Scrutiny Committee

Members of the Scrutiny Committee:

Mrs M Dewsbury (Chairman)
Mr B McClenning (Vice Chairman)
Mr L Hornby
Mr T Lewis
Mr A Pond
Mrs S Thomson
Mr K Tilcock
Mr G Watt
Mr K Weeks
Mrs J Wilby
Mr M Windridge

Group Meetings

Conservatives:
Colman Room 9.00 am

Liberal Democrats:
Kett Room 9.00 am

If any member of the public wishes to speak on a non-confidential item, they may do so at the discretion of the Chairman

Agenda

Date
Friday 21 November 2014

Time
9.30 am

Place
Colman & Cavell Rooms

South Norfolk House
Long Stratton
Norwich
Norfolk
NR15 2XE

Contact
Sue Elliott  tel (01508) 533943
South Norfolk District Council
Swan Lane
Long Stratton Norwich
NR15 2XE

Email: democracy@s-norfolk.gov.uk

If you have any special requirements in order to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance

Large print version can be made available
AGENDA

At the discretion of the Chairman, a short break will be taken after the meeting has been running for approximately two hours.

1. To report apologies for absence and to identify substitute members;

2. Any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972. Urgent business may only be taken if, "by reason of special circumstances" (which will be recorded in the minutes), the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency;

3. To Receive Declarations of Interest from Members;
   (Please see guidance form and flow chart attached – page 4)

4. To confirm the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 1 October 2014
   (attached – page 6)

5. Update on Whitlingham Charitable Trust Funding Agreement; (report attached – page 11)

6. NPLaw Review 2014;
   (report attached – page 14)

7. Scrutiny Work Programme, Tracker and Cabinet Core Agenda; (attached – page 22)
Working style of the scrutiny committee and a protocol for those attending scrutiny

Independence
Members of the Scrutiny Committee will not be subject to whipping arrangements by party groups.

Member leadership
Members of the Committee will take the lead in selecting topics for and in questioning witnesses. The Committee will expect members of Cabinet, rather than officers, to take the main responsibility for answering the Committee’s questions about topics, which relate mainly to the Council’s activities.

A constructive atmosphere
Meetings of the Committee will be constructive, and not judgmental, accepting that effective overview and scrutiny is best achieved through challenging and constructive enquiry. People giving evidence at the Committee should not feel under attack.

Respect and trust
Meetings will be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and trust.

Openness and transparency
The Committee’s business will be open and transparent, except where there are sound reasons for protecting confidentiality. In particular, the minutes of the Committee’s meetings will explain the discussion and debate, so that it could be understood by those who were not present.

Consensus
Members of the Committee will work together and, while recognising political allegiances, will attempt to achieve consensus and agreed recommendations.

Impartial and independent officer advice
Officers who advise and support the Committee will give impartial and independent advice, recognising the importance of the Scrutiny Committee in the Council’s arrangements for governance, as set out in the Constitution.

Regular review
There will be regular reviews of how the overview and scrutiny process is working, and a willingness to change if it is not working well.

Programming and planning
The Scrutiny Committee will have a programme of work. Members will agree the topics to be included in the work programme, the extent of the investigation to be undertaken in relation to resources, and the witnesses to be invited to give evidence.

Managing time
The Committee will attempt to conclude the business of each meeting in reasonable time. The order of business will be arranged as far as possible to minimise the demands on the time of witnesses.
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AT MEETINGS

When declaring an interest at a meeting Members are asked to indicate whether their interest in the matter is pecuniary, or if the matter relates to, or affects a pecuniary interest they have, or if it is another type of interest. Members are required to identify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. In the case of other interests, the member may speak and vote. If it is a pecuniary interest, the member must withdraw from the meeting when it is discussed. If it affects or relates to a pecuniary interest the member has, they have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public but must then withdraw from the meeting. Members are also requested when appropriate to make any declarations under the Code of Practice on Planning and Judicial matters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you declared the interest in the register of interests as a pecuniary interest? If Yes, you will need to withdraw from the room when it is discussed.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the interest directly:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. affect yours, or your spouse / partner’s financial position?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or your spouse / partner?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Relate to a contract you, or your spouse / partner have with the Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Affect land you or your spouse / partner own</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Affect a company that you or your partner own, or have a shareholding in</td>
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<tr>
<td>If the answer is “yes” to any of the above, it is likely to be pecuniary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Please refer to the guidance given on declaring pecuniary interests in the register of interest forms. If you have a pecuniary interest, you will need to inform the meeting and then withdraw from the room when it is discussed. If it has not been previously declared, you will also need to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the interest indirectly affect or relate any pecuniary interest you have already declared, or an interest you have identified at 1-5 above?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If yes, you need to inform the meeting. When it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be an other interest. You will need to declare the interest, but may participate in discussion and voting on the item.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you made any statements or undertaken any actions that would indicate that you have a closed mind on a matter under discussion? If so, you may be predetermined on the issue; you will need to inform the meeting, and when it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.</td>
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FOR GUIDANCE REFER TO THE FLOWCHART OVERLEAF. -
PLEASE REFER ANY QUERIES TO THE MONITORING OFFICER IN THE FIRST INSTANCE -
DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

What matters are being discussed at the meeting?

