



NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday, 7 October 2015

Time: 2.00 pm

Place: LB31-32 - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG

Councillors are requested to attend the above meeting to transact the following business

Corporate Director for Resilience

Governance Officer: Rav Kalsi **Direct Dial:** 0115 8763759

AGENDA

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IF YOU NEED ANY ADVICE ON DECLARING AN INTEREST IN ANY ITEM ON THE AGENDA, PLEASE CONTACT THE GOVERNANCE OFFICER SHOWN ABOVE, IF POSSIBLE BEFORE THE DAY OF THE MEETING

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CITIZENS ARE ADVISED THAT THIS MEETING MAY BE RECORDED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC. ANY RECORDING OR REPORTING ON THIS MEETING SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S POLICY ON RECORDING AND REPORTING ON PUBLIC MEETINGS, WHICH IS AVAILABLE AT WWW.NOTTINGHAMCITY.GOV.UK. INDIVIDUALS INTENDING TO RECORD THE MEETING ARE ASKED TO NOTIFY THE GOVERNANCE OFFICER SHOWN ABOVE IN ADVANCE.

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 9 September 2015 from 14.00 - 15.44

Membership

Present

Councillor Brian Parbutt (Chair)
Councillor Glyn Jenkins
Councillor Azad Choudhry
Councillor Georgina Culley
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan (Vice Chair)
Councillor Neghat Nawaz Khan
Councillor Anne Peach
Councillor Pat Ferguson
Councillor Leslie Ayoola
Councillor Josh Cook
Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim
Councillor Patience Ifediora

Absent

Councillor Ginny Klein
Councillor Corall Jenkins

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Gill Cooke - Executive Officer
Richard Henderson - Head of Transformation
Helen Hill - Research Engagement and Consultation Manager
Rav Kalsi - Senior Governance Officer

6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Ginny Klein – other Council business

7 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

8 MINUTES

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2015 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

9 NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL'S SUMMER OF ENGAGEMENT

Richard Henderson, Head of Transformation and Gill Cooke, Executive Officer, delivered a presentation on Nottingham City Council's Summer of Engagement programme for 2015, highlighting the following:

- (a) In November 2014 Overview and Scrutiny were updated on the Council's progress from 'Good to Great' and it's proposals to put citizens at the heart.

Part of this journey is supported by a great workforce providing great services to its citizens and contributing to Nottingham being a great city. The previous focus had been on fundamental topics such as cleanliness, crime, education, transport and infrastructure. Allied to the process is the process of department restructure and improving the Council's and the city's reputation. A great Council will enable a new business economy, ensure Nottingham's workforce is skilled and establish a reputation for business innovation;

- (b) The Council will lead the city in bringing businesses and partners together, set the long-term strategic direction for the city and support vulnerable people. A 'great' vision includes being honest about the services the Council can provide and empower communities to be independent by raising aspirations;
- (c) The focus for the Summer of Engagement for 2015 has been the Council's future workforce. Nottingham City Council colleagues have been asked to discuss "how do we create a workforce that's right for our citizens?"
- (d) The programme aims to engage with over 800 colleagues, involve discussion with the Council's Corporate Leadership Team, include discussions with a range of employee networks, such as disability forums and the black and minority ethnic forum;
- (e) Discussion with Council colleagues will help shape the Council's approach to creating the workforce of the future, provide feedback to senior managers to improve their understanding of how it feels to work for the Council. This feedback will not only influence the review of the Council's equality objectives but it will inform decision makers on how they make the Council more diverse;

In response to questions the Committee raised the following points:

- (f) Citizens of Nottingham expect the Council workforce to be efficient, provide a consistent service and in particular circumstances, citizens will expect service from the same people. There is also an expectation that the Council's workforce should be representative of the community it serves, across all tiers of governance. In the past, communication from local councils has been difficult to digest and complex. In light of this, it is crucial that councils communicate in plain English and in a way that citizens understand;
- (g) There is an expectation that the citizens want Council staff to operate as an information hub with the ability to signpost citizens to the right area. There is an expectation that the Council will share relevant data with other Council departments to avoid duplication and confusion;
- (h) With recent Council reorganisation, Council workers who leave the authority after many years often do so with years of experience and knowledge. The Council should be thinking about how it efficiently captures the knowledge of staff that leave the authority. There is also a perception that Council workers remain in local government for life which is not necessarily the best thing. It could be argued that a more productive option is to develop staff members for 3-4 years and let staff move on;

- (i) It could be argued that the younger demographic in the city are not attracted by working for the city, both in terms of reward and a perceived stigma that local government work is not appealing. To attract a more representative and diverse workforce there would need to be a healthy turnover of Council staff.

