

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at LB31-32 - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 5 February 2014 from 14.00 - 15.15

- ✓ Councillor Brian Parbutt (Chair)
- ✓ Councillor Glyn Jenkins (Vice Chair)
- Councillor Azad Choudhry
- Councillor Georgina Culley
- ✓ Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim
- ✓ Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
- ✓ Councillor Neghat Nawaz Khan
- ✓ Councillor Ginny Klein
- Councillor Thulani Molife
- Councillor Toby Neal
- ✓ Councillor Anne Peach
- Councillor Mohammed Saghir
- Councillor Roger Steel
- Councillor Marcia Watson

✓ indicates present at meeting

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Imoegen Denton - Equality and Community Relations Lead
Jane Garrard - Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Angelika Kaufhold - Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator

47 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Georgina Culley – unwell/ medical
- Azad Choudhry – unwell/ medical
- Thulani Molife – other Council business
- Mohammad Saghir – other Council business
- Roger Steel – other Council business
- Beverley Denby

48 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None

49 MINUTES

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2014 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

50 THE EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS COMMISSION

Councillor Parbutt introduced the report of the Head of Democratic Services, informing the Committee that the purpose of the item was to discuss development of the relationship between Overview and Scrutiny and the Equality and Fairness Commission. It is important that the two bodies keep informed about each other's work, make referrals to the other as appropriate and avoid duplication in activity.

Imoegen Denton, Equality and Community Relations Lead, informed the Committee that the Equality and Fairness Commission (EFC) aimed to work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders to make sure people in Nottingham were treated fairly and to address any inequalities between communities. She outlined the role and work of the EFC highlighting the follow points:

- (a) The EFC has an independent Chair, which is currently Professor Cecile Wright.
- (b) Advocates on the EFC represent different characteristics protected under the Equalities Act including ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion and belief. Advocates act as a link between those communities and the Commission.
- (c) The EFC has a work plan and over the last year it has looked at a variety of issues including welfare reform, Police use of 'stop and search' and streamlining investment to the voluntary sector.
- (d) The EFC acts as a 'sounding board' for proposed policy changes by key partners in the City (not just Nottingham City Council); it listens to views of a diverse range of people and uses that to shape policy and direct resources.
- (e) The EFC is still establishing the most appropriate routes for escalating and promoting issues of concern, particularly given the complex and long-term nature of many of these issues.
- (f) In October 2013 the EFC held a review meeting. It identified areas for improvement, including that:
 - i) The Commission should look at fewer issues but in more depth.
 - ii) Activity for 2014 should include Nottingham City Council budget process; living wage, payday lending and financial support for vulnerable people; child poverty; maximising opportunities for good growth; and addressing gaps in provision as a result in the closure of the Race Equality Council.
 - iii) The Commission should regularly review its priorities to ensure that they are still relevant.
 - iv) The Commission needs to reinforce its independence and publicise its work more widely.
 - v) Accountability of the Commission needs to be strengthened through One Nottingham.
- (g) The EFC has identified a number of possible issues that Overview and Scrutiny could usefully include in its work programme. These are:
 - i) Commissioning and procurement
 - ii) Approach to good growth
 - iii) Health and Wellbeing Strategy

During the subsequent discussion the following points were made:

- (h) The EFC always asks for Equality Impact Assessments to inform its consideration of the impact of policy changes.
- (i) Cultural competency in service delivery is an issue that scrutiny could explore as a line of questioning.
- (j) Some councillors highlighted that taxi drivers are concerned about a lack of support from Police in tackling non-payment of taxi fares. This disproportionately impacts on particular communities who are over-represented in the taxi driver population. Imoegen Denton agreed to take this issue to the EFC as a possible area for review.
- (k) Councillors felt that the EFC doesn't have a very high public profile, and not even all councillors are aware of it and its achievements.
- (l) The EFC's work plan is being driven predominately by the review carried out in October 2013 and aims to focus on where the EFC thinks it can add the greatest value. Issues are also raised by the advocates. There is a large number of potential issues for inclusion on the work plan and therefore it is important to prioritise.

The Committee discussed the importance of having a protocol to guide the relationship between Overview and Scrutiny and the EFC, to provide clarity about how they would work together and deal with referrals between the two bodies.

Councillor Parbutt noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be a workshop to identify topics for review during 2014/15. The issues raised by the EFC could feed into that process but initial thoughts were that equality issues relating to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy could be addressed through the existing work of the Health Scrutiny Panel; and there would be opportunity to consider good growth when the Committee carries out its annual scrutiny of progress of the Nottingham Plan. It might be possible to carry out a specific review of commissioning and procurement as a way of promoting equality but a tight focus would need to be established.

RESOLVED to

- (1) Circulate a list of the Equality and Fairness Commission advocates to members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee so links can be made to inform future scrutiny activity;**
- (2) Request that the Equality and Fairness Commission consider exploring how taxi drivers are supported by the Police when dealing with non-payment of taxi fares;**
- (3) To approve the protocol between Overview and Scrutiny and the Equality and Fairness Commission; and**
- (4) Scope a review of commissioning and procurement as a way of promoting equality for potential inclusion in the 2014/15 work programme.**

The Committee considered the Head of Democratic Services' report about the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2013/14. Angelika Kaufhold, Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator, advised that the next meeting would be a workshop to identify topics for scrutiny review panels in 2014/15. She also advised that a date for the first meeting of the Education Scrutiny Review Panel had been set for 25 February 2014.

RESOLVED that Councillors Ibrahim, Neghat Khan, and Peach be appointed to sit on the Education Scrutiny Review Panel.