



Scrutiny Committee Meeting **Minutes of the Meeting Held on 17 September** **at 10am in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Norwich**

Present:

Cllr Steve Morphew (Chair)
Cllr Alison Thomas (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Roy Brame	Cllr Ron Hanton
Cllr Ed Connolly	Cllr Ed Maxfield
Cllr Emma Corlett	Cllr Joe Mooney
Cllr Phillip Duigan	Cllr Richard Price

Parent Governor Representatives:

Mr Giles Hankinson

Substitute Members present:

Cllr David Harrison for Cllr Dan Roper
Cllr Graham Middleton for Cllr Keith Kiddie
Cllr Terry Jermy for Cllr Chris Jones

Also present:

Cllr Bill Borrett	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention
Helen Edwards	Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer)
Sara Tough	Executive Director of Children's Services
James Bullion	Executive Director of Adult Social Services
Cllr Andrew Jamieson	Cabinet Member for Finance
Cllr Greg Peck	Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management
Simon George	Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services
Tom McCabe	Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services
Cllr Andrew Proctor	Leader of the Council
Simon Hughes	Head of Property
Cllr Martin Wilby	Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure
Cllr Andy Grant	Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste
Chris Walton	Head of Democratic Services
Karen Haywood	Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager
Fiona McDiarmid	Executive Director Strategy and Governance

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Paul Dunning, Cllr Chris Jones (Cllr Terry Jermy substituting), Cllr Keith Kiddie (Cllr Graham Middleton substituting) and Cllr Dan Roper (Cllr David Harrison substituting)

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 22 July 2019 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.
- 2.2 The minutes of the meeting held on 30 July 2019 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3 Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. Urgent Business

- 4.1 No urgent business was discussed

5. Public Question Time

- 5.1 No public questions were received

6. Local Member Issues/Questions

- 6.1 No local member questions were received

7. Call ins

- 7.1 No call ins had been received

8. Strategic and Financial Planning Scrutiny

- 8.1.1 The Committee invited Cabinet Members and Executive Directors to Scrutiny Committee meetings to discuss underlying risks and activities on any firm budget proposals before they were presented to Cabinet
- 8.1.2 The Chair asked for background information on financial planning in preparation for the release of budget proposals, due in the upcoming weeks. The Chair thanked the Leader for attending to provide information on the portfolio of the Cabinet member for Children's Services in Councillor Fisher's absence.
- 8.2.1 Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure, Cllr Martin Wilby, gave background to the position of budgetary issues and priorities related to his portfolio:
- The current budget for service transport strategy had no identified variances; highways had a predicted underspend of £154k; passenger transport which included concessionary fares, and flood water management showed no variance from budget
 - The services under Cllr Wilby's portfolio were on track to deliver to budget and it was assumed that there would be an overall balanced position
 - Pressures were expected in 2020-21 related to on-street parking costs and

the roll out of street lighting improvements, which was forecast to cost £160k, and was on track to be delivered

- Capitalisation of activities had been carried out to release revenue savings
- Highways commercialisation involved new operations with Norse and was on target to be delivered
- Emerging areas of risk were: transport and highways pressures related to inflation and highway maintenance, labour cost increases, dealing with floods and managing the highway network
- The passenger transport contract was due to end in March 2020 and negotiations were underway with operators about a new contract