RESOLVED to

- (1) Thank Richard Henderson and Gill Cooke for their informative presentation and facilitated discussion;**
- (2) Review the outcome of the Summer of Engagement programme in 12 months and receive an update on the Council's workforce transformation.**

10 CITIZEN SURVEY

Helen Hill, Research Engagement and Consultation Manager, delivered a presentation on the results of the Citizen Survey 2014, highlighting the following information:

- (a) Nottingham City Council commissioned Information by Design in 2014 to conduct the survey and the field work was undertaken in October and November 2014. The field work involved face to face interviews with 2,107 citizens (approximately 100 per ward, depending on size). This is the same methodology used in 2011, 2012 and 2013 surveys enabling directly comparable results;
- (b) The survey is used to gather citizens' perceptions on a variety of subjects including quality of life, health and wellbeing, community cohesion, feelings about Nottingham and experiences due to the economic climate;
- (c) Overall, results from this year's survey are similar to last year with a couple of notable improvements which is positive in light of the current challenging economic climate and difficult budget decisions;
- (d) In relation to citizen's perceptions about their local area, 87% of respondents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, compared to 88% in 2013. Currently, 75% are satisfied with the cleanliness of the local area, compared to 74% in 2013 and 82% are satisfied with the city centre cleanliness. 90% of respondents feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together which is a figure Nottingham should be proud of. Similar to results in 2013, there is a strong correlation between respondents satisfied with their area and those satisfied with the cleanliness of their area;
- (e) When questioned about the perceptions of the Council, 65% feel the Council provides value for money, compared to 57% in 2013. 73% of respondents are satisfied with the way the Council operates and the feeling that the City Council provides value for money has increased significantly since last year. Although satisfaction with the Council remains the same as last year, there is

a variation between areas, such as 69% in Area 7 to 78% in Area 4. Last year, Area 7 recorded the highest level of satisfaction within the Council;

- (f) In responding to questions around equality, 90% of respondents think that local public services treat all types of people fairly. This is a significant increase since last year and is the highest results obtained by the Council for this question;
- (g) When discussing citizens' experiences due to the economic climate, 30% have said that they are keeping up with bills but sometimes or constantly find it a struggle. 1% said that they are falling behind with bills and as a direct response of the current economic climate, 61% said they had made at least one change. Results from this area suggest that those who are unemployed or otherwise not in paid work and those with disability or long term illness seem to be having the most difficulty keeping up with bills and credit commitments.

Following comments and questions from the Committee, the following information was provided:

- (h) Field workers use a methodology where they visit every 4th house on a set of streets and where a citizen does not speak English, they arrange for a visit from someone who speaks their language. Information by Design, who were commissioned to carry out the survey in 2014 use local people from communities to conduct part of the field work;
- (i) All results are published on Nottingham City Council's website and respondents are asked if they would like to subscribe to the Council's Stay Connected feed which includes updates on consultation and engagement events.

RESOLVED to thanks Helen Hill for the information presentation and to report the results of the survey in 2015 to the Committee.

11 PROGRAMME FOR SCRUTINY

Rav Kalsi, Senior Governance Officer introduced the report of the Head of Democratic Services setting out the programme of activity for this Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Review Panels for 2015/16.

RESOLVED to

- (1) agree the work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Review Panels for 2015/16, as summarised in the report;**
- (2) appoint Councillor Brian Parbutt to chair a review of the use of enforcement agents in Nottingham on Monday 26 October 2015, 10am.**

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
7 OCTOBER 2015
MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION OF THE LOCAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS HELD IN MAY 2015
REPORT OF HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To scrutinise the organisation and management of the combined parliamentary and local elections held in May 2015 by Nottingham City Council.

