

Committee name: Cabinet

Committee date: 14/06/2023

Report title: Scrutiny Committee Recommendations

Portfolio: Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources

Report from: Head of legal and procurement

Wards: All wards

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Purpose

To consider the recommendations made by scrutiny committee with respect to green financing and welcoming asylum seekers and refugees on 16 March 2023.

Recommendation:

To consider whether to adopt all or some of the recommendations from the scrutiny committee.

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 city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish corporate priority.

Report details

1. Members proposed and agreed a Terms of Reference to explore the topic 'welcoming immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers to Norwich' at their meeting in January 2023. In undertaking the work, the scrutiny committee were keen to understand the lived experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in Norwich as well as gaining insight, through a survey, from organisations that support refugees and asylum seekers.
2. Officers arranged a visit to the Zainab café and officers and members attended a session to hear the lived experiences of refugees and asylum seekers on 16 February 2023. Officers collated feedback from the meeting which was presented to committee on 16 March 2023 alongside feedback from the survey. Unfortunately, the survey had a limited response with just 3 organisations providing feedback.
3. On this basis the Scrutiny Committee suggested that the new committee, in setting its work programme, determine whether they would like to revisit the topic early in the new civic year. With that in mind, the Committee have not made formal recommendations to Cabinet at this stage although have requested officers take forward some further work, as follows:
 - a) Investigate with partner organisations, and decide upon, a method of approach that is acceptable to asylum seekers and refugees, that allows the committee to gain data directly from service users so that the committee can understand the level of need within the city.
 - b) Ask the Head of legal and procurement to ask relevant managers to ensure that all customer contact assistants were aware of the Intran translation service and that the availability of the service was advertised.
 - c) Ask officers if any data sets around refugees and asylum seekers were already available.
 - d) Ask officers to investigate if there were any council owned properties that the Zainab Project could use as a base.
 - e) Review the list of issues raised by service users at the Zainab Café and ask for an update to be brought to a meeting of the scrutiny committee early in the civic year.
4. Officers have been considering these items in the event that the Scrutiny Committee wish to review the topic further. This will determine whether any formal recommendations are made by the Scrutiny Committee in future.
5. At its meeting on 16 March 2023 the scrutiny committee also considered recommendations to make to cabinet on Green Financing. The committee had considered information from the Green Finance Institute (GFI) at its meeting on 19 January 2023. Recommendations were as follows:

Recommendation	Rationale	Implications/ resource requirements
<p>Local Climate Bonds</p> <p>To begin piloting blended finance models and identify a project to invest in, potentially the retrofitting of community centers.</p>	<p>To address retrofitting using blended finance.</p>	<p>Officer time to identify and run a project.</p>
<p>Green Mortgage Campaign</p> <p>To seek further analysis of green mortgage providers and to understand how Norwich City Council can be a part of this and seek opportunities to work with partner providers, such as Lendology.</p>	<p>To lend to homeowners to enable properties to be retrofitted.</p>	<p>Officer time to scope project.</p>
<p>Integrated retrofit finance</p> <p>To obtain statistics regarding take up rate from the pilot in Manchester, with a view to promoting such a campaign in Norwich and gather information on how the projects were delivered.</p> <p>See if the additional benefits data was available; and</p> <p>Explore working with partners, such as the Greater Norwich Growth Board to expand this work within the Greater Norwich area.</p>	<p>To promote and enable retrofitting across the Greater Norwich area.</p>	<p>Member time to negotiate across Greater Norwich Area.</p> <p>Officer time to research and scope such a project.</p>
<p>Green rental agreements</p>	<p>To incentivise landlords to improve the energy</p>	<p>Officer time to scope project and implement.</p>

<p>To seek clarity on how green rental models work in practice, how these protect tenants and how tenants can be involved in the process, with LetNCC being considered as a pilot model.</p>	<p>efficiency of their properties.</p>	
<p>Property link finance</p> <p>To support the concept of property link finance and seek to be considered for a UK pilot or early adoption, whichever comes first.</p>	<p>To enable retrofitting/ energy efficiency measures of properties in the city.</p>	<p>Officer and member time to consider any pilot and apply.</p>
<p>General recommendations</p> <p>To increase capacity for the delivery of green finance projects and seek assurance from cabinet that the council has the resources for these.</p> <p>To investigate how Norwich City Council can benefit as a landlord from these projects.</p> <p>Investigate how the council's wholly owned companies, NCSL and NRL can be part of the retrofit programme</p> <p>To ask cabinet to provide the scrutiny committee with details of the work already underway on whole house retrofit pilots, including details of funding.</p>	<p>To increase green financing options across tenures in the city to promote retrofitting and energy efficiency measures.</p> <p>To ensure that the council and its wholly owned companies are able to progress retrofitting and energy efficiency measures.</p>	<p>Increasing capacity to deliver infers greater staff time which would have to be funded. Officer time to scope and deliver projects.</p>

Consultation

6. There has been no specific consultation on these proposals.

Implications

Financial and resources

7. 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 2022-26 and budget.
8. Any additional financial requirements where activities cannot be undertaken within existing resources will need to be subject to further consideration, and approval through a business case. This will need to include an appropriate funding source being identified and/ or being built into future years' budget processes.

Legal

9. The proposals in respect of green financing largely request the Cabinet to consider exploring specific matters further. If these result in formal business cases, the legal implications will require due consideration at that time.

Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	Concern raised regarding ability to access translation services addressed and programme in place to increase staff awareness.
Health, social and economic impact	The aim of the recommendations is increase retrofitting and energy efficiency measures across tenures in the city which would positively influence these considerations.
Crime and disorder	None at this stage.
Children and adults safeguarding	None at this stage.
Environmental impact	Decarbonisation, retrofitting and energy efficiency measures across tenures in the city would lead to a positive environmental impact although this is not quantified as yet.

Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
None at this stage.		

Other options considered

10. There have been no other options considered for this report, as it is a factual report based on the outcome of committee meetings that have already taken place.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

11. This report will allow cabinet to make a decision on whether or not to take forward some or all of the recommendations.

Background papers: None

Appendices: None

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