8.2.2 The Committee questioned Cllr Wilby about strategic and financial matters related to his portfolio:

- The Chair queried the passenger transport deficit; Cllr Wilby clarified that £8-9m was received from Government for concessionary fares and the Council had a budget of £14m to cover the costs. The Council had lobbied for extra funding but been unsuccessful; there was no risk of extra costs related to this
- Cllr Wilby confirmed that the Members Allowance Scheme consisted of £6000 per Member for highways projects in their division. The scheme had been successful and £0.5m would be included in next year's budget to continue it. The Parish Partnership Scheme, which cost £330,000 per year, had also been successful and would also continue
- Cllr Wilby confirmed that a scheme was in place to replace street lighting with LED lighting and would continue
- Cllr Wilby reported that the 10 major accident blackspots in Norfolk had been slowly reduced by introducing schemes such as the Hempnall roundabout
- Cllr Wilby confirmed in response to a query about priorities moving forward, that he would like to see safer roads which were easier to use and a continuation of campaigning for dualling of the A47.
- A Member queried spending for non-road-based projects; Cllr Wilby reported that Transforming Cities funding had given access to £6m to make major infrastructure improvements including for non-road-based traffic such as walking and cycling in the greater Norwich area. Officers had carried out studies in market towns to identify improvements to infrastructure, including walking, cycling and public transport
- Cllr Wilby reported that the Great Eastern Main Line Task Group was looking into a line between Norwich and London, introducing more trains on smaller lines, and trains towards Sheringham. There had also been a meeting to discuss introducing a train line between Kings Lynn and Hunstanton
- A Member noted that local residents had commented on how tidy the Hempnall Roundabout site was during building and landscaping
- Cllr Wilby reported that the application for Major Road Network Funding for the Long Stratton Bypass had been submitted in July 2019 and a response was expected at the end of 2019.
- Cllr Wilby confirmed that during renegotiation of the passenger transport contract, discussions would be held with providers about upgrading fleets
- A Member felt that some of the off-road cycle tracks in Norfolk needed improvement and more were needed; Cllr Wilby spoke about the cycling tourism in the County, the Marriott's Way, and a new cycle way from Wymondham to Norwich which was being worked on
- A Member asked whether the Chancellor's announcement would allow the

opportunity to widen the approach to dealing with issues such as potholes, speeding and capacity of rural roads. Cllr Wilby noted the work with Market Towns to identify infrastructure improvements, and the Parish Partnership Scheme which had funded many SAM2 machines for rural villages which had a positive impact on speeding

- Cllr Wilby noted that the Broadland Northway had improved accessibility to the North Norfolk Coast, impacting positively on the experience of visitors to businesses in this area. He felt that the Norwich Western Link would have a similar positive impact on businesses and tourists in surrounding areas
- The Chair asked for more information on the Market Town studies; Cllr Wilby clarified that 5 had been carried out in the first year and 5 in the second year of the project. From the studies, schemes for the Market Towns had been drawn up which would bring improvements to roads, cycle ways, rail and walking facilities through seeking funding bids.
- Other pieces of work included discussions about the East West Rail and work by the Walking and Cycling Champion.
- Cllr Wilby had no information about plans to develop a rail station at Broadland Business Park
- Cllr Wilby reported that success factors would be that the budget was deliverable, taking into account that there would be unknown impacts on it, and maintaining the network to a high standard.
- The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services clarified that short-term measures would include completion of the inspection regime; 3-monthly inspections being completed and; how quickly the department was responding to urgent defects.
- A Member noted that some of the trees planted on the Broadland Northway had died in the heatwave; Cllr Wilby reported that those which required it had been replanted.
- The Committee thanked the Cabinet member and noted the comments

8.3.1 Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management, Cllr Greg Peck, gave background to the position of budgetary issues and priorities related to his portfolio:

- Cllr Peck's portfolio covered commercial services, related to income generation, and asset management, management of the council estate through disposals or utilisation of assets
- The service was exceeding budget by £140k
- Income generation was exceeding targets related to Scottow Enterprise Park and income generation from gypsy and traveller sites was on target.
- Contracts were being rationalised for 140 buildings and other small savings were being made on rent and domestic rates
- against the savings target set by Council of £23.6m over 3 years, a saving of £8m had been achieved in 3 months
- The income target for Scottow Enterprise Park had increased by £200,000 and been exceeded due to securing rents and additional space; the site was currently at 80-90% occupancy
- the gypsy roma sites services had met the income target and would upgrade some of the sites
- in general, there had been an over delivery on savings forecast
- emerging areas and pressures included:
 - Scottow Enterprise Park, as there were buildings on the site in need of

maintenance and repair. All buildings would be assessed to see how much work was needed.