2. Action required

The Committee is asked to

- 2.1 use the information received at the meeting to scrutinise how Nottingham City Council organised and managed the combined parliamentary and local elections in May 2015; and
- 2.2 identify any relevant recommendations for improvements and any potential areas for further scrutiny activity for inclusion in the work programme.

3. Background information

- 3.1 On 7 May 2015, elections were held for 650 members of the UK Parliament and for local councillors in all 36 metropolitan boroughs, 194 district authorities and 49 unitary authorities in England. In almost 280 local authority areas in England, the UK Parliamentary election was combined with other polls, including in the City of Nottingham. The elections were held amid the introduction of a new system of voter registration – Individual Electoral Registration (IER) - which brought a significantly increased level of complexity to the management of the election for electoral administrators nationwide. In their report into the challenge of 2015 elections, the Association of Electoral Administrators noted the following:
- 3.2 “Electoral administrators continue to deliver elections within an increasingly complex and challenging environment even when the odds are increasingly stacked against them. This was clearly the situation for the complex elections held on May 7 2015 following the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER). Preparations for the elections were behind as a result of the impact of the introduction and IER and

electoral administrators were exhausted before the election timetable even started.”¹

- 3.3 Overall, the Nottingham City Combined elections were delivered effectively. There have been no challenges to the result, there were no major issues at the count and polling was carried out without major incident. The ERO also met the performance standards set by the Electoral Commission for the conduct of the election (the Commission’s report on the election identified 29 councils where this was not the case).²
- 3.4 Post election, Democratic Services’ held conversations with key colleagues who took part in the administration of the elections and sent out questionnaires to polling and count staff, candidates and agents. The feedback received is referred to in this report and in the appendix to this report.

National Context

Individual Electoral Registration (IER)

- 3.5 IER was introduced on 10 June 2014, significantly changing electoral registration in England, Wales and Scotland. Instead of the ‘head of the household’ completing a registration form on behalf of all residents at an address, citizens are now required to register to vote individually and in order to do so, they must provide personal identifiers (National Insurance Number and date of birth). Additionally, IER introduced an online registration facility in an effort to improve access to the registration process (although paper applications to register can still be made).
- 3.6 The transition to IER began with a complex data matching exercise known as confirmation, which compared existing electors’ details with the details held on the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) database. Electors whose details matched with DWP records were confirmed on the new register and were notified of their registration status. Citizens whose records did not match were sent Invitations to Register. For the purposes of the elections in May 2015, these ‘unconfirmed’ electors were allowed to stay on the register but were not allowed to have a postal vote (even if they had had one before). This created a register where electors could have a range of different statuses but still be eligible to vote thereby increasing the potential for confusion (amongst electors) and for errors in advice.

¹ Association of Electoral Administrators – Elections and Individual Electoral Registration – The challenge of 2015. <http://www.aea-elections.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/aea-report-elections-and-ier-challenge-of-2015.pdf>

² Electoral Commission’s report – Assessment of the performance of Returning Officers at the May 2015 polls, http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/190957/Assessment-of-the-performance-of-Returning-Officers-at-the-May-2015-polls.pdf

- 3.7 National and local campaigns to raise awareness of the new system of voter registration, together with burgeoning interest in the election, led to a late surge in registrations (with 10,000 new electors added to the City's register in the final 2 weeks before the election) and many electors registered to vote repeatedly. This had a huge impact on the Electoral Services team who, in addition to processing new registrations, processed 30,000 duplicate registrations in the run up to the election. The team also dealt with a significant increase in the number of postal vote applications.

Cross Boundaries

- 3.8 In light of the boundary review in 2016 the issue of cross boundaries could also pose a significant problem for the Council in the future. Local authorities who have parliamentary cross boundaries already have to give and take data from each other's Electoral Registers. They then print and despatch polling cards and postal packs and provide polling stations for people not normally on their register of electors for the purpose of running the parliamentary election. With unfamiliar data (different software systems) and partner organisations providing elements of the election on your behalf this increases the risks involved in this type of election.