Do any relate to an interest I have?

A Have I declared it as a pecuniary interest?

OR

B Does it directly affect me, my partner or spouse's financial position, in particular:
- employment, employers or businesses;
- companies in which they are a director or where they have a shareholding of more than £25,000 face value or more than 1% of nominal share holding
- land or leases they own or hold
- contracts, licenses, approvals or consents

The interest is pecuniary – disclose the interest, withdraw from the meeting by leaving the room. Do not try to improperly influence the decision.

If you have not already done so, notify the Monitoring Officer to update your declaration of interests.

The interest is related to a pecuniary interest. Disclose the interest at the meeting. You may make representations as a member of the public, but then withdraw from the

Does the matter indirectly affects or relates to a pecuniary interest I have declared, or a matter noted at B above?

The interest is not pecuniary nor affects your pecuniary interests. Disclose the interest at the meeting. You may participate in the meeting and vote

Have I declared the interest as an other interest on my declaration of interest form? OR

Does it relate to a matter highlighted at B that impacts upon my family or a close associate? OR

Does it affect an organisation I am involved with or a member of? OR

Is it a matter I have been, or have lobbied on?

You are unlikely to have an interest. You do not need to do anything further.

YES

NO

NO
SCBRUTINICOMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on 1 October 2014 at 9.30 am.

Committee Members Present: Councillors: M Dewsbury (Chairman), L Homby, T Lewis, B McClenning, A Pond, K Tilcock, G Watt, K Weeks and J Wilby

Apologies: Councillors A Pond, S Thomson and K Tilcock

Substitutes: Councillor R Savage for A Pond

Cabinet Members in Attendance: Councillors Y Bendle, M Wilby and G Wheatley

Officers in Attendance: The Director of Growth & Localism (T Horspole), the Acting Director of Business Development (D Lorimer), the Marketing & Engagement Manager (S Scott), and the Scrutiny Officer (E Goddard)

Also in attendance: Cllr C Foulger - Wymondham Town Team
Mr D Disney - Wymondham Town Team
Ms D Sarson - Diss Town Clerk
Mr I Carstairs - Harleston Town Team
Ms N Stainton - Harleston Town Team
Mr N Hart - Harleston Town Team

1121 MINUTES

With a minor addition, the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 2 July 2014, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Arising from Minute 1118, the Committee was advised that a meeting had not yet taken place between Cllr Thomson, the Council’s officers and representatives of Whitlingham Charitable Trust. The Scrutiny Officer reminded members that the Whitlingham Charitable Trust Funding Agreement was already on the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for discussion by the Committee on 21 November 2014, when it was hoped that further information would be available.
Members considered the report of the Director of Growth and Localism which reviewed the progress of South Norfolk Council’s Market Towns’ Initiative and outlined the proposals to develop the next phase of the Initiative.

Cllr M Wilby welcomed six Town Teams Representatives to the meeting and provided members with a brief outline of the work already undertaken by members, SNC officers and the Town Teams for each of the Market Towns covered by the initiative (Diss, Harleston, Loddon and Wymondham). He commended the Town Teams on their enthusiasm and commitment, and was pleased to advise the Committee that many successful outcomes had already been achieved during phase one of the project.

The Director of Growth and Localism further explained the work of the Market Towns’ Initiative, advising members that one of the key objectives of the project was to promote the market towns both individually and collectively to increase the number of people visiting and using them. The Committee was informed that much work had been undertaken to increase footfall by organising events for local residents and new visitors, many of whom it was hoped would return, and by ensuring the towns were clean and had good signage. Members were advised that the Marketing and Engagement Manager had assisted in many of the successes achieved by the Market Towns’ Initiative but, as she had been promoted within the Council, it had been decided that a new, full time Market Towns’ Co-ordinator be appointed to work closely with the Town Teams and to drive forward the Initiative.

In response to a member’s question regarding the future intentions of the project and whether other towns and large villages could be included at a later date, the Director of Growth and Localism agreed that there were several other parts of South Norfolk which might benefit from the Initiative, notably Costessey and Long Stratton. He advised that consideration would be given to the expansion of the project in a future phase, but stressed the importance of achieving successes first with the four Market Towns already covered by the scheme. Furthermore, the intention was that South Norfolk Council would continue to provide professional assistance and assist in the funding of the project for a two year period, but it was hoped that through experience and skills learned during the first phases, the Towns would build autonomy and begin to self-fund as the Initiative continued. The Acting Director of Business Development added that funding had been secured through the New Homes Bonus for 2015/16, and although it was hoped that future funding would be provided, this was dependent upon the outcome of the election in 2015.

