

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at Loxley House on 6 November 2013 from 2:03 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
- ✓ 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:

Katherine Cook)	HLG
Bea Tobolewska)	
Fergus Slade	-	Nottingham Community and Voluntary Service (NCVS)
Karla Kerr	-	Market Development Project Officer
Jane Garrard	-	Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Zena West	-	Constitutional Services Officer

32 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Councillor Georgina Culley – other council business
- Councillor Gul Khan – unwell/ medical
- Councillor Ginny Klein – unwell/ medial
- Councillor Thulani Molife
- Councillor Marcia Watson

33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

34 MINUTES

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2013 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

35 THE STATE OF THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR AND STREAMLINING INVESTMENT TO THE VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SECTOR

Fergus Slade of NCVS presented information about the 'State of the Sector' survey, highlighting key findings of the survey and NCVS's assessment of the current position of the voluntary and community sector in Nottingham. Karla Kerr, Market Development Project Officer at Nottingham City Council gave a presentation on the Council's progress in streamlining investment to the sector. In these two presentations the following points were made:

- (a) The NCVS State of the Sector Survey highlights concerns and priorities of the Voluntary and Community Sector. This year there has been increased demand for services, decreased funding, and fewer staff.
- (b) The Sector is concerned for clients and vulnerable citizens, and many organisations are using reserves and savings. Nottingham CVS wants to cooperate and work with Nottingham City Council to ensure continuity of services.
- (c) The results show that fewer groups are closing, there is an increase in retained staffing levels, and an increase in the level of volunteers. More groups intend to apply for national funding, and 40% are considering commercialization with 66% of groups also having financial reserves.
- (d) Nottingham City Council considers the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to be a key partner to delivering a safe, clean, ambitious and proud city.
- (e) The formal partnership agreement between NCC and the VCS is called the Nottingham Compact Plus Framework.
- (f) NCC has analysed previous funding routes, to provide a clear, transparent and streamlined process for funding, to support a thriving VCS and achieve better outcomes for citizens.
- (g) Approximately £31 million was spent with the VCS in 2012/13, with £29 million won through tenders, and £1.7 million of grant funding.
- (h) Area Based Grants are the first phase of streamlining investment. Previous funding streams at an Area level were identified, and four grant funding streams were brought together. The VCS was asked to form partnerships and identify a lead organisation to apply for the grant funding. 14 Lead Organisations applied, but not all were successful, as some were out of the city or didn't meet other criteria. Seven Lead Organisations were successful, and 33-month contracts began 1 July 2013.
- (i) Service Level Agreements are in place with the seven Lead Organisations, who work with their partner organisations to deliver services in the communities.
- (j) Phase Two involves working with Communities of Identity, which are likely to have particular needs and priorities for public services. Consultation took place between April and June 2013, with a closing date for applications of 22 October. Contracts will be awarded in December 2013, with 34-month Service Level Agreements to begin in April 2014.

- (k) Communities of Identity are based on the Equality Act (2010), with certain categories being out of scope due to availability of existing support services, such as age, disability, communities of interest and geographical communities.
- (l) The categories include sexual orientation, refugee and asylum seekers, Black Minority and Ethnic (BME) communities, and new and emerging communities.
- (m) The three priority outcomes are to build skills and confidence, provide physical and virtual space, and provide information, advice and guidance. It is important to ask Communities what their priorities are.
- (n) There have been several applications so far, and recommendations will be made to the Executive Board Commissioning Sub Committee in December 2013.
- (o) Phase Two work includes a voluntary sector property and lease review with a standard contract or agreement for all voluntary sector buildings, and a fair funding formula, to analyse key priorities within areas with a view to changing the distribution levels between areas.

The Committee discussed the following issues:

- (p) There was only a 6% response rate to the State of the Sector Survey from over 1,000 groups, which is disappointing, but could be attributed to capacity issues within the sector. There is a short window to contact and survey all of the organisations. Next year there will be an additional staff member to help with conducting the survey.
- (q) While the number of volunteers is increasing, this may be because volunteers sometimes replace paid staff.
- (r) There is an issue around knowing what services are being provided by which groups, as some will remain unidentified. There is no way of knowing about all groups helping citizens, some may not want to engage with the Council. All known groups will be mapped in the next few weeks.
- (s) It is difficult to know about Voluntary groups' other funding streams, and some groups don't want to let us know what they are, as it might be commercially sensitive, leading to someone else undercutting their services.
- (t) Area 7 currently has a very small percentage of the funding, but certain areas have higher levels of deprivation or need. A needs analysis will be conducted in each area, in conjunction with the Lead Organisations, to make the funding split more fair and transparent. The Area 7 needs analysis is being conducted by Neighbourhood Development Officers. Spend in areas was initially based on existing expenditure. It will not change for the next two years, as Service Level Agreements are already in place.
- (u) There may be some difficulties with conflicting needs from established communities and emerging communities. The Market Development Team will work alongside applicants to identify needs and get the best outcomes. Any issues raised with Councillors can be fed back directly to Karla Kerr or the Lead organisations.

- (v) Funding to the Voluntary Sector will be maintained currently. If the funding decreased, then demand for services from elsewhere would increase, and there would be no financial benefit.
- (w) Catherine Cook from HLG reported that some voluntary and community sector groups relating to health and wellbeing issues were experiencing challenges in understanding, and effectively engaging with the new health landscape, particularly at a strategic level. There is no longer a clearly identified single contact person for voluntary sector issues within the Council, and some groups feel this would be very useful. She suggested that commitment is needed at a senior level to enable voluntary and community groups to influence strategic decision making, and a single clear contact post for third sector engagement within Public Health was requested.
- (x) The new City Council website is very helpful for citizens, but Voluntary Sector groups have reported to HLG that it is not helpful to them, and does not contain information relevant or useful to them in understanding how the Council works and how they can engage with the Council.
- (y) Lead Organisations attend Area Committees, and can be questioned directly by other groups, citizens and Councillors at those meetings.
- (z) There is a need to ensure that groups are talking to each other, to avoid duplication of work, particularly surrounding cross-area funding. Lead Organisations should be encouraging the groups to communicate and facilitating this if necessary.
- (aa) A team led by Louise Graham monitors all Service Level Agreements, providing performance evidence to be analysed by experts. This also helps to avoid duplication, but there are instances where duplication is not inappropriate, to reach a wider range of citizens.

The Committee thanked Fergus Slade, Catherine Cook, Bea Tobolewska and Karla Kerr for attending the meeting and contributing to discussion.

RESOLVED to request that the Health Scrutiny Panel explore how the voluntary and community sector can be effectively engaged in, and influence, health and wellbeing issues at a strategic level.

36 PROGRAMME FOR SCRUTINY

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

RESOLVED

- (1) To note the topics scheduled for forthcoming meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;**

(2) To appoint additional councillors to sit on forthcoming scrutiny review panels as set out below:

The changing Education Landscape

- **Councillor Toby Neal**
- **Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim**

Parking Congestion Around Educational Establishments

- **Councillor Toby Neal**
- **Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim**

Wheelie bins on Pavement

- **Councillor Toby Neal**
- **Councillor Glyn Jenkins**
- **Councillor Sally Longford**
- **Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim**

Flood risk management and gulley cleansing

- **Councillor Toby Neal**
- **Councillor Brian Parbutt**
- **Councillor Roger Steel**