

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

of meeting held on **9 January 2013** at Loxley House

from 2.04 pm to 3.50 pm

- ✓ Councillor Parbutt (Chair)
Councillor Bryan
Councillor Culley
Councillor Choudhry
 - ✓ Councillor Dewinton (Vice-Chair)
 - ✓ 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

- Assim Ishaque - Parent Governor Representative
- Mr P Davies-Bright - Interim Growth Plan Programme Manager
Mr J Yarham - Director for Economic Development
- Ms J Garrard) Overview and Scrutiny Review Co-ordinators
Mr N McMEnamin)

42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Choudhry, Culley, Healy and Watson and Beverley Denby (3rd Sector Advocate).

43 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were made.

44 MINUTES

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

45 **GROWTH PLAN**

Mr Yarham gave a presentation, copies of which had been circulated, outlining the key elements of the Growth Plan and the progress made to date. Information provided to the Committee included:

- Work on the Growth Plan commenced one year ago following recognition that the national and international context meant that there had been a need for an agreed direction of travel to ensure that Nottingham prospered.
- Key challenges identified for Nottingham included an over-reliance on the service sector, rising unemployment levels ahead of the national average, and low private sector growth. There had been a need to revive manufacturing in Nottingham with a focus on building upon new digital and green technologies.
- Extensive consultation had been carried out with stakeholders to inform development of the Plan, which had been led by key partners in the private sector.
- The Plan had three strands:
 - Fostering enterprise – supporting new business start-up; helping existing businesses grow; and attracting new businesses to the City. The City had been successful in negotiating a deal with the Government to obtain financial investment for Nottingham. Along with other funding streams, this would be used to offer a range of funds to support local business including the Nottingham Investment Fund, the Nottingham Technology Grant Fund and the Generation Y Fund Programme. Another key aspect of this strand had been understanding what would motivate businesses to locate in Nottingham and ensuring the reputation of Nottingham reflected this.
 - Supporting high quality workforce – enabling Nottingham citizens to access the jobs that it was intended would be created as a result of the Plan. The Employer Hub had been effective in getting local people into local jobs, and the new Apprenticeship Hub worked through existing networks to widen access to apprenticeship schemes. The Council was in the process of developing its relationship with Jobcentre Plus to, where possible, combine resources so as to achieve a more co-ordinated approach and reduce the barriers to supporting unemployed people. Work was also planned in relation to harnessing the potential of students studying in the City and retaining their talent when their course of study had been completed.
 - Developing 21st century infrastructure – the key activity under this strand was development of the Creative Quarter, using a physical space to focus intense business support activity. This would include improving digital connectivity and transport infrastructure. It was intended that this would create a 'cluster effect' improving the whole area, an approach which had proven effective in America.

- Independent calculations had been carried out by Nottingham Trent University on the potential impact of the Growth Plan. In assessing the impact of the Plan, there would be an emphasis on growth that reached citizens across all communities. Work was taking place with One Nottingham to look at effective measures for evaluating this, for example levels of income inequality and health indicators.

During discussion, the following comments were made and additional information provided:

- One of the biggest challenges would be ensuring that all Nottingham citizens aspired to, and were able to access available apprenticeships and jobs. This was a significant area of work including activities such as the Nottingham Jobs Fund and the Apprenticeship and Employer Hubs but it was acknowledged that more needed to be done to build aspiration, and move away from the low-skill base and generational long-term unemployment, for example promoting the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) agenda and having a business focused curriculum in schools.
- Concern was raised about some negative experiences of individuals with Jobcentre Plus. Mr Yarham reported that he had recently met with representatives of Jobcentre Plus and ‘walked through’ the process of applying for unemployment support and benefits. This had identified some barriers to be addressed, but also suggested that some widely-held negative perceptions were not necessarily the reality. As part of the Growth Plan, the Council would be working closely with Jobcentre Plus to improve the support provided to unemployed people.
- It would be important to ensure that all existing businesses, and potential new businesses were aware of the support now available to them. The Committee was informed that there was a strand of work on communications and it was intended that much of the information about available funds would be sent out through intermediary channels such as further education colleges and the Federation of Small Businesses. The effectiveness of communication channels would be reviewed and amended as appropriate.
- It was important that measures of effectiveness focus on both business start-up and the sustainability of those businesses. There needed to be a balance between flexibility to support a range of businesses and potential businesses, but not allowing funds to be wasted. There was a deliberate focus on outcomes rather than targets.
- There could be scope to use the Council’s influence with financial institutions in the City, such as Co-op Bank and Credit Union to encourage them to support business support activity.
- The Creative Quarter was focused on ‘creative’ business in its broadest sense. It incorporated a wide range of businesses, although some funds were restricted to specific industries.

- There was a formal government definition of an apprenticeship but not all schemes referred to as apprenticeships adhered to this. Schemes varied significantly, for example not all included training and they were not necessarily for young people.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Growth Plan was achieving a positive direction of travel in supporting the Nottingham economy, and the active involvement of the private sector in developing and implementing the Plan boded well for its effective implementation;**
- (2) That the Committee should consider including a follow-up to this discussion in its 2013/14 work programme focusing on the progress made in implementing the Growth Plan; the sustainability of business start-ups; and the progress made in addressing longer term issues of aspiration, the low skill base and supporting long-term unemployed into jobs; and**
- (3) That the Director for Economic Development provide the following additional information:**
 - (a) Process and timescales for advertising, assessing applications and issuing funds under the Fostering Enterprise strand; and**
 - (b) Data on the number of Nottingham citizens, and specifically Bulwell residents, who obtained jobs at the new Asda distribution centre in Bulwell.**

46 PROGRAMME FOR SCRUTINY

The Committee considered the future programme for scrutiny as set out in the report of the Head of Democratic Services, copies of which had been circulated.

RESOLVED

- (1) to carry out the following reviews in the style of the Hertfordshire County Council review model:**
 - (a) How is the changing relationship between schools, academies and the Council being managed and who will be responsible for educational performance outcomes for children?
Chair – Councillor Jenkins**
 - (b) Is the funding available for tree management and maintenance being used in the most efficient and effective way possible? Are there any improvements needed to manage and maintain trees across the City and, if so, what? How is the Council managing the**

problems caused by tree roots, in particular damage to pavements/ roads?

Chair – Councillor Parbutt

- (c) How effective is the route that Nottingham City Homes' tenants have to follow to get a good quality housing repair, and how does Nottingham City Homes ensure its commissioning and procurement procedures ensure contractors, for example for the Decent Homes Standard, provide good quality, timely repairs which are quality assured?**

Chair – Councillor Parton

- (2) that for the meeting on 6 February 2013 scrutinising Neighbourhood Working Structures, the Committee intends to focus on community cohesion and localities issues; and**
- (3) that Overview and Scrutiny Review Co-ordinators carry out background research into the following possible issues for future review:**
- (a) measurement and reduction of air pollution**
 - (b) adult social care – care at home; and funding for care homes**
 - (c) effectiveness of parking enforcement**