The Marketing & Engagement Manager provided members with background information on how the Council had commissioned Towns Alive to conduct a benchmarking survey for Loddon, Wymondham and Harleston to give officers baseline data by which to measure the success of the Market Towns Initiative. Diss had already commissioned their survey separately. The Committee was advised that much work had been undertaken to determine the unique qualities offered by the individual towns in order for their identities to be established and so that their individual ‘brands’ could be established. Members considered how the role of the ‘high street’ had changed over the past decade, with the success of internet shopping. It was agreed that the role of the market town retailer had become more difficult and the need for diversity and innovation in driving footfall was becoming more important. The Committee was pleased to note that many successful events had taken place as part of the Market Towns’ Initiative over the past year and that many such events had been arranged on days when the footfall would have usually been low, to attract those people who would not have visited otherwise.
A discussion followed around the necessity of signage to Market Towns, members feeling that increasing footfall was paramount to the success of the project. Officers agreed that this was an important issue but added that only a relatively small number of people would decide to visit a town spontaneously, and advised that much work was being undertaken to improve ‘branding’ for market towns to improve the numbers of people who would plan a visit. Signage and advertising was also discussed particularly for Diss Railway Station, where it was felt that a promotion of the town centre would be of interest to commuters and might encourage people to visit.

Members considered ways in which tourism could be promoted, suggesting that areas for coaches to park might improve tourism and encourage tour companies to run whole or half day visits to the Towns. It was also suggested that Wymondham and Dereham could be twinned and that people could be encouraged to travel via the steam train which ran regularly between the two towns. This would promote a local attraction for visitors as well as encouraging those who did not drive to explore alternative shopping facilities.

Members discussed various ways in which footfall could be improved, commenting that many other towns, where large, non-retail offices were close by, benefitted from good footfall at lunchtimes when workers visited the town centres to buy lunch and other goods.

The Marketing and Engagement Manager advised the Committee that SNC had offered a programme of specially targeted training to retail businesses which had been delivered by the Retail Skills Academy, and many participants were starting to put skills learned during training into use. She also stressed the importance for retailers to work together in driving footfall, stating that competition between shopkeepers was no longer a main issue and that by local business people working together should be one of the main strategies to achieve success for all. Members suggested and agreed that, although the four market towns had different needs and difficulties, it would be useful for them to meet together and share ideas, views and experiences.

Following comments made by a member regarding the cleanliness of some of the areas around the market towns, the Director of Growth and Localism agreed that he would ask the Director of Housing and Environment to address the issue. He further agreed to look into reports that a bicycle stand had been removed by the Council in Wymondham.

After lengthy discussion, the Chairman invited the Town Teams Representatives to share their views and report on the progress of of the Market Towns Initiative. Representatives from Harleston, Wymondham and Diss all gave individual presentations to the Committee.

Harleston
Mr Carstairs, the Harleston Town Team Chairman, provided members with a visual presentation which demonstrated various community events held in the town centre. The Committee was advised that, although the layout of the Town restricted the types of events which could be held and often required the road to be closed, organised events had been well-supported and local businesses were keen to enhance the community experience within the Town. Mr Carstairs thanked the Council for officer and monetary support throughout the year, adding that he wished to discuss a few points in the report with officers away from the meeting.

Mr Hunt, the Harleston Town Team Environment Chairman, echoed the comments of Mr Carstairs, adding that the Team had identified 50-60 safety issues in the town centre which
had been discussed at a meeting between SNC, Norfolk County Council Highways Department, Norfolk Police and the Harleston Town Team.

Ms Stainton, the Harleston Town Team Events Chairman, commended the Harleston Town Team on their hard work and achievements, adding that they had a very full programme of events. The Committee was pleased to note that support from the community had grown and retailers were becoming more aware that working together benefitted the whole Town and were keen to develop the Initiative further.

Members were pleased that there had been successes in Harleston and that good progress was being made. Enquiries were made regarding the bus service to the town centre and Mr Hunt stated that although the local services were generally good, many small nearby villages were not serviced. It was suggested that a private bus company might be interested in providing services to these areas and Mr Hunt provided details of a local coach company who officers might like to contact.

Wymondham
Cllr Foulger, Wymondham Town Team Representative, gave a brief summary of the progress of the Market Towns’ Initiative in Wymondham, advising the Committee that the needs and problems in Wymondham were very different to those in Harleston in that although local transport was excellent, residents of the Town generally did not visit the centre, preferring instead to travel to work and shop in Norwich.