Local Context

- 3.9 The Electoral Commission sets standards, monitors and reports on the performance of Returning officers (ROs) which is designed to support ROs in delivering consistent high-quality service for voters and those standing for election. In its assessment of the performance of returning officers (ROs) at the May 2015 polls, the Electoral Commission assessed 29 ROs as not meeting performance standards, encountering issues such as an early dispatch of poll cards, issues at the count, errors with nominations and ballot papers being issued to those not entitled to receive them.³ Nottingham was not mentioned as having encountered issues or as not having met the Electoral Commission's performance standards.

IT/ Software

- 3.10 During the IER confirmation process in 2014, Electoral Services experienced significant problems with their existing software, so much so as to seriously impair confidence in the team's capacity to both implement IER successfully and to run the combined elections appropriately in May 2015. An urgent decision was taken in August 2014 to replace the software in the clear knowledge that, whilst this would address the concerns about the functionality of the existing software,

³ Electoral Commission's report – Assessment of the performance of Returning Officers at the May 2015 polls,
http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/190957/Assessment-of-the-performance-of-Returning-Officers-at-the-May-2015-polls.pdf

there were risks to a rapid instalment of a new system and that this would entail Electoral Services' staff managing a very complex election using an unfamiliar system. Whilst the replacement of the software proved justified in terms of IER functionality, as the deadline for registration in advance of the election approached and the volume of processing for IER increased, Electoral Services then encountered major problems with slow running of the system and a build-up of data queues.

- 3.11 This had a significant and prolonged effect on the team's daily operations, led to excessive overtime hours and challenge to progression against the election planning timetable. Ultimately, IT colleagues were able to diagnose where some of the problems with the new software installation lay and achieved improvement in its operational speed shortly before the election. Notwithstanding the context of IER complications and software installation issues, all milestones in the election timetable were met.

Staffing

- 3.12 The core Elections team for the 2015 election comprised two managers, four electoral services officers, two apprentices, one member of staff on secondment from another area and two temporary business support officers. One senior post remained vacant as the team had been unable to recruit to the position (this is indicative of a national recruitment and retention problem within Electoral Services' teams generally). Of the team of nine, only four staff had worked on previous elections. The lack of experience in the team, combined with the scale of the election and the impact of IER and IT issues, meant that senior managers were forced to focus on day to day electoral registration operations and processing rather than higher level planning. This ultimately delayed key internal preparations and communications in respect of the election, but caused no external detriment.
- 3.13 Colleagues in Constitutional Services provide additional telephone support to Electoral Services usually from the period when the notice of election is given though the extent of their support depends on the degree to which their day to day governance role is reduced during the pre-election period. There is no other dedicated call centre support available as is provided in some other authorities of the size of Nottingham nor is there HR or payroll support to deal with the appointment and payment of temporary staff for the election.

Management of the election

Complexities of a Combined Election

- 3.14 Combined elections are complex as they run on different timetables and legislation. This can be not only confusing for administrators, candidates and agents but also for electors, as different rules can apply. When local elections are combined with a parliamentary election there is also the

added pressure of the volume of work due to the increased public awareness. The Returning Officer does however have some discretion on local arrangements such as the timing for local nominations and the count. There are of course some benefits of combined elections: they are more cost effective, as we can share the costs with central government and they can help increase turnout.

Outcomes on Key elements of the 2015 Combined Elections

- 3.15 This section includes headline feedback on outcomes from key parts of the election process reflecting both the experience of candidates and agents and polling station and count staff and also the perceptions of the core team of Electoral Services and Democratic Services staff. Work is still in progress to review all the detailed election feedback to address:
- 1) how citizens, candidates and agents can be better supported in future;
 - 2) how polling station and count management procedures can be improved going forward; and
 - 3) how Electoral Services colleagues can be better supported to ensure that they have the capacity to plan and organise elections effectively.

Nominations

- 3.16 The nomination process in Nottingham this year included 19 parliamentary candidates and 200+ local candidates. The nomination period for parliamentary candidates was prescribed by the Cabinet Office as between 30 March and Thursday 9 April 2015, 4pm. There was some flexibility over the nomination period for the local election; however the deadline was also 4pm on Thursday 9 April. This was further shortened by the Easter Holiday period during the nomination period, from Friday 3 April to Monday 6 April 2015.
- 3.17 Nottingham City Council held briefings to which candidates and agents were invited and issued guidance. A facility of informal checking of nomination papers was also offered to support candidates and agents. The Electoral Commission advised that local authorities dealing with combined local and parliamentary elections should consider having a longer nomination period for the local election to minimise the impact on resources. The decision taken on the length of Nottingham's nomination period for the local elections was in line with various other core cities and local districts that also opted for the minimum nomination period.

