. It was a high level document recognising new priorities in difficult financial circumstances.

The chief executive added that the Corporate Plan was not meant to capture everything that the council did, but alongside the Covid-19 Recovery Plan, it was the main strategic framework for the council. It included a set of key deliverables showing the activity that the council would be focussed on alongside KPIs to measure progress.

A member commented the climate change was a cross cutting issue but she felt that the work of the 2040 vision framed it as a way of life issue. Climate change needed to colour the work of all departments and suggested that the council could create a senior level resilience officer with cross cutting council responsibility to ensure the council was working toward and was supported in achieving net zero targets.

Councillor Waters agreed that this was an important point but the documents which contributed to the 2040 vision such as the details of the Climate Commission and the Environmental Strategy described the cross-cutting activity which was already taking place. He was confident that an environmentally compliant economic model was being worked on by the council with a variety of partners. A piece of work was being led by the strategy manager looking at all aspects of policy relating to climate change and the environment and has been presented in the Environment Strategy. The chief executive added that this had been addressed through a restructure which brought the environmental function into the corporate strategy team to give it more prominence.

A member asked which barriers the council was referring to removing under the priority 'a fair city'. The leader of council replied that policies around the living wage, the work of the Good Economy Commission around good employment and ensuring decent quality housing were all strands of work to push forward improvements to people's material situations. The cost of living crisis was not just about energy prices; chronic low pay, insecure employment and cuts to welfare support were all factors.

A member referred to the Community Safety Action Plan which was being developed and asked how it differed from previous work around anti-social behaviour and the impact of drugs. In terms of climate change, there was more work needed to ensure that it was a cross cutting issue as there were still financial issues, such as income from car parks, which conflicted with environmental issues.

The chief executive responded that there were clear tensions between economic drivers and climate change ambitions. The income currently received from car parks could not be covered with funding from elsewhere. He highlighted that the Corporate Plan set out a pathway to transitioning away from reliance on car parks but this needed to be done in a transitional way whilst maximising income from other sources. The council had set out an ambitious response to the Transport for Norwich Strategy which would stand alongside any work being done around car parks.

The executive director of city development services added that public space was referred to in the Corporate Plan and the look and feel of the city was key for economic success. There was work being undertaken on a programme of measures using the Towns Deal and the Transforming Cities Fund. Feedback on projects was received from a variety of sources such as interaction with the BID, public consultation on projects and direct engagement with communities and community groups.

The executive director of community services added that the Corporate Plan was clear in its aims and within the technical appendix on how the council would work with partners and access funding to address issues with drugs and anti-social behaviour.

A member commented that within the foreword, there was a reference to the climate emergency framing all of the work of the council. She felt that the Corporate Plan was

missing an opportunity within its structure to reflect that and asked how the challenges around the climate emergency could be brought to the foreground of the report.

The leader of the council replied that the document described what the council had direct responsibility for which was informed by the aspirations of the people living in the city. All policies within the Corporate Plan had been created with consultations on projects and partnership working. the Corporate Plan was refreshed every year and the priorities reflected changing circumstances so it was not a static document.

The chief executive added that with Corporate Plan set out a wider set of policies with clear ambition around climate change, cutting emissions from the council's own estate and working with the City Vision 2040 group and local businesses to create a climate reduction strategy for the city. Local authorities had shown what could be delivered at a local level and central government needed to put resource into this.

In response to a member's question on funding for retro fitting, the executive director of community services said that she was aware of some good initiatives around the country which focussed on pooling resources and skills to tackle these challenges. The council had a large number of homes to consider and would review the HRA business plan to consider priorities.

Members discussed the Key Performance Indicators and it was suggested that those that are 'roll overs' of existing targets due to upcoming reviews could be indicated as such for clarity. It was also suggested that a KPI for the Councillor enquiry service could be included as it would be straightforward to report on.

The chair referred to the Private Renters Charter and asked why a date of December 2025 was set for such an important document which was at the end of the lifespan of the Corporate Plan. The strategy manager replied that more detail was needed within the wording as it should clarify that there was already a charter in place and the work was to review and update the existing document.

On being put to a vote, a resolution to create a senior level resilience officer with cross cutting council responsibility to ensure the council is working toward and is supported in achieving net zero targets was lost.

On being put to a vote, a resolution to increase the target for the total number of private sector insulation measures completed or facilitated by the council was lost.

**RESOLVED** to ask cabinet to:

- 1) amend the wording of Aim One to 'listen to communities and use their views in decision making'
- 2) amend the wording of Aim Two to – 'Work with partners to increase sustainable transport and improve air quality'.
- 3) Indicate those KPIs that are 'roll overs' of existing targets due to upcoming reviews for clarity.

- 4) Include previous KPIs in performance documents to understand if the council is achieving its targets.
- 5) Include a KPI linked to the Councillor enquiry service.

(As two hours had passed since the beginning of the meeting, the chair took a vote on continuing the business. With eight members voting against, the meeting ended at 18:45)

### **3. Work Programme**

The chair would circulate on a note on this item to members by email.

CHAIR