Mr Disney, Wymondham Town Team Representative, explained how local business people in the Town had formed a limited company to address local issues and were working together with SNC on the Market Towns’ Initiative. Members were pleased to hear that the experiences had generally been positive and the Town had welcomed the policies. One main issue for the town centre was the lack of footfall and interest from Wymondham’s own residents. According to a survey held over two days, it was noted that over 50% of people in the town centre were visitors. The Committee were advised that several successful events had been held in the Town including a carnival and a talent contest. Mr Disney stressed the need for SNC to provide co-ordination and clear communication as the Town Team was keen to progress the project further.

A discussion followed around the impact of the Morrisons supermarket on the edge of the Town. The importance of local community groups engaging with Morrisons was stressed, to ensure that all businesses, large and small, realised the benefits of working together.

Diss
Ms Sarson, Diss Town Clerk, provided the Committee with a summary of the progress of the Market Towns’ Initiative in Diss. Members were advised that, although funding of £10,000 had been secured for Diss with the help of their Member of Parliament, this remained unspent and the Town Team had not met since the start of the Market Towns’ Initiative. The Committee heard that the Town Team Representatives had felt somewhat demotivated and that work would need to be done to restore their previous enthusiasm and commitment to the project. Ms Sarson pointed out that whereas other town centres mainly consisted of local retailers, the high street in Diss mainly consisted of national chain stores so opportunities for local business people to work together were more limited.

Positive features of Diss, in comparison to the other Market Towns’ difficulties, included that the close proximity of supermarkets actually increased footfall in the Town and that the layout of the town centre would allow coaches to park in the market place on non-market days, although signage to the town centre was raised as an issue.
A discussion followed around the Heritage Triangle which would greatly benefit from funding to enhance this area and it was felt that the Town Team and local retailers could join and work together to ensure that the rest of the Town could progress along with the improvements and enhancements made to this area, as a wider project.

Summary

Following presentations from the Market Towns represented at the meeting, Mr Hunt advised the Committee that funding for the whole of rural Norfolk might be available from the Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Chairman thanked the Town Team Representatives for attending the meeting and sharing their views with the Committee.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Support the recruitment of a full time Market Towns’ Co-ordinator and to ensure that once in place, their contact information be communicated to the Town Teams.

2. Review the South Norfolk Market Towns’ Initiative once the Market Towns’ Co-ordinator was in post, and invite Town Teams’ Representatives back to the Scrutiny Committee in one year to report back on the progress with the Initiative.

3. **RECOMMEND TO CABINET**

   a. that a ‘conference’ be arranged to take place as soon as possible so that Town Teams’ Representatives can share their experiences and discuss the points raised at this meeting. Local members to also be invited.
   
   b. that the Town Teams should meet regularly to discuss their experiences and share ideas collectively.

**1123 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND THE CABINET CORE AGENDA**

Members noted the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.

(The meeting concluded at 12.35 pm)

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Chairman
Update on Whitlingham Charitable Trust Funding Agreement

Scrutiny Committee Members are asked to consider the update on discussions with the Whitlingham Charitable Trust following the Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 2nd July 2014.

Cabinet member(s): Ward(s) affected:
Martin Wilby Stoke Holy Cross, Rockland

Contact Officer, telephone number, and e-mail:
Mark Heazle, 01508 533979 mheazle@s-norfolk.gov.uk

1. - Purpose of Update

1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the discussions between South Norfolk Council and the Whitlingham Charitable Trust following the Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 2nd July 2014 at which members considered the effectiveness of the Trust in providing management of the Whitlingham Country Park and made a number of recommendations.

2. - Background

2.1. At the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on the 2nd July members considered the effectiveness of the Trust in providing management of the Whitlingham Country Park. While appreciative of the work of the Trust in providing a venue for peaceful recreation, members expressed concerns regarding certain aspects, in particular the car park management.

A number of recommendations were made by the committee as follows:

Request that (before any further financial contribution is made by South Norfolk Council) the WCT and partners at the Broads Authority liaise with South Norfolk Council officers and the Council’s representative, Cllr S Thomson to:

(i) Develop robust outcome measures and performance indicators with which the Council’s investment can be justified.

(ii) Consider:

- Improving signage regarding car park fees and how the park is funded.
• Seeking donations and legacy funding
• Three year financial forecasting
• Increasing promotion of the park to increase visitor numbers.
• Installing cameras at the car parks to detect/deter crime.

2.2. Following the meeting of Scrutiny Committee, the matter of the Whitlingham Charitable Trust was debated further at a meeting of the Full Council on the 7th July 2014 and the Leader was requested to formally write to the Trust outlining the Council’s concerns.

