

## **NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

#### **MINUTES**

of meeting held on **5 September 2012** at Loxley House

from 2.03 pm to 3.40 pm

- ✓ Councillor Parbutt (Chair)
- Councillor Bryan
- ✓ Councillor Choudhry
- ✓ Councillor Culley
- ✓ Councillor Dewinton
- ✓ Councillor Hartshorne
- ✓ Councillor Healy
- ✓ Councillor Jenkins
- ✓ Councillor Khan
- ✓ Councillor Klein
- Councillor Molife
- ✓ Councillor Parton
- ✓ Councillor Watson
- ✓ Councillor S Williams

✓ indicates present at meeting

#### **In Attendance**

- Mrs B Denby - 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Advocate – co-opted member
- Ms L Jones - Interim Head of Policy
- Mr J Rhodes - Nottingham Plan Programme Manager
- Ms A Kaufhold ) Overview and Scrutiny Review Co-ordinator
- Mr N McMEnamin )

#### **22 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of interests were made.

#### **23 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2012, copies of which had been circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

## **24 THE NOTTINGHAM PLAN TO 2020**

**RESOLVED** that the report of the Head of Democratic Services, copies of which had been circulated be noted.

## **25 THE NOTTINGHAM PLAN TO 2020- PRESENTATION**

The Committee received for information a presentation provided by Ms L Jones, Interim Head of Policy, and Mr J Rhodes, Nottingham Plan Programme Manager.

The information provided in the presentation included:

- the Nottingham Plan to 2020 had emerged from extensive consultation work on the 2030 Vision, and the current Annual report provided an assessment of achievements and challenges in Year 2 (2011/12) of the 10-year plan;
- the achievements highlighted in the report included there being a strong focus on supporting economic growth, with such developments as the Nottingham Growth Plan and Nottingham Jobs Fund, as well as ongoing infrastructure developments, such as Phase 2 of Nottingham Express Transit and train station transformation. Education levels continued to improve, while neighbourhood satisfaction levels and quality of housing infrastructure continued to rise;
- Nottingham was considered safer, greener and cleaner, with the lowest crime levels since the 1980s, reduced carbon emissions and increased citizen satisfaction with action taken to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour;
- 17 of the Plan's 37 performance indicators had not been met, and this was attributed in the main to the current economic downturn, Nottingham's performance in comparison with other local authorities, whereby improvements made in Nottingham had not matched the levels of improvement made elsewhere, and the high levels of ambition inherent in the original performance targets. Particular economic targets, such as creating 20,000 new jobs in the science and technology sector, reflected aspirations at a time when economic conditions were more positive, while difficulties in achieving health targets, for reducing child obesity and alcohol-related hospital admissions, for example, were mirrored elsewhere in the country;
- The One Nottingham Board was clear that the ambitious targets in the original Plan were to be maintained, and that the Board's Performance Board was to examine areas where performance and direction of travel was not in line with projections.

During discussion the following comments were made and information was provided in response to questions:

- in response to councillor comments, it was explained that there had been lots of upheaval among partner agencies in aligning community boundaries, and while it was too early to assess the impact of the changes, the task of achieving alignment should not be underestimated. In the wider community development context, several councillors expressed the view that the objectives of the localism agenda were not being supported by appropriate resource allocation;
- it was acknowledged that there remained much to do in respect of tackling crime. However, Mr Rhodes stood by the assertion that crime was at its lowest level since the 1980s, and that the level and profile of crimes had undergone a transformation since the historically high levels of 2003. Nottingham's performance was assessed by the Home Office against a number of comparator cities, including Liverpool and Manchester, and performance had continually improved in recent years. The highest volume offence was currently shoplifting, which marked a significant shift away from serious acquisitive crime and violent crime, though there was no room for complacency. Councillors requested information in respect of drugs usage in Nottingham, particularly in respect of cannabis;
- in respect of health issues, disappointment was expressed that alcohol admissions to A&E was on the rise. In response, it was explained that the mainstream population was drinking too much and that social marketing initiatives were required to address the issue. The point was also made that the cultural shift in Nottingham in respect of smoking levels had taken a long time to take effect and, with the public health function returning to local authority control from April 2013, there was an opportunity to raise the profile, both of problem drinking and of alcohol-related services;
- in response to councillor comments about the effectiveness of training initiatives to address worklessness, Ms Jones explained that the employment skills profile of Nottingham citizens was not where it needed to be to compete in the global market, and addressing this issue was a key Manifesto commitment;
- Ms Jones undertook to compile information in respect of developing policy and funding provision for Family Support, as she understood there to be considerably more resource earmarked than that reported at the meeting by the Voluntary and Community Sector representative;
- Ms Jones highlighted the Growth Plan as an issue for consideration by the Committee at a future meeting.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the appreciation of the Committee for the information provided by Ms Jones and Mr Rhodes be recorded;**
- (2) that the Committee receive information in respect of:**

