



Corporate Select Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 14 September 2020 at
10 am as a virtual meeting

Present:

Cllr Karen Vincent (Chair)

Cllr Penny Carpenter

Cllr Phillip Duigan (sub for Cllr Ed Colman)

Cllr Colin Foulger

Cllr Terry Jermy

Cllr Chris Jones

Cllr Ian Mackie

Cllr Brian Long

Cllr Rhodri Oliver (from item 12)

Cllr Sandra Squire

Cllr John Timewell

Cllr Vic Thomson (sub for Cllr Nigel Dixon)

Cllr John Ward

Also Present:

Cllr Tom FitzPatrick (Cabinet Member for
Innovation, Transformation and
Performance)

Cllr Margaret Dewsbury (Cabinet Member for
Communities and Partnerships)

Cllr Andrew Jamieson (Cabinet Member for
Finance)

1A Apologies for Absence

1A.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ed Colman and Cllr N Dixon.

1B Election of A Vice-Chair For The Day

1B.1 The Committee RESOLVED

That, in the absence of Cllr Ed Colman (who had given his apologies for the meeting), the Committee elect Cllr Penny Carpenter as Vice-Chairman for the day, to deal with any issues that might arise in this meeting, should the Chairman experience connectivity issues as a result of being unable to maintain an internet connection.

2 Minutes

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of Interest

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4 Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

5 Public Question Time

5.1 There were no public questions.

6 Local Member Issues/Questions

6.1 There were no local Member questions.

7 Business Transformation (Smarter Working) Programme Update

7.1 The annexed report (7) by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance was received.

7.2 The Committee received a report about how the County Council and wider Norfolk Resilience Forum had put in place a 3-phased plan in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic that moved from response, through a period of normalisation, to recovery. It was expected that the normalisation period would extend well into 2021. The report described the current state of Business Transformation and the key focus areas for the next 6 months that arose from the extended normalisation phase.

7.3 Cllr FitzPatrick (Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance) covered the Introductory section of the report and specifically the references to the Council making better use of technology to enable colleagues to find more effective and smarter ways of doing things in a modern and business-like way.

7.4 During discussion the following key points were noted:

- The report provided an update on those strands of activity within the Business Transformation (Smarter Working) Programme that were previously reported to Committee in July 2020.
- Appendix A to the report provided an additional update on the HR and Finance System Transformation Programme, prior to a more detailed report being brought to Committee in November 2020.
- The key point was that the go live date for the replacement of the existing HR and Finance systems with a single integrated solution had moved to November 2021. Covid-19 had made for just a one-month delay to the original planned go live date and had led to significant early progress in key areas of the programme.
- The health and safety of County Council staff during the pandemic was being monitored through the work of the existing health and safety support help line and through closer working of managers and their staff. Councillors will be updated about possible changes in ways of working, including

smarter working arrangements and future property use through the Political Assistants and were asked to channel comments about these matters through them.

- In reply to questions it was pointed out that when the review of traded services and of arm's length companies was set up it did not include within the terms of reference the services provided by Norse. This was because Norse had clear governance and working practices in place. It was suggested by Councillors that because circumstances had changed substantially since the start of the traded services review Norse Care should be examined in terms of commercial opportunities and the challenges faced by the Council in protecting the adult social care market in Norfolk.
- Councillors drew attention to the work to enable Districts to better detect and prevent council tax errors and fraud. The Executive Director for Finance and Commercial Services said that the County Council was analysing data to check that the correct discounts were being claimed and to understand the effect of Covid-19 on falling council tax collection rates.
- The Chairman stressed the importance of greater collaboration and improvement of processes to secure additional inward funding through successful external funding bids. The Executive Director of Strategy and Governance said that this area of work was about optimising the Council's ability to obtain external funds and bring in additional funds. This work was stalled as a result of Covid-19 and now needed to be taken up as a priority.
- Councillors spoke about the additional savings that could be made from the pace of digitisation and from embedding digital print, post and storage into normal ways of working.