3. - Update

3.1. For reasons beyond the control of the officer and member representative, discussions with the Trust were not able to take place as soon as would have been hoped, but negotiations with regards to the Trust adopting a performance management framework have begun and it is hoped that this will be adopted at a meeting of the Trust in early December 2014. A number of indicators have been suggested to the Trust that covers user satisfaction, promotion and marketing, volunteering, income generation, financial management and impact on the local economy, essentially the elements that Scrutiny committee requested the Trust to look at. The framework has been developed using indicators sourced from a variety of other bodies responsible for the management of parks and open spaces including other local authorities and members of the National Park family. It is expected that the intelligence provided by the indicators will be useful to the Trust and its partners but will be proportionate in the resources required to collate and administer.

3.2. Following the discussion at Scrutiny Committee and the Leader’s letter to Trust, a number of improvements have been instigated by them. These can be summarised as follows:

• 46 new signs were installed during October across the Trust’s car parks that address the most common misunderstandings concerning the requirements for registration number entry, the methods for topping up to the required tariff level at any time during a visitor’s stay and that tariffs apply from entry to exit. The wording of the signs was generated in consultation with frontline staff at Whitlingham who deal with the majority of queries in the first instance. Officers of South Norfolk Council were also consulted on the proposed signage.

• The Trust has not introduced 24 hour parking charged as planned, which was a key cause for concern for South Norfolk Council’s elected members. This had been considered by the Trust to act as a deterrent to anti-social in an around the car parks in the evenings and other mechanisms are now being considered in consultation with Norfolk Constabulary.

• The Trust has negotiated a reduction in the parking Charge Notice Notices issued by ParkingEye to £54 if paid within 14 days.

• Deferred any increases to the parking tariffs in 2014 until a later date.

• Instigated daily cash collections from the payment machines, in an attempt to reduce the likelihood of theft.
• Introduced bulk discounts for annual permits for clubs, charities and the Whitlingham camp site, with annual permits for all other users remaining at £30 a year or £20 for Blue Badge holders.

4. - Conclusion

4.1. It would appear as if the Trust has addressed a number of concerns that the Council had, in particular with respect to improving the signage within the car parks and not introducing a 24 hour parking regime.

4.2. The anticipated adoption of the proposed performance management framework by the Trust will ensure that their effectiveness in managing and operating the park is continually monitored and any financial contribution made by South Norfolk Council can be justified.

5. - Action Required

5.1. Members are requested to note the contents of the update and to pass comment as required.

Background Papers

Whitlingham Charitable Trust Funding Agreement
Review of nplaw: update

This is the third review undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee following the transfer of the legal service to nplaw in April 2012.

This report highlights that the arrangements are considered to be effective for the Council, providing a strong and resilient service that is valued by Council officers.

Cabinet member(s): Garry Wheatley
Ward(s) affected: All
Contact Officer, telephone number, and e-mail: Leah Mickleborough 01508 533954 lmickleborough@s-norfolk.gov.uk

1. - Purpose of Scrutiny
1.1. In April 2012, the legal service of South Norfolk Council transferred to nplaw. Since that time, the Scrutiny Committee has undertaken a periodic review to ensure that the Council is receiving an effective service and the original objectives in transferring the Service are being achieved.

2. - Scope of Scrutiny
2.1. The Scrutiny Committee have requested four areas of attention to be considered, as is set out in the findings section below.
2.2. In addition, the review last year highlighted that the Committee would appreciate further information as to how nplaw and the Council are working together to progress s.106 agreements, which forms a key part in ensuring the Council meets its Development Management performance objectives.

3. - Findings
Financial position and savings achieved

3.1. Appendix 1 to this report highlights the financial out-turn on legal services to 2013/14, and the current expected out-turn for 2014/15.
3.2. The Scrutiny Report in 2013 highlighted the need to view the (then) financial performance figures with some scepticism due to a strong likelihood of additional Counsel fees being incurred in relation to two
3.3. These events materialised, resulting in the service incurring an additional £90,000 more than reported at the time. Approximately £66,000 of this related to fees on the two planning inquiries, and a further £20,000 was accrued in relation to the complex legal case. It is pleasing to report that as well as the Secretary of State upholding the Council’s position in relation to both planning cases, very recently, the Council has been successful in the complex legal case, and are currently engaged in a costs settlement process.

3.4. It was reported to the Scrutiny Committee in 2013 that in line with the Contract, the Council was expecting to incur additional fees due to the high level of use of nplaw. This did occur for 2013/14, however the level of usage did stabilise towards the end of the year and so the additional costs were in line with the mid-year estimate reported to Scrutiny.

3.5. We are anticipating that the 2014/15 position should be less volatile, and at the end of September the Council was 8% higher than the benchmark figure for nplaw costs. The Council will only be liable to pay additional amounts where the costs are 10% higher than the benchmark, and then only for the amount above the 10% (i.e. if the Council was 11% higher than benchmark, they are required to pay an additional 1%). Counsel costs are charged separately, and were incurred in relation to the legal cases but, as per paragraph 3.3, are currently subject to a settlement.

