

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at Loxley House on 3 July 2013 from 2.00pm to 3:55pm.

- ✓ Councillor Brian Parbutt (Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Azad Choudhry
- ✓ Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim
- ✓ Councillor Glyn Jenkins (Vice Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Ginny Klein
- ✓ Councillor Gul Khan
- ✓ Councillor Sally Longford
- ✓ Councillor Thulani Molife
- ✓ Councillor Toby Neal
- ✓ Councillor Mohammed Saghir
- ✓ Councillor Tim Spencer
- ✓ Councillor Roger Steel
- ✓ Councillor Marcia Watson

- ✓ Beverley Denby (Third Sector Advocate)

✓ indicates present at meeting

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Jon Collins	-	Leader of Nottingham City Council
Toni Price	-	Executive Officer to the Leader
Roxy Shamsolmaali	-	Executive Performance Officer
Alice Johnson	-	Policy Officer
Jane Garrard	-	Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Angelika Kaufhold	-	Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Gul Khan (unwell) and Councillor Tim Spencer (personal)

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None

17 MINUTES

Subject to adding Beverley Denby (Third Sector Advocate) as present at the meeting, the Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2013 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

18 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - DISCUSSION

Councillor Jon Collins presented a summary of how the City has progressed over the last ten years and an assessment of the delivery of Council objectives for 2012/13. He also outlined his perspective on the key challenges facing the Council in the future. He highlighted that:

Progress over the last ten years

- (a) Over the last ten years crime has fallen by nearly 60% and anti-social behaviour has fallen by approximately 46% since 2004/05.
- (b) Exam results have improved from approx 30% of pupils achieving 5 A*-C grades in 2002 to over 80% of pupils achieving 5 A*-C grades in 2012.
- (c) Cleansing standards have become more rigorous. The number of graffiti incidents reduced from approx 9,000 incidents in 2008/09 to approx 3,500 incidents in 2012/13, and flytipping reduced from approx 13,000 incidents in 2008/09 to approx 7,500 incidents in 2012/13.
- (d) Feedback from the citizens survey showed that:
 - (i) the level of respondents who were satisfied with the local area increased from 60% in 2004 to 84% in 2012
 - (ii) respondents who felt able to influence decisions increased from 26% in 2003 to nearly 50% in 2012
 - (iii) respondents who felt well informed by the Council increased from 56% in 2003 to 71% in 2012
 - (iv) respondents who felt that the Council provided value for money increased from 31% in 2004 to 70% in 2012
 - (v) overall satisfaction with how the Council is run increased from 48% in 2003 to 60% in 2012
- (e) While improvements have been made over the last ten years the Council is not complacent and continues to focus on making further improvements.

Performance against 2012/13 objectives

- (f) During 2012/13 levels of crime and anti-social behaviour have continued to fall and performance at GCSE level has continued to improve.
- (g) The Council made a commitment that all neighbourhoods would be as clean as the City Centre and this has been achieved in 10 wards so far.
- (h) 350 council houses are in the process of being built to meet demand for local authority housing.
- (i) £400m of investment has been put into the tram extension, helping to enhance public transport systems and boost the local economy. There is acknowledgement that the tram works and station improvements will result in short term disruption but decisions had to be taken in the best interests of the medium to long term.

- (j) The transfer of public health responsibilities to the Council has been completed and there are likely to be benefits from more explicitly integrating public health with services such as housing and education.
- (k) The Council has had to cope with a reduced budget and make substantial savings. This will continue in future years. Financial pressures have had an impact on service delivery but savings have primarily been achieved through greater efficiency and service redesign. This cannot continue in the same way in the future and a greater impact on services will be felt.

Challenges for the next 2-3 years

- (l) Financial pressures will be one of the biggest challenges facing the Council, with the need to make substantial savings.
- (m) Unemployment in the City is currently too high. While schemes such as the Nottingham Jobs Fund and promoting apprenticeships have been successful, funding will be a challenge in the future and there is a need to target private sector jobs more effectively.
- (n) Responding to the impact of welfare reform changes will be a significant challenge given the relatively large population in the City in receipt of some form of benefits. There will be financial pressures on many households as a result of the changes.

Following questions from councillors, Councillor Jon Collins made the following additional points:

- (o) He is confident that 4 of the 5 key manifesto commitments (which now form Council policy) will be met. The commitment relating to reducing unemployment will be a challenge to meet due to the current economic climate and national economic policy.
- (p) Future priorities are likely to include continuing to develop the City's economy, with a focus on Nottingham as a major shopping destination. This needs to include redevelopment of Broadmarsh but also consideration of the future for shopping and what needs to be done differently in order to attract people to the City centre. There is also potential to develop a clearer strategy for supporting small-medium sized manufacturing. There also needs to be a focus on maintaining thriving neighbourhoods and the types of services needed to support this.
- (q) Fragmentation of the schools system is a concern with the potential for inconsistency and challenges for parents in understanding and negotiating the system. The Council has a role in being a champion for children and parents and needs to ensure that there is robust external accountability for schools to maintain a focus on improving outcomes for young people. Schools must be publicly held to account for areas such as educational performance, exclusions and open and transparent decision making.
- (r) The Council supported the continued existence of special schools in the City and also provided funding for additional support for children in mainstream schools. However, funding is now provided to schools directly from the Department for Education and this has potential to result in variability between schools. The

Council will continue to work with schools but does not have any powers to require specific action in relation to support for children with additional needs.

- (s) There is a problem with underemployment as well as unemployment. In addition to providing employment opportunities, the City needs to ensure that local people are able to take up those opportunities.
- (t) Tourism is important and the Council will try to take advantage of available opportunities but it is not a major area of focus on its own.
- (u) 98-99% of businesses liable for the Workplace Parking Levy have paid and there is no evidence that the Levy has had a negative impact on investment in the City. There have been issues in how some schools have applied the Workplace Parking Levy and some evidence of displacement and parking issues, and work needs to take place to help residents address this. For example Area Funding can be used to support resident parking schemes.

The Committee thanked Councillor Collins for attending the meeting and answering the questions put to him.

19 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services about the overview and scrutiny work programme for 2013/14. The Committee also considered briefing papers on potential review topics requested at the previous meeting, which had been circulated separately to Committee members.

Following discussion, councillors agreed three topics for review during September, October and November. The Committee was informed that each review will be allocated to one of the scrutiny chairs and the appointed Chair will work with one of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinators to develop the scope for their review. Membership of review panels will be sought via Group Whips.

RESOLVED to carry out scrutiny reviews into the following issues

- (1) tackling anti-social behaviour caused by irresponsible dog owners and dangerous dogs;**
- (2) parking congestion around educational establishments;**
- (3) communication and enforcement of policies relating to wheelie bins on pavements.**