

## NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Loxley House on 2 October 2013 from 2.00 pm to 3.55 pm.**

- ✓ Councillor Brian Parbutt (Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Azad Choudhry
- Councillor Georgina Culley
- ✓ Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim
- ✓ Councillor Glyn Jenkins (Vice Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Ginny Klein
- ✓ Councillor Gul Khan
- ✓ Councillor Sally Longford
- ✓ Councillor Thulani Molife (minute items 30-31)
- Councillor Toby Neal
- ✓ Councillor Mohammed Saghir
- Councillor Roger Steel
- Councillor Marcia Watson

Beverley Denby (Third Sector Advocate)

✓ indicates present at meeting

#### **Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

- Councillor Nick McDonald – Portfolio Holder for Jobs and Growth
- Kathy McArdle – Chief Operations Officer, Creative Quarter Company
- Chris Henning – Director of Economic Development
- Angelika Kaufhold – Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator
- Carol Jackson – Constitutional Services Officer

#### **26 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP CHANGE**

**RESOLVED to note the appointment of Councillor Georgina Culley in place of Councillor Tim Spencer.**

#### **27 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None

#### **28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- Councillor Georgina Culley - other Council business
- Councillor Toby Neal - other Council business
- Councillor Roger Steel - other Council business
- Beverley Denby – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Advocate

## **29 MINUTES**

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2013 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

## **30 NOTTINGHAM GROWTH PLAN**

Councillor Nick McDonald, Portfolio Holder for Jobs and Growth, presented the report, highlighting the progress made in the delivery of the Nottingham Growth Plan and its 'flagship' project, the Creative Quarter and setting out the key challenges for the next twelve months.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) the Nottingham Growth Plan is one year old and the annual review is currently being finalised. A monitoring framework that will measure the Growth Plan's impact is being developed;
- (b) the Nottingham Growth Plan sets out clearly what the ambitions are for Nottingham and how they can be achieved. It sets out a series of measures to drive growth and create jobs by:
  - (i) fostering enterprise by supporting small businesses and encouraging entrepreneurship;
  - (ii) developing a skilled workforce and ensuring local jobs for local people; and
  - (iii) building a 21st century infrastructure to make it easier for the City to develop, including high speed internet access and wireless connectivity in key areas, major transport improvements and the expansion of green energy;
- (c) there are twelve program areas with a total of 40 individual projects with varying timescales for delivery. It is anticipated that the whole program will be delivered in ten years. Responsibility for program management sits with the Council but responsibility for delivery is split between partners, including the private sector;
- (d) enterprise is being fostered by providing finance and support for businesses both to start and to grow, by City Centre regeneration, the development of the Creative Quarter and by seeking out inward investment and international trade. Rising labour costs in some foreign markets may lend itself to opportunities to claw back some manufacturing industry to Nottingham, rebuilding the City's international reputation for design and manufacture;
- (e) business finance is being made available for small businesses in the form of the N'Tech Grant Fund which was launched in April 2013. To date, it has made 15 grants totaling £1.2 million, created 292 new jobs and ensured that 23 existing jobs are safeguarded. Finance is also available for small businesses from the Nottingham Investment Fund which was launched on 19 November. This fund had £37.5m at first close and is expected to leverage over £100m additional investment in Nottingham businesses. The Creative Quarter has a £1m loan fund and has already made 6 awards;