Nominations – stakeholder / citizen feedback

- 3.18 Nottingham City Council sent questionnaires to candidates and agents, and of those who responded, 68% of candidates and agents agreed or strongly agreed that the information supplied was helpful, with none disagreeing. Several candidates/agents did comment that it would have been useful to have had the guidance available electronically, rather than only in hard copy, either via email or a link to a website.

- 3.19 Of the candidates and agents who responded, 68% either strongly agreed or agreed that they felt well supported during the nominations process, with only 4% disagreeing.

Polling Day

- 3.20 Nottingham City Council used 129 polling stations on 7 May 2015. There were reports of queues at polling stations and Inspecting Officers went to those venues to troubleshoot and assist wherever possible. There was only one polling station with a significant queue at 10pm and all of those queueing were able to vote.

Polling Day – stakeholder / citizen feedback

- 3.21 The majority of polling stations were deemed adequate for use with 83% of responding Poll Clerks and Presiding Officers agreeing or strongly agreeing that their polling station met the needs of voters and 70% of responding candidates and agents agreeing the polling stations were managed effectively.
- 3.22 53% of candidates and agents who responded to the survey agreed that polling station arrangements were appropriate and managed effectively, whereas 7% disagreed.

Polling and Count Staff Appointments

- 3.23 A significant number of temporary staff was required to resource the combined parliamentary and local election, with particular roles relating to polling day and the count. Staffing levels were increased for the election in 2015 in anticipation of a higher turnout and increased workload, partly due to the implementation of IER and the potential for confusion for voters resulting from having two ballot papers and boxes. 322 individuals were appointed to 628 posts with appointment letters being sent out on 19 March 2015. The appointment and training process was managed by Electoral Services whilst also managing the transition to IER and implementing new IT software. The recruitment involved an increase in the proportion of staff that had no previous experience of working on an election, especially at the count.
- 3.24 Polling stations were staffed in accordance with Electoral Commission guidance as to the numbers of staff to the size of the electorate. Some polling stations had to manage queues and became extremely busy. However, there were no reports of queues having been managed inefficiently or of any major issues with queuing at the close of polling. Many people dropped out of working on the election who then had to be replaced at short notice. This resulted in some polling stations and count teams having a larger number of new inexperienced staff than initially intended.

Polling and Count Staff Appointments – stakeholder / citizen feedback

- 3.25 67% of Presiding Officers who responded to the questionnaire felt that their poll clerks were effective in carrying out their duties. Comments were however made that on occasion poll clerks were slow.
- 3.26 53% of candidates and agents who responded to the survey agreed that polling station arrangements were appropriate and managed effectively, whereas 7% disagreed.

Postal votes

- 3.27 On election day the postal vote team started opening postal votes at 1pm, followed by another session at 7pm which included all the postal votes collected from polling stations throughout the day. At this election there was an unprecedented amount of postal votes handed in during the last few hours of polling, however this did not cause a delay.
- 3.28 Improvements to the postal vote checking-in system meant that postal packs were identified more easily and processed straight away. Due to the Nottingham Tennis Centre being a Council networked building the Council was able to scan and check 100% of the personal identifiers exactly as they would have if at the Council offices. This provided consistency in the process and allowed staff, candidates and agents to have confidence in the process in place on the night.
- 3.29 Experienced staff were used to open postal votes at these sessions and were assisted by Senior Officers of the Electoral Services Team to ensure that the postal votes did not delay the verification. This was an improvement on previous general elections since the relaxation of postal voting restrictions when late delivery of postal votes had caused overall delays to verification.