- Facility improvements required on the gypsy and roma sites and identifying the impact this may have on rents in the future
- National economic factors which may affect income, for example, changes to the farming subsidy could impact on farm tenants
- More exits from buildings were planned for 2020-21
- Corporate decisions on office use would impact on savings

8.3.2 The Committee questioned Cllr Peck about strategic and financial matters related to his portfolio:

- It was noted that Scottow Enterprise Park could be advertised more widely
- Cllr Peck confirmed that some building sales were subject to contract with lawyers and **agreed** to provide Members with a list of sold buildings
- Cllr Peck reported that some of the success measures for his portfolio included meeting the needs of other areas, such as renovating buildings used by Children's Services; rationalising the property portfolio and bringing staff into buildings generated savings and efficiencies which meant other services could gain financial benefits. The Chair noted that at the meeting on the 30 July 2019, Cabinet Members had been asked to quantify the added value to other departments through their portfolios. The Chair **suggested** that Cllr Peck could do this also.
- The Vice-Chair asked for information on rationalisation of office provision at Carrow House; Cllr Peck confirmed that the site would go on market in the Autumn of 2019 and staff would start to move after this time
- Cllr Peck clarified that when looking at sharing facilities with other service users, facilitation related to the building would come under his portfolio, and the overall decision would be taken by the relevant Cabinet Member; for example, when closing police stations or building fire stations, the decision was taken by Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships
- The Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services reported that the back-office team had been capitalised against capital projects with money found through borrowing or other means; he **agreed** to share information with the Committee after the meeting
- The Committee thanked the Cabinet member and noted the comments

8.4.1 The Leader of the Council, Cllr Andrew Proctor, gave background to the position of budgetary issues and priorities related to the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Cllr John Fisher, in his absence:

- Adult Social Care and Children's Services were the key, demand led services for the Council
- The Children's Services budget had an overall spend of £211m and a projected £7m overspend
- Pressures for this service included looked after children, young people leaving care and support for children and families
- At the end of July 2019, the number of looked after children in Norfolk reduced to 1151
- there was an increased complexity of how children were looked after and increased residential care costs
- sustained transformation had been going on for some time focussed on changing the model of social care and Children's Services staffing structure

- There was a shortage of social workers and an increased cost from agency social workers
- The overspend related to the dedicated schools grant and impact on the high needs block was £15m
- The Government Spending Review gave £7m towards Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and £10m had been given to NCC to pay off some debt and short-term pressures
- The strategy for this service was to continue to deliver good outcomes for children; improve the Ofsted outcome when re-inspected; embed the transformation programme around value for money and the new model of working and; address staffing issues and staff retention

8.4.2 The Committee questioned the Leader about strategic and financial matters related to the Children's Services Portfolio:

- Cllr Proctor reported that the final figures from the Government Spending Review were still being worked through
- A Member asked about success measures and outcomes for the new Early Years' service going live the following month; Cllr Proctor confirmed that performance measures were built into the contract with the provider. The Executive Director of Children's Services reported that impacts were set out as part of the service design and **agreed** to share further information with Members after the meeting
- A discussion was held about court delays for children in the care system, the impact this could have on children and the financial impact on the Council; the Executive Director of Children's Services reported that the courts were aware of the impact, but budget reductions meant they had less availability to see cases timely. A new judge was in post and the Executive Director of Children's Services was due to meet with her. This had also been raised nationally as it was an issue across the Country.
- Cllr Corlett declared a non-pecuniary interest as she had temporary approval as a foster carer
- Cllr Proctor noted that the one-off funding could help alleviate pressures in the system however would not solve budgetary issues in the long term.
- The Executive Director of Children's Services reported that the transformation programme started in 2018 and projects were now in place to ensure more integrated working, better commissioning and more innovative working; successes were starting to be seen and would lead to cost avoidance and an impact on future year budgets.
- Early Childhood and Family Service (ECFS) was at an early stage, but all partners were committed to implementing the new approach. The Chair confirmed that ECFS would be scrutinised 6 months after implementation
- Cllr Proctor reported that the Scrutiny Committee would be required to scrutinise the performance of Children's Services at Ofsted inspection and ECFS would come up as part of this. The Chair would look at how to take this forward
- The Committee thanked the Leader and noted the comments

8.5 The Committee had a break from 11:20 until 11.31

8.6.1 Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste, Cllr Andy Grant, gave background to the position of budgetary issues and priorities related to his portfolio:

- The service was forecasting an underspend of £111,000
- Emerging areas and pressures were: waste procurement in 2020 and the environmental policy which would bring additional cost
- All areas of Cllr Grant's portfolio were either on budget or predicting an underspend

8.6.2 The Committee questioned Cllr Grant about strategic and financial matters related to his portfolio:

- A Member queried Norfolk's recycling rate of 40%, which was low compared to some other Counties, and what could be done to improve it. Cllr Grant replied that work had been done to remove green bins in areas with high contamination rates and further work would be carried out to reduce contamination of recycling waste. Discussions were ongoing with the Norfolk Waste Partnership.
- If the recycling rate was increased to 60%, this could reduce costs to the Council by millions of pounds.
- Cllr Grant felt that public awareness of what could and could not be recycled needed improving
- Cllr Grant confirmed that he would work with districts to improve rates without setting targets. The Chair wondered if incentivising districts to meet targets could be beneficial; Cllr Grant felt that different approaches may be needed in different areas
- The Vice-Chair noted there were other ways to deal with food waste such as home composting; Cllr Grant reported that the council encouraged home composting and sold compost bins, but better communication was needed to educate people on how to use them
- A discussion was held about recycling alternative materials, such as polystyrene from retail; Cllr Grant reported that alternative recycling was being looked at, including polystyrene, however it was not yet known if this was financially viable. Recycling of mattresses had been trialled and it would hopefully be expanded to other centres.
- Working with businesses to encourage business recycling was an area of action, however Cllr Grant was wary of setting up plants to recycle alternative materials which may be banned in the long term.
- Cllr Grant confirmed that an additional budget would be put in, with specific funding set aside for staff for the climate change project. This would be a global team across the council, with staff from each department.
- The Committee thanked the Cabinet member and noted the comments

8.7.1 Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention, Cllr Bill Borrett, gave background to the position of budgetary issues and priorities related to his portfolio:

- Adults Social Care was the largest of the demand led services to NCC and demand to this service was dependent on public need
- The promoting independence programme had focussed on managing demand through supporting people to be independent for longer, meeting the aspiration of service users who had said they wanted to remain independent
- The budget for the service was £420m, with a net of £247m. A cost overspend of 2% was being reported, of around £4m, mostly due to the pressure on purchase of care budget
- It was difficult to quantify the success of the prevention agenda, as it was

difficult to identify where people would have been without intervention however Cllr Borrett was pleased with its progress

- A £220m cost had been taken out of services to deliver last year, the reablement service had been expanded; 2000 extra people had returned home instead of to care homes because of the service
- Money had been invested to take cost out of the system; some of these costs accrued were to the NHS. Working more closely with the NHS was a key priority
- Social workers had been taken on to work with people at discharge to help them find support and meet their needs in a more personalised way using the three conversations model
- Cllr Borrett hoped that the service would achieve 80% of the £17m forecast savings
- There would be pressure from new deprivation of liberty safeguarding legislation; there was a large backlog of people who required assessment

8.7.2 The Committee questioned Cllr Borrett about strategic and financial matters related to his portfolio:

- The Vice-Chair asked whether the Council could do anything to encourage the NHS to take up their responsibilities; the Executive Director of Adult Social Services reported that Officers worked with the NHS on intervention where possible and engaged with Senior Officers to ensure close working. The Executive Director of Adult Social Services was the lead Officer for primary care and NHS across Norfolk on the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP)
- The Executive Director of Adult Social Services reported in response to a query that there were 6 specialist roles in continuing healthcare embedded in community healthcare teams to train social workers, and that there should always be a social worker present at assessment. Work was underway to encourage assessments to take place outside of a ward environment to get a more accurate picture of each person's nursing and care needs
- A Member asked if there would be workforce and care cost issues related to Brexit; Cllr Borrett noted that at that time there were vacancies, but implementation of the living wage had had a positive effect; better wages were sometimes paid for caring roles in the NHS and this could impact on staffing. Adult Social Care was supporting care providers with recruitment, training and retention of staff, for example the Association of Care Providers was being re-established
- Cllr Borrett felt that the Government position related to people without settled status was clear that they would be able to remain after Brexit and therefore that staffing would remain more stable now than it had been in the past
- A Member asked about the funding from the Government Spending Review; Cllr Borrett thought that use of a lot of this would be prescribed from Government, but had no detail on how much would be received and what it would be for
- Cllr Borrett was asked about the Adult Social Care council tax precept; he replied that he would like to look into it in more detail before committing to saying whether a rise would be recommended
- Cllr Borrett confirmed that there was a target to find £17m of savings in 2020-21; he noted that savings went back into meeting increased demand, and one-off funding from government would not allow for long term planning