- (f) business support is available through such initiatives as Growth 100 which was launched in April and has 25 businesses on the first programme with 25 more starting in November. Further support is available from the Gen Y programme, Get Ready for Business, MediCity and Antenna Access;
- (g) specific initiatives for fostering enterprise in the City Centre include:
  - (i) the Retail Strategy which was published in September 2013. This has action plans to strengthen the retail and leisure offer, improve the visitor experience and develop the physical environment and infrastructure;
  - (ii) the Vacant Shops Plan was rolled out in April. It aims to tackle vacancy hotspots, unit by unit and establish a business support programme for independent retailers. In addition, there is the Vacant shops grants scheme and the *Inspiring Retail* competition in one year. Pop-up shops are being encouraged. Nottingham has seen a significant drop in vacancies from over 30% to under 20%. A lot of work is taking place with private Landlords, encouraging them to offer initiatives to fill empty units. The commercial rental market appears to be adjusting accordingly;
  - (iii) the Nottingham City Event Experience Notts' conference and events bidding unit was launched in June;
- (h) the Growth Board will consider proposals for a new Inward Investment/place marketing agency at its next meeting in October;
- (i) with regard to developing a skilled workforce, the Employment and Skills Team supported 1489 people into jobs in 2012/13. This was done through the Employer Hub (486 jobs), community grants (270 jobs); Job Fairs (462 jobs), Nottingham Jobs Fund (191 jobs) the Nottingham Futures Innovation Fund. Also, 957 people received training (pre-employment training, work trials, literacy/numeracy, NVQs, etc) and there were 140 Apprenticeship Hub starts. The target for 2013/14 is 2,700. There are plans to reshape the unemployment team so that it is more community based, and integrates with other public sector support e.g. Department of Work and Pensions;
- (j) there are other initiatives in place to get jobs and improve skills including the Employer Hub which was integrated with JCP (April), expanding beyond construction sector, the implementation of a neighbourhood focused approach across employment and skills and ward employment plans. The Apprenticeship Hub was launched in November 2012 and the Nottingham Apprenticeship Grant was launched in April. All 400 Nottingham Job Fund placements have been filled, ahead of schedule. Nottingham University Academy of Science & Technology is due to open September 2014. An Internships programme is being developed for summer 2014;
- (k) the various initiatives in place to ensure that Nottingham has 21<sup>st</sup> Century infrastructure include:
  - (i) super-connected Nottingham- the delivery of Ultraband in the Creative Quarter. The Council is working with BT on super-fast broadband in the Creative Quarter. A tender is being put out for city centre wireless and developing business case

for fibre in ducting Challenges remain in getting central government to invest in usable digital infrastructure. The ongoing tram and roadworks are being used to lay ducting for Broadband wherever possible;

- (ii) Enterprise Zones – work is due to start on the Boots site early 2014. The Medipark plan was approved by Hospital Trust Board in August;
  - (iii) Sector growth hubs – BioCity an expansion site has been identified. Antenna – finalising funding arrangements for expansion. Nottingham Energy Park – funding and land deal secured. Southglade Food Park – funding secured for expansion;
  - (iv) the Tram extension is on schedule, with work set to ramp up over next 3 months;
  - (v) the new Station Hub, A453 improvements and the ring road works are all on schedule.
- (l) The aim for the Creative Quarter is to create a supportive environment where enterprise can flourish and innovative creative businesses start up and grow. Key progress in the last year includes the establishment of business finance and support programmes (N'Tech, Nottingham Investment Fund, Gen Y, etc) focusing on lifesciences, digital content, cleantech sectors;
- (m) Highlights of the last year include:
- (i) the Creative Quarter Company and Board were established March 2013;
  - (ii) the Creative Quarter Loan Scheme was launched in March 2013 – 6 awards (£128k) have been made to businesses so far with more in the pipeline;
  - (iii) the Chief Operations Officer has been in post from May 2013;
  - (iv) an Office in the Creative Quarter was set up in June 2013;
  - (v) support is being provided to a variety of small businesses in the Creative Quarter by the Creative Quarter Company;
  - (vi) support is being provided to new property projects (eg Cobden Chambers);
  - (vii) joint working is taking place on a variety of projects with partners such as NTU, NCN, Broadway, Antenna and BioCity;
  - (viii) four N-Tech awards have been made to CQ-based businesses (total £158k – £935k leverage, 30 jobs created);
  - (ix) 45 businesses have been signposted to business support schemes;
  - (x) phase 1 of public realm improvements have been completed, improving pedestrian links into Creative Quarter;