- (a) **drugs usage in Nottingham, and in particular cannabis usage;**
- (b) **policy development and resource allocation for Family support;**
- (3) **that the Interim Head of Policy provide the date of the meeting of the One Nottingham Performance Panel, following which two councillors from the Committee would be appointed to participate and engage directly with the discussion on challenging performance targets within the Plan;**
- (4) **that the Committee consider adding the Growth Plan to the Committee's Work Programme.**

## **26 LOCAL AUTHORITY HEALTH SCRUTINY – PROPOSALS FOR CONSULTATION**

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Democratic Services, copies of which had been circulated, highlighting proposed national changes to arrangements to refer unsupported changes to NHS services to the Secretary of State for Health, and providing a consultation response for consideration and approval.

The report as introduced by Mr N McMenamin, Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator, who explained that the proposals would require local authorities to:

- determine a timescale within which a referral could be made,
- consider and take account of the financial implications of a referral,
- secure full Council approval to make a referral,
- form joint health scrutiny committees to look at cross-boundary NHS service changes,
- go through an intermediate referral stage via the NHS Commissioning Board.

Mr McMenamin explained that while the City Council had not previously submitted a referral to the Secretary of State, the proposed changes to arrangements would have implications for the operation of the Joint City and County Health Scrutiny Committee, and would politicise the health scrutiny function. The proposed response to the Department of Health was not supportive for the proposed changes.

In the discussion which followed, there was consensus that the proposals were not in the best interests of maintaining an independent, non-political scrutiny function, that current joint health scrutiny arrangements worked well and, in particular, that it was not desirable to require full Council approval of health scrutiny decisions.

**RESOLVED that, subject to minor presentational amendments, the consultation response at Appendix 2 to the report be submitted to the Department of Health on behalf of the City Council.**

## **27 PROGRAMME FOR SCRUTINY**

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Democratic Services, copies of which had been circulated.

The report was introduced by Ms A Kaufhold, Overview and Scrutiny Review Co-ordinator, who explained that, in order to ensure that the work programme remained relevant, focussed and achievable, it was proposed that a methodology and criteria toolkit would be used to assess and prioritise current items on the work programme. The toolkit, at appendix 1 to the report, was based on Centre for Public Scrutiny best practice, and included applying 'public interest', 'range and scope of impact' and 'ability to change or influence' challenges, among others, to prospective items for scrutiny.

Allied to this approach, Mr McMenamain explained that it was proposed to pilot the operation of what was known as the Hertfordshire model of scrutiny, at appendix 5 to the report, whereby a scrutiny item was the subject of a one-off meeting involving key stakeholders. While not appropriate for all issues, adopting such an approach could help greater throughput of scrutiny activity. The approach was considered appropriate for the forthcoming review of the Housing Nottingham Plan consultation document.

In the discussion which followed, several issues were raised and points made:

- it was explained that the revised approach would not compromise the principle that scrutiny was a councillor-led activity. Rather, it was intended that impetus would be given to taking forward issues that been awaiting scrutiny for some time, and to making a judgement on whether historic issues still required scrutiny;
- councillors commented that the representations were being made to delay the start of the pre-election period in advance of Police and Crime Commissioner elections, to minimise disruption to the scrutiny function;
- councillors requested information on the types of issues addressed by Hertfordshire County Council under the 'Hertfordshire Model'.

### **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the proposed methodology for prioritising and managing the work programme as detailed at appendix 1 to the report, and the methodology for conducting appropriate scrutiny (the Hertfordshire Model) as detailed at appendix 5 to the report, be approved;**
- (2) that the Chair and Ms Kaufhold conduct a review of current items on the work programme, applying both methodologies above to determine the way forward for each item on the work programme;**

- (3) that a review panel be commissioned to consider the Housing Nottingham Plan consultation document to submit a response on behalf of the Committee, to be completed in one meeting.**