



Scrutiny Committee

16:30 to 18:45

15 October 2020

Present: Councillors Wright (chair), Carlo, Driver (substitute for Ryan), Giles, Manning, McCartney-Gray, Oliver, Osborn, Sands (M) (substitute for Councillor Sands (S)), Stutely (substitute for Councillor Sarmezey) and Thomas (Vi)

Apologies: Councillors Fulton-McAlister(M), Ryan and Sands (S)

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 17 September 2020.

4. Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee update (verbal update)

Councillor McCartney-Gray gave the committee a verbal update on the recent work of the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. NHOSC had considered the ambulance response rate in North Norfolk, and a recent report on bullying within the ambulance service. In response to a member's question, Councillor McCartney-Gray said that new people had been brought into the service and the bullying allegations would be taken seriously. NHSOC had asked for an update on work around this to come back in six months' time.

RESOLVED to note the update of the representative on the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5. Scrutiny committee work programme 2020-21

The chair presented the item. He said that cabinet had considered the recommendations of the select committee on short term lets. The leader of the

council was positive about the work of the select committee but said that it was not possible to take the recommendations forward at this time. The chair said that he had written to the two Norwich MPs asking for their feedback and he would report back to the committee once he received a reply.

A motion to council on safe drug consumption rooms had asked scrutiny committee to consider adding this to its work programme. It was suggested that this could be added to the scope of the select committee on fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour. A member commented that this would perhaps add too many elements to the select committee which should be focussed only on fly-tipping, and suggested that this topic be taken to NHOSC for consideration instead. The representative on NHOSC agreed to propose this as a piece of work.

A member suggested that no select committees were taken forward due to the pressure of the Covid-19 pandemic on the work on the council. A member commented that although the select committees were due to look at crucial topics, officers were already under huge amounts of pressure with great demands on their time. A member said that the select committee on fly-tipping had already been deferred from the last civic year and the topic was extremely important to residents of the city. It was worth separating fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour to concentrate on fly-tipping as the issue had been raised by a member of the public. The chair said that it would be pragmatic to separate these topics as it would reduce the scope and should initially be member led with officer involvement later in the process. A member added that those who were willing to sit on the select committee could start the work and it could be paused if necessary. Following debate, the majority of the committee felt that select committees involved a large time commitment from all participants and that with the pressures of the Covid-19 pandemic on the work of the council, the select committee should not be taken forward.

Members discussed the work programme and the item for the December meeting. A member said that as social inclusion following Covid-19 was the item with the highest score at the work setting programme which had not been allocated a space, this should be considered for the December meeting. The strategy manager said that the scope would need to be refined but this could be done and he would work with the chair to do this.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) ask Councillor McCartney-Gray to take work on safe drug consumption rooms to NHOSC for consideration,
- (2) not take any select committees forward at this time; and
- (3) ask the chair to work with the strategy manager to refine the scope for the item on social inclusion following Covid-19 for the December meeting.

6. Norwich City Council response to enhancing community development following Covid-19

The neighbourhood and community enabling manager presented the report. The council had good links with the voluntary and community sectors and had many enquiries from residents and organisations on how they could get involved with their communities. The Covid pandemic had highlighted that communities that were connected to each other were better able to support one another during the lockdown.

The Covid Recovery Blueprint had elements focussed on asset based community development models which focussed on the positive parts of a community model and built on those rather than looking at what was missing.

There were five main elements to the blueprint, including internal strengths and opportunities as a council to improve service design and delivery, looking at good practice from projects which worked well in the past, looking at other organisations, understanding how the council invited people to be involved and how to hear the 'unheard voices', and how technology could help with the project.

The aim was to create a living document that officers could use when redesigning a service and the neighbourhood and community enabling manager was looking for colleague and councillor input into how the document could be shaped, including what the role of the ward councillor was within community development.

The chair thanked the neighbourhood and community enabling manager and invited questions and comments from the committee.

A member asked what the timeline would be for the document and how long it would be until a final draft would be considered by cabinet or council. The neighbourhood and community enabling manager said that the aim was to have a draft document by January and then a report to cabinet in March 2021.