3.6. Our profit share from nplaw has remained in line with the budgeted figures included in the annual business plan for the service, and is proposed to do so for 2014/15. These figures have been included in our income projections for the year.

3.7. Members of Scrutiny will also be aware of the current programme of structural works within the County Council offices. nplaw are in the midst of moving to one of the refurbished areas, offering them a modern, fresh and open environment.

Performance and Satisfaction with the service provided

3.8. The results of the annual user survey are attached at Appendix 2. This year, 16 users responded to the survey which reflects the fact that a limited number of officers act as the main commissioners of nplaw’s services.

3.9. Following feedback from the Scrutiny review in 2013, the survey has been modified in that overall, officers are requested to evaluate the service on a 5 point scale from very poor to excellent. We aim to ensure that at least 85% of respondents consider the service to be good. This was achieved, and moreover 42% considered the service to be very good or excellent. Disappointingly, one user identified significant issues with the service but also identified they had not taken any previous action to raise this. Officers are therefore producing a blog on the e-link system to raise awareness of the outcomes of the survey and encourage officers to raise issues where they experience these.

3.10. In the past, the speed of responses from nplaw has been highlighted as an issue. It is therefore pleasing to report that this position appears to have
improved, in that 85% now rate the speed of response as being good or better.

Reliance on legal advice provided by Solicitors

3.11. The use of nplaw seems to have stabilised at present. There is always a careful balance, as whilst legal advice can be expensive, we also must recognise that the current portfolio of work within the Council, such as the expansion of the building control service or the developments at Poringland and Cygnet House, demands a high degree of legal advice to ensure that the risks associated are fully understood.

s.106 Agreements

3.12. In undertaking their review last year, the Scrutiny Committee asked for further details relating to the processing of s.106 agreements; this was particularly important with the approaching introduction of CIL. Weekly monitoring spreadsheets were set up that were updated by both South Norfolk and nplaw, to give a clear indication on the current stage of each agreement. All key s.106 agreements were successfully completed prior to CIL being introduced. Since CIL, the number of s.106 agreements has reduced, and the monitoring spreadsheets are now formally reviewed fortnightly.

3.13. The Team Leader for Property, Environment and Regulation at nplaw is currently working on developing standard s.106 agreements. Although there will be opportunity to vary the agreements, the standard documents will enable developers to have a very clear view of the expectations of South Norfolk prior to progressing development, and therefore hopefully enable further improvements in the speed in which such agreements are processed.

2014/15 audit

3.14. An audit was undertaken in the first quarter of the year. Just one medium priority recommendation was raised, that the results from the annual user survey be retained; all results for the survey since 2012 are held on the “surveymonkey” online system and available for review and as such this issue is resolved.

4. - Relevant Corporate Priorities

4.1. Driving services through being businesslike, efficient and customer aware.

Implications and Risks

4.2. Financial – if usage of nplaw does increase significantly in Q3 and Q4, then the Council will be expected to pay additional fees in respect of the service. Budget contingencies have been put in place to accommodate this.

5. - Conclusion

5.1. The nplaw service continues to generally receive a high satisfaction rating amongst Council users. Although significant additional costs were incurred in 2013/14, these substantively related to costs on planning inquiries and a complex legal case, and it is expected this will not re-appear for 2014/15.
6. - **Action Required**

6.1. The Committee are requested to assess the performance of the service, making any recommendations as necessary.
### Costs of South Norfolk Council Legal Service Provision

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Direct cost of legal service</th>
<th>Costs of legal services charged to other services</th>
<th>Income obtained</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Actual Difference</th>
<th>% Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>£351,970</td>
<td>£32,881</td>
<td>-£17,248</td>
<td>£367,603</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>£312,345</td>
<td>£29,808</td>
<td>-£20,705</td>
<td>£321,448</td>
<td>£46,155.00</td>
<td>12.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>£330,232</td>
<td>£31,393</td>
<td>-£58,426</td>
<td>£303,199</td>
<td>£18,249.34</td>
<td>5.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>£441,114</td>
<td>£39,798</td>
<td>-£120,911</td>
<td>£360,001</td>
<td>-£56,801.88</td>
<td>-18.73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>£405,791</td>
<td>£22,075</td>
<td>-£128,825</td>
<td>£299,041</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

- **Direct cost of legal service** - for 2010/11 and 2011/12 this balance is the expenditure costs charged to the legal service team.
- In 2012-13 and 2013-14, this is the fixed fee for nplaw costs plus "disbursements" (mostly Barrister costs).
- For 2014-15, this represents the current budget expectation and anticipated Counsel costs.

- **Costs of legal services charged to other services** - for 2010/11 to 2013/14 this is the expenditure costs for legal services charged to services other than the legal team.
- For 2014-15, this is the budgeted cost.