- (xi) the Creative Quarter New Business Rates Relief Scheme was announced late September 2013 with two businesses have received it so far.
- (n) The key challenges and aims for Creative Quarter for the next year include:
  - (i) digital connectivity – the contract for the upgrade of street cabinets is being finalised, and funding approval pending for digital voucher scheme;
  - (ii) the rolling out of public wi-fi in this area of the City;
  - (iii) bringing vacant properties back into use through implementation of the Property Action Plan from November 2013;
  - (iv) developing a support programme to cultivate social businesses and micro-enterprises.
- (o) Key milestones for the next six months for the Creative Quarter include Game City Limits Business Expo and Pixel Pyros event (October 2013), the CQ website being launched (October 2013), an action plan being delivered to promote and secure apprenticeships across the CQ Creative Quarter Markets & Street Music (starts November 2013), Start-Up Weekend – 22-24 November and Christmas in The Quarter promoted (November 2013).
- (p) one of the key challenges will be to fill the ‘Jobs Gap’. To return to the pre-recession employment rate, Nottingham needs 12,000 additional jobs. To meet the Nottingham Plan target (75% employment rate by 2020) it needs nearly 30,000. It is vitally important to attract new employers to the City;
- (q) a Growth Sector and Jobs Strategy is being developed to identify sectors with high job growth potential and to connect demand to sites, jobs, skills and business support;
- (r) development in the City Centre needs to be kick started. The Council is a major land and property owner and has clear interest in seeing development kick-started with developers and investors looking for best investment opportunities.

The Committee discussed the following issues:

- (s) In response to concerns about how funding to small businesses through various schemes is being monitored Councillor McDonald assured Councillors that each scheme has a different method of monitoring to ensure that there is no misuse of funds and that jobs are being protected. A clear pathway through the financial support on offer is being created and a raft of different business support is now in place.
- (t) Councillors were concerned that all the focus is on revitalising the City Centre and that the district centres such as Bulwell and Sherwood were being overlooked. Councillor McDonald informed the Committee that that all the financial incentives, save for the Creative Quarter Loan are also available to small businesses outside the City Centre.
- (u) The issue of derelict buildings in the Creative Quarter is being looked at through the Property Action Plan which is looking at the potential of these buildings. The Creative

Quarter Company is working with Nottingham Regeneration on a strategy to address this and the key priority is to fill street level retail units.

- (v) It is agreed that Nottingham needs to retain its talent as it has a large volume of students attending its two internationally renowned universities and more needs to be done to encourage them to stay in Nottingham once they have graduated. This can be achieved through alumni networks, internship programmes, more work experience opportunities, business support and access to finance for business start up etc.
- (w) Work experience and enterprise education in schools is, at best, patchy and tackling this is a challenge, especially as schools are becoming increasingly detached from local authority control. Measures to address this include Nottinghamshire Futures developing options for business-focused curricula that can be offered to schools. More graduate training schemes need to be encouraged and put in place, working in partnership with Universities to maximise the benefits of the Universities for the City as a whole.

In conclusion, the Chair summarised that the key priorities for the coming year should include:

- (x) ensuring that there is sufficient targeted communication and information available relating to the financial and other support for business start up etc for minority ethnic groups which is on offer;
- (y) the lack of progress both nationally and locally on the development of a digital infrastructure;
- (z) the importance of district centres such as Bulwell need to be remembered and addressed as part of the whole package of regeneration of the City as a whole.

The Committee thanked Councillor Nick McDonald, Chris Henning and Kathy McArdle for attending the meeting and answering the questions put to them.

### **31 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services about the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2013/14. Angelika Kaufhold summarised the report and highlighted the actions needed from the Committee.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (1) to note the allocation of items scheduled for forthcoming meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;**
- (2) to note the changes in the scrutiny review programme and put forward names to sit on panels.**