7.5 The Committee **RESOLVED**

- 1. That in agreeing to the focus areas for the Council's Business Transformation over the next 6 months Committee they were keen to see progress in the following areas:**
 - **greater collaboration and improvement of processes to secure additional inward funding through successful external funding bids;**
 - **the work to enable Districts to better detect and prevent council tax errors and fraud;**
 - **additional savings that can be made from the pace of digitisation;**
 - **current and future ways of working for Councillors, including future property use, will be channelled through Political Assistants.**
- 2. To agree that a further report be made to Select Committee, with an updated plan that takes business transformation forward from the new baseline, in January 2021.**
- 3. To agree that a more detailed update in respect of the HR and Finance System Transformation Programme be brought forward to the November 2020 meeting.**

- 8.1 The Committee received a PowerPoint presentation (by Geoff Connell, Director of IMT and Chief Digital Officer) and a report (9) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services that summarised progress made in the delivery of plans to improve the availability and use of digital infrastructure, systems and data since the last update in January 2020. (The presentation was made available on the committee pages website at the end of the meeting)
- 8.2 In his introductory comments Cllr FitzPatrick (Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance) said that the current top priorities of the Strategy were developed as part of the “Caring for our county” 3 Year Strategic Plan in early 2018. The work programme that arose from the strategy was delivered as part of the Norfolk Futures Transformation Programme.
- 8.3 Cllr FitzPatrick drew the Committee’s attention to the invitation that Councillors had received to the official launch of the LoRaWAN (Long Range Wide Area network) which would be held with colleagues from Suffolk tomorrow evening. This would be the largest free to use public sector LoRaWAN deployment in the UK.
- 8.4 The presentation by Geoff Connell, Director of IMT and Chief Digital Officer covered:
- 2018 Digital Norfolk strategic plans
 - Progress & achievements
 - 2020/21 Priorities
 - Impact of Covid-19 on the Strategy
 - Technology Roadmap to 2030.
- 8.5 In summary, the strategy showed that the County Council was committed to bringing world class digital connectivity to Norfolk to support business growth, social mobility, tourism, efficient public services and quality of life for our residents. The strategy also showed that the County Council was committed to digitally enabled new ways of delivering services and achieving outcomes that provided new opportunities to transform services to cope with funding cuts and growing demand. Good progress continued to be made in the delivery of the strategy, and the input of the Committee was welcomed as Norfolk moved forward into the 2020s.
- 8.6 During discussion the following key points were noted:
- Members thanked Geoff Connell and his team on the truly outstanding work that they were doing and for what was a detailed presentation.
 - Members of the Committee were recommended to take up the invitation to attend the launch of the LoRaWAN (Long Range Wide Area network) on the evening of 15 September 2020.
 - It was pointed out that the use of robotics had freed up the time of qualified technical and front-line staff and had made for improved council response times.
 - Further information on how the Council was meeting the My Norfolk account holder targets would be made available to Councillors outside of today’s meeting.

- With reference to paragraph 4.9 of the report it was noted that both of the new Covid-19 response systems were made possible by the use of new and cheaper technology, the support of Microsoft and agile working by Council staff. Many important lessons had been learnt that would be applied when implementing other response systems.

8.7 **The Committee RESOLVED**

- 1. To give their full support to the good progress that is being made towards delivery of the Digital Norfolk Strategy.**
- 2. Agree to receive a further update report in January 2021 to consider and further refine the revised and extended Digital Norfolk Strategy for the 2020s.**
- 3. For Councillors to receive an update outside of the Committee on how the Council is meeting My Norfolk response targets.**

9 **Norfolk PLC Update and consideration of NCC recruitment**

- 9.1 The annexed report (9) by the Executive Director for Community and Environmental Service and the Executive Director, Strategy and Governance was received.
- 9.2 The report provided an update on activity to date, including key points from presentations that a cross-party Member Task and Finish Group (MTFG) (chaired by Cllr Ed Colman of this Committee) had received from New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, as well as future research and development priorities proposed by the Group.
- 9.3 During discussion the following key points were noted:
 - Councillors referred to the experience of the #LoveWestNorfolk and #WorkWestNorfolk campaigns. The lessons learned from this experience were being looked as part of the Norfolk wide concept.
 - Councillors also referred to the importance of supporting the sustainability of smaller niche entrepreneurs and larger Norfolk employers, a visit by the Tourism Minister in August 2020 and the work of the East of England Tourism Board in putting together a bid for Norfolk to be one of five English tourism zones.
 - Reference was also made to work to support people who were living and working remotely in Norfolk.
 - The Chairman agreed to take up at the Member Task and Finish Group the very strong working relationship that the Council had with the UEA and how the Council could work more closely with the UEA in the recruitment of more highly skilled people to live and work in Norfolk.
 - The Committee referred to the significance of the Norfolk Kickstart programme. Officers pointed out that this programme would go live in November 2020 and that 6,000 young people in Norfolk were eligible to take part. Councillors would be kept informed of progress with the programme.