- **Income obtained** - this reflects the legal service income received for 2010-11 to 2012/13. In 2010/11 and 2011/12, this includes income received for services performed on behalf of Saffron Housing Trust.
- In 2012/13 and 2013/14, this includes the "profit share" from nplaw.
- In 2014/15, this includes the budgeted nplaw profit share and income anticipated from a Court award of costs.
Nplaw user survey outcomes

Q1. How frequently do you use nplaw?

- Less than monthly
- Monthly
- Weekly

Q2. Do you use legal services more or less frequently since the transfer to nplaw?

Please note – 6 people noted this was not applicable as they did not work at South Norfolk Council at the time of transfer to nplaw.

- Less Frequently
- About the same
- Not applicable
Q3. How do you rate the speed of responses from nplaw?

*Note – no users identified the service as being “very poor”*

![Pie chart showing responses](chart.png)

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Poor

Q4. Have you had any issues with nplaw – and have you raised these?

- Not had any issues with nplaw
- Have had issues but not raised them
- Yes - raised with nplaw or C&RM / S&IR

Q5. If you have identified that you have issues, have these been resolved?

Only 4 users answered this question, in 3 cases identifying they had been resolved. The final user who identified their issues had not been resolved also identified they had taken no action to rectify these.
Q6. Overall, how do you rate the nplaw service?

![Rating Pie Chart]

Note – no users rated the service as very poor

Q7. Have you got any other comments to make?

The following points were raised:

- Good advice on employment law but concerned that nplaw is reliant on one key officer in this area
- Ensuring that the advice is from South Norfolk Council’s perspective, and not just Norfolk County Council’s perspective
- It is intended to hold regular meetings with nplaw on debt collection to monitor outcomes and measure success
- The wide range of solicitors and advisors is very helpful
- The nplaw staff are “jolly nice” to work with
**Agenda Item 7**

**Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme**

In setting future Scrutiny **TOPICS**, the Committee is asked to consider the following: T*imely – O*bjective – P*erformance – I*nterest – C*orporate Priority

T  Is this the right **time** to review this issue and is there sufficient **Officer time** and resource to conduct the review? What is the **timescale**?

O  What is the reason for review; do officers have a clear **objective**?

P  Can **performance** in this area be improved by input from Scrutiny?

I  Is there sufficient **interest** (particular from the public)? The concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny.

C  Will the review assist the Council achieve its **Corporate Priorities**?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of meeting</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Organisation / Officer / Responsible Cabinet Member</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Method(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 Dec 14 (Monday)</td>
<td>No items scheduled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Jan 15</td>
<td>Council representation on outside bodies</td>
<td>Compliance and Risk Manager &amp; Cllr M Wilby</td>
<td>For members to consider the role of member representatives on outside bodies and how they feedback. Consideration to also be given to guidance, the personal liabilities that may be involved and the role of supporting officers.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Feb 15</td>
<td>Budget 2015/16</td>
<td>Head of Finance &amp; Cllr G Wheatley</td>
<td>For members to consider the Council’s 2015/16 budget and the recommendations of Cabinet. For Scrutiny Committee to make its own recommendations to Council regarding the budget for consideration at its meeting at the end of February 2015.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Feb 15</td>
<td>Outcome of Scrutiny Directorate Plan Workshop</td>
<td>Business Improvement Manager &amp; all Cabinet</td>
<td>For members to assess the outcomes of the Scrutiny-led Directorate Plan Workshop in December 2014. Members to receive feedback regarding the recommendations/suggestions that were put forward at the Workshop.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 March 15</td>
<td>Meeting to be held only in the event of a call-in</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 April 15</td>
<td>Market Towns Initiative</td>
<td>Head of Economic Growth and the Market Towns Co-ordinator &amp; Cllr J Fuller</td>
<td>For members to receive an update with regard to the Market Towns Initiative, particularly in relation to meetings held of all Town Teams and following the appointment of the Market Towns Co-ordinator.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 May 15</td>
<td>Meeting to be held only in the event of a call-in</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 July 15</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Working Review</td>
<td>Compliance and Risk Manager &amp; Cllr M Wilby</td>
<td>Members to review the new way of neighbourhood working, particularly the criteria for allocating funding from both budgets, how members and the Chairmen have worked together, and the outcomes that have been achieved.</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Aug 15</td>
<td>Meeting to be held only in the event of a call-in</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Sept 15</td>
<td>Market Towns Initiative</td>
<td>Head of Economic Growth and the Market Towns Co-ordinator &amp; Cllr J Fuller</td>
<td>For Members to receive an update on the Market Towns Initiative and evaluate forward planning of the Scheme. Representatives of the Town Teams to be invited to allow members to gauge success of the Scheme from the perspective of the Teams</td>
<td>Officer report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of meeting</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Organisation / Officer / Responsible Cabinet Member</td>
<td>Objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 Nov 15</td>
<td>No items scheduled</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 Dec 15 (Mon)</td>
<td>No items scheduled</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