- Cllr Borrett fed back from an Adult Social Care staff conference at Carrow Road which demonstrated the commitment of staff; he noted that prevention focussed on areas which also reduced the risk of dementia by 30% such as exercise, diet and learning new skills
- The aspirations around short-term funding and commitment of staff were noted by the Committee
- The Chair queried measuring success of the prevention strategy; Cllr Borrett replied that one way to do this was to look at people treated through prevention, and compare this to where they would have been without it; for example, reablement preventing people going into care homes
- The Committee thanked the Cabinet member and noted the comments

8.8.1 The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Andrew Jamieson, gave background to the Committee on the report “Financial Monitoring Report 2019-20 P4: July 2019”, which had previously been reported to Cabinet:

- Adult Social Care was forecasting an overspend in the current financial year, 2019-20, and this had been reduced from £6m to £5m; further detail was shown on page 6 of the report
- The overspend would reduce throughout the year as money was received back from the NHS and public health
- The overspend of Children’s Services had been reduced to £7m from £9m using capital receipts to assist the invest to save transformation programme
- The Spending Review funding was for one year, so did not support long term planning for the Council; approximately £18m would come to Norfolk
- The overall overspend of £11.9m gross was offset by savings from corporate finance; an underspend was caused by revised business rates, and income from insurance,
- £20m had been borrowed the previous month, consisting of two lots of £10m, and £5m at 1.83% had been borrowed this month
- The total debt of the Council was £683m at an average of 4%
- Cllr Jamieson felt that a balanced budget could be achieved in 2021 but was awaiting detail on the Government settlement; further savings may be needed in 2021-22

8.8.2 The Committee asked questions of Cllr Jamieson on the report:

- Cllr Jamieson reported that the borrowing of £20m and £5m was for the capital programme, which had been previously been reported on
- A Member noted that the debt was around 60% of the income of the Council and queried what policies had been applied when ensuring the Council’s deb was sustainable; Cllr Jamieson felt it was better to monitor debt based on the total interest being paid, which was well below what he would regard as the limit. He **agreed** to provide a written answer on the Government guidelines around this
- The Committee thanked the Cabinet member and noted the comments

9. **Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan**

9.1 The Committee considered and discussed the forward work plan.

9.2.1 The Chair reported that the cycling topic would be taken on by a Select Committee

- 9.2.2 The Chair was looking at a system for the Committee to receive briefing papers on issues which arose, so that Members could decide whether to consider them at a meeting. A formal process would be drawn up around how to circulate these briefing papers to Committee Members
- 9.2.3 The topics of “Regional Schools Commissioner” and “Norwich Opportunity Area” would be considered together as the Regional Schools Commissioner attended these meetings; an invitation had been sent to the Commissioner to attend a Meeting
- 9.3 Members discussed additions to the forward plan:
- The Vice-Chair suggested looking at capital investment in Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision; the Chair agreed that this could be added to the forward plan
 - The Chair noted that there would also be future meetings to look at the Ofsted inspection when it occurred. He would discuss how to manage this. The Vice-Chair felt there was a role for scrutiny to challenge Children’s Services as the Children’s Services Improvement Board was not continuing
 - A Member suggested looking at the climate change agenda and no deal Brexit or Brexit preparations.
 - The Chair suggested a briefing paper was circulated to members on Brexit for them to decide whether to discuss this at a future meeting
 - The Chair noted that the climate change agenda was going to Full Council in November and Cabinet for implementation; he suggested the Committee could scrutinise it after this time
 - A Member noted that capital spend for SEND provision also included in-county support for looked after children and care for looked after children out-of-county;
- 9.4 The committee **AGREED** the forward plan with the addition of the discussed items

The meeting concluded at 12.43

Chair