9.3 The Committee RESOLVED

To acknowledge and support the work that the Working Group has done to date and the feedback on the direction of travel and next steps.

10 Scope of Review of Unconscious and Structural Bias

10.1 The annexed report (10) by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services was received.

10.2 The Committee was informed that the purpose of the review was to enable the Council to fully understand whether and to what extent there was or might be unconscious or structural bias in how it worked or communicated as an organisation. The County Council had agreed a motion on equality, diversity and inclusion at Full Council on 20 July 2020.

10.3 The outline timetable, at this stage, was as follows:

September 2020 Agree scope of the review (as set out in the report)
By end January 2021 Phase 1
By end April 2021 Phase 2
May/June 2021 Phase 3.

10.4 The Committee RESOLVED

- 1. To agree the scope of the review, as set out in the report.**
- 2. To agree the outline timetable for the review and that initial findings will be brought to Select Committee to review and consider.**

11 Strategic Asset Management Framework

11.1 The annexed report (11) by the Executive Director for Finance and Commercial Services was received.

11.2 The Head of Property pointed out that officers across the Council were considering their services' medium-term property requirements following Covid-19 guidance and how Smarter Working could enable better ways of working. These conversations were scheduled to continue through September and October 2020.

11.3 The Chairman asked for a date for the next meeting of the Working Group to be agreed by email outside of this meeting. Councillors spoke about the impact of Covid-19 and supported a further and final meeting of the Working Group.

11.4 The Committee RESOLVED

To note the update on key activity set out in the report and request a further meeting of the Working Group.

12 Norfolk County Council Budget Planning 2020-21

- 12.1 The annexed note (12) by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance and the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.
- 12.2 The report set out the latest information about the 2021-22 Budget in order to support Select Committee discussion and enable them to provide input to the October meeting of Cabinet to inform budget decisions. A similar report was being presented to all the Select Committees.
- 12.3 Cllr Andrew Jamieson (Cabinet Member for Finance) introduced the report and referred to approach that was being taken by the Cabinet.
- 12.4 Councillors said the County Council awaited a Government announcement about the White Paper on Adult Social Care and plans for the devolution of local government in Norfolk. Councillors also spoke about the difficulty that the Committee had in commenting on broad budget planning proposals that were not yet set out in enough detail. It was suggested that broad budget planning proposals should be brought to the Committee in July each year so as to provide more focus and that this should be suggested for future years.
- 12.5 In reply to questions the Chairman said that she had followed up on action agreed by the Select Committee in March 2020 regarding the additional use of LED street lighting. The Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services said that Cabinet had agreed to allocate an additional £8.5m in capital investment to LED street lighting.
- 12.6 The Head of Property confirmed that the Council was examining the possibility of making an application to the Land Release Fund but that it was too early to go into the detail.
- 12.7 **The Committee RESOLVED**
- To note the key issues for 2021-22 budget setting and the broad areas proposed for savings development in relation to the services within the Select Committee's remit, in order to provide input to the October Cabinet meeting and inform saving proposals put forward.**
- 13 **Performance Reporting Framework: proposal to develop a new reporting mechanism and a new set of Corporately Significant Vital Signs**
- 13.1 The annexed note (13) by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance was received.
- 13.2 Cllr Tom FitzPatrick (Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance) in introducing the report said that corporately significant vital signs were reported to Cabinet on a regular basis. The proposal to develop a new reporting mechanism and a new set of Corporately Significant Vital Signs would provide key information on the Council's progress towards its strategic outcomes.
- 13.3 The Chairman said that workshops detailed in the report were due to be held in late October 2020.

13.4 The Committee RESOLVED

- 1. Acknowledge the impact of Covid-19 on the revision of the vital signs.**
- 2. Agree to a series of Member workshops as detailed in the 'Member Involvement' section of this report.**
- 3. Acknowledge and comment on the proposed reporting mechanisms.**

14 Corporate Select Committee Forward Work Plan

14.1 The annexed note (14) by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance was received.

14.2 The Committee RESOLVED

- 1. To agree that meetings are structured as set out in the note.**
- 2. To endorse the areas of focus for future meetings subject to any changes by the Chair and Vice Chair to accommodate the review of the Council's constitution at the November 2020 meeting.**

Chair