themselves. Scrutiny Committee to make recommendations as appropriate.
## Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker 2014/15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Responsible Officer &amp; Committee</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Progress</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 May 2014</td>
<td>Review of South Norfolk Job Clubs</td>
<td>Mike Pursehouse</td>
<td>1. endorse the report;</td>
<td></td>
<td>A review of job clubs is being carried out in autumn 2014 to bring the agenda much closer towards the early help work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. support the approach of developing a more targeted 'jobs service' as part of the early-help integrated approach;</td>
<td></td>
<td>The main theme of early help running through the programme is economic resilience and so job clubs are an integral part of this work. Future focus will be on working with individuals (both young and old) who are nearly work ready, to provide the final piece of support to get them into work or training. The review will also look at how we engage businesses to understand current and future need.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3. recommend that officers consider:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>▪ establishing targets and ensuring these are monitored;</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>▪ requesting that the provider collect information regarding repeat attendees so reporting can be standardised;</td>
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<td>▪ improving advertising and creating an identity;</td>
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<td>▪ evaluating the focus of the Jobs Clubs and developing them to become more interactive;</td>
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<td>▪ attending schools to promote the service at an early stage;</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>▪ exploring the possibility of developing two schemes – one for young people and another to cater for more mature adults.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 July 2014</td>
<td>Review of Whitlingham Charitable Trust Funding</td>
<td>Mark Heazle</td>
<td>1. Endorse the contents of the report</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Request that (before any further financial contribution is made by South Norfolk Council) the WCT and partners at the Broads Authority</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Responsible Officer &amp; Committee</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 July 2014</td>
<td>The welfare reform agenda one year on - an update</td>
<td>Amanda Adams</td>
<td>To endorse the report and the work taken to implement the welfare reform agenda</td>
<td>No action required</td>
<td>Members are fully aware of the impact of welfare reform upon the residents and customers and are happy with the work that has been carried out to date to assist residents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Responsible Officer &amp; Committee</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Oct 2014</td>
<td>Review of Market Towns Initiative</td>
<td>Tim Horspole / Sophie Scott and Cabinet</td>
<td>The Committee <strong>RESOLVED</strong> to:</td>
<td>No action required</td>
<td>Item added to Work Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Support the recruitment of a full time Market Towns’ Co-ordinator and to ensure that once in place, their contact information be communicated to the Town Teams.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Review the South Norfolk Market Towns’ Initiative once the Market Towns’ Co-ordinator was in post, and invite Town Teams’ Representatives back to the Scrutiny Committee in one year to report back on the progress with the Initiative.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>3. <strong>RECOMMEND TO CABINET</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cabinet endorsed the recommendations of Scrutiny Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a. that a conference be arranged to take place as soon as possible so that Town Teams’ Representatives can share their experiences and discuss the points raised at this meeting.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. that the Town Teams should meet regularly to discuss their experiences and share ideas collectively.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Decision</td>
<td>Key Decision/Item</td>
<td>Lead Officer</td>
<td>Cabinet Member</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Dec</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Market Towns Initiative</td>
<td>T Horspole</td>
<td>M Wilby</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Costessey Conservation Area Appraisal and Mgt Plan</td>
<td>Helen Mellors</td>
<td>K Kiddie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Pre-Application Planning Charges</td>
<td>H Mellors</td>
<td>K Kiddie</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>FULL COUNCIL 15 DECEMBER</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Jan</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>Long Stratton Area Action Plan</td>
<td>A Nicholls</td>
<td>J Fuller</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Feb</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Performance Risk and Revenue Budget Q3</td>
<td>E Goddard/W Salmons/M Fernandez-Graham</td>
<td>G Wheatley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Capital &amp; Treasury Report Q 3</td>
<td>M Fernandez-Graham</td>
<td>G Wheatley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Budget Consultation</td>
<td>M Fernandez-Graham</td>
<td>G Wheatley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K</td>
<td>Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2015/16</td>
<td>D Lorimer</td>
<td>G Wheatley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K</td>
<td>Capital Programme April 2015 to March 2018</td>
<td>D Lorimer</td>
<td>G Wheatley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Corporate Enforcement Policy</td>
<td>B Wade</td>
<td>K Kiddie/Y Bendle</td>
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<td><strong>FULL COUNCIL 23 FEBRUARY</strong></td>
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<td>23 March</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 April</td>
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<td><strong>COUNCIL AGM 1 JUNE</strong></td>
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<td>15 Jun</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Key decisions are those which result in income, expenditure or savings with a gross full year effect of £100,000 or 10% of the Council’s net portfolio budget whichever is the greater which has not been included in the relevant portfolio budget, or are significant (e.g. in environmental, physical, social or economic) in terms of its effect on the communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions in the area of the local authority.