In response to a member's question on baseline data for the document, the neighbourhood and community enabling manager said there had been a huge piece of research undertaken as part of the reducing inequalities work. Areas had been selected for focus as they had significant issues within their data around inequalities. The work would be led by residents and once an overview of data for each area had been put together, these would be shared with members. By way of a follow up question, a member asked how less visible data would be captured, such as how groups of residents were helping each other. The neighbourhood and community enabling manager said that there were a lot of groups undertaking that kind of work and her team was looking to capture some data around this, without subjecting the groups to anything too formal. She wanted the groups to see that there was value in engaging with the council and wanted to promote a culture in which they could flourish. The strategy manager added that a report had been taken to cabinet in March 2020 around a pilot on reducing inequalities work. A question on how much people felt a part of their community had also been added to the local area survey on and this would be reported to cabinet as part of the performance framework.

A member commented that the wards across the city varied in character and makeup with variations within these wards as well. This meant that ward councillors would have a valuable input into the work. The neighbourhood and community enabling manager said that she was looking at how best to work with members to discuss and inform the work on the blueprint.

A member said that a select committee had looked at building social capital in 2015 and she suggested that the recommendations from that work were revisited as she said it was not clear as to how these had been implemented. She said that she had concerns that some decisions were 'handed down' to some wards without communication and that the council needed to allow communities to take on projects that they wanted to. She added that the council's constitution included a member / officer working protocol but there was nothing in it regarding community engagement. The neighbourhood and community enabling manager said that she had reviewed the recommendations of the 2015 select committee and these reflected the day to day work of her team.

In response to a question on the production of a vision statement, the neighbourhood and community engagement manager said that this would be developed once the initial piece of work had been undertaken with residents, to ensure that a vision was not imposed upon them.

A member said that she welcomed the positivity and openness around the piece of work. She said that with regards to barriers to engagement, people often wanted to engage with people similar to themselves, and suggested that some of those undertaking the engagement work could be people with similar life experiences to those residents.

A member questioned how principles could be formed without taking a 'one size fits all' approach. There needed to be accountability to show residents what the council was able to do for them and that it would deliver. The neighbourhood and community enabling manager said that a 'one size fits all' approach would not work but the work would need to be led by the community which would be reflected in the principles. She was keen for the document to be a blueprint rather than a list of actions as there was a will to empower officers to take the best course of action to make sure that residents were getting what they expected from the council and to build a sense of trust. The accountability would sit within the corporate performance indicators. The strategy manager added that the key challenge was that there could be dissonance between residents and the council, despite best efforts for this not to happen. There would need to be a culture change in how managers and teams were incentivised to display certain behaviours. There was a need to evaluate the feel of how well the council was doing which members would play a key role in.

A member commented that the strategy would need to consider council partners as well, such as contractors and charities. He said that there had been cases where trust had been broken with the council and wondered if there was any process for mediation. The strategy manager said that the culture of working with those residents receiving services would be considered within the blueprint. The values would inform the strategy and would be part of how services were delivered. The neighbourhood and community enabling manager said that the council was not

always seen as being separate from other statutory authorities and so it was beneficial to work with partners to develop a similar mind-set.

A member said that it was important that the council was delivering efficient public services and that it would be helpful for both councillors and residents to understand the council's internal processes.

A member commented that there was always room for improvement but the council was working in trying times with stretched budgets. The work being undertaken around community engagement was positive and would give people a vehicle in which to engage with the council.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to:-

- (1) Ask the neighbourhood and community enabling manager to consider the following recommendations when developing the Citizen Participation Blueprint
 - a) To draft a council / councillor / citizen compact with participation and transparency at its heart to improve interactions with residents and influence and shape council culture.
 - b) For ward councillors to have a better understanding of internal council processes in order to identify improvements through an all member briefing and for this information to be made available to residents.
 - c) Make it clear to residents that councillors are a first point of contact within the council and to highlight other contact means such as online forms and the customer contact centre and to investigate barriers to people contacting the council.
 - d) Ensure that issues are followed through, by looking at the most effective way of doing so for residents.
 - e) Ensuring that services are delivered to build and maintain trust with residents
- (2) Ask cabinet to commission a piece of work to refresh the constitution so that it more accurately reflects the collaborative nature of the council, for example, in discussions with councillors to include a rationale on why a project can or cannot be taken forward.

7. New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership

RESOLVED to ask members to email the scrutiny liaison officer with any recommendations to be considered at the November meeting of the scrutiny committee.

CHAIR