The Count

- 3.30 The Nottingham Tennis Centre is one of the largest venues we have and is close to the city centre on the west side of the city. It provides two large sports halls, along with many additional facilities, such as a public gallery overlooking the courts which is used as the media area, adequate space for three parliamentary constituency counts, plenty of space for candidates and agents to view all aspects of the verification and count, a café serving light refreshments with televisions for viewing results, and adequate parking for staff and observers.
- 3.31 The Parliamentary count (i.e. post verification) should have commenced by 2:00am. This was not achieved by Nottingham. In terms count

arrangements, in accordance with Electoral Commission best practice, the Council operated a mini count system on a ward by ward basis. The ballot boxes from each polling station in each ward were verified side by side for both elections, thus allowing the Council to identify immediately where papers had been deposited in the wrong box as previous experience had indicated that this was likely to be an issue that might impact deleteriously on the verification process. Each ward also had a postal ballot box for both elections which staff in that ward also verified. Once all boxes had been verified the final verification figures were fed back to the Deputy Acting Returning Officer who completed an overall verification sheet for the whole constituency. This figure was then released to candidates and agents and the UK Parliamentary count commenced.

3.32 The Acting Returning Officer decided, on the basis that polling day was expected to be busy and, accordingly, that staff would be fatigued, to inject additional and new staff to the verification process in an effort to ensure that this progressed well. All verification and count staff were trained in advance and had written instructions and many were in situ and already working on postal boxes before other boxes and staff arrived. This decision was also taken in the interests of succession planning, in order to develop a larger cadre of staff involved with elections. The benefits of this were seen more immediately with the local counts where 20 DROs were used, most having acted as ward count supervisors in the parliamentary verifications and counts.

3.33 However, in some instances, the impact of having 50% new staff members meant that the verification and count were affected as those staff were cautious and diligent but slower. Many of our boxes did not tally straight away with the ballot paper account and therefore had to be recounted which is not unusual. However, with a large turnout and a significant amount of papers in each box, which then had to be counted up to three times to clarify the figure, there was an impact on time. Accuracy, transparency and a clear audit trail ultimately took precedence over speed.

3.34 The local election count was held at 12:00pm on Friday 8 May and included a significant number of staff from the parliamentary verification and count from Thursday 7 May. Due to the overrunning of the Parliamentary Count, core team members were not ready for the start of the count at noon. Some core team colleagues had no or little break between the two counts and did not have enough time to complete their tasks before people started to arrive for the local count.

The Count – stakeholder / citizen feedback

3.35 The verification and count for the combined elections took place at the Tennis Centre in Nottingham. This is widely regarded as a good venue with 97% of count staff who responded to the questionnaire agreeing or strongly agreeing that the venue was effective. 57% of candidates and

agents felt that the verification and count arrangements were effective, with 7% disagreeing. There were a number of comments made by candidates and agents about the delay in announcing results and the perception that staff was being underused. Twenty-five percent of candidates and agents who responded to the survey commented on the fact that the verification and both counts took significantly longer than other comparable places. This needs to be seen within the context of the exceptional number of candidates and turnout, the use of additional inexperienced staff and the opportunity taken to “promote” a number of experienced staff to work as Deputy Returning Officers for the individual ward counts.

- 3.36 The majority of Deputy Returning Officers and Count Supervisors who responded to the questionnaire were satisfied with the calibre of their count assistants with 84% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their count assistants worked effectively. Those that disagreed expressed concern about the proportion of experienced staff to inexperienced staff and the impact this had on the speed at which the count was able to progress. Concerns were also expressed about the amount of hours staff were required to work and the impact this had on their ability to work quickly and accurately.

4. List of attached information

- 4.1 Appendix 1 – Questionnaires and responses

5. Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information

- 5.1 None.

6. Published documents referred to in compiling this report

- 6.1 The May 2015 UK Elections, Electoral Commission, July 2015.
- 6.2 The Electoral Commission, Assessment of progress with the transition to Individual Electoral Registration.
www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/190464/IE R-June_report.pdf, 10 July 2015.
- 6.3 Cabinet Office Statement - 16 July 2015.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/individual-electoral-registration-ending-the-transition>
- 6.4 The Electoral Commission – Standing at a UK Parliamentary general election in Great Britain.
http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/electoral_commission_pdf_file/0007/79540/UKPGE-nominations-factsheet-FINAL.pdf

- 6.5 Electoral Commission's report – Assessment of the performance of Returning Officers at the May 2015 polls
http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/190957/Assessment-of-the-performance-of-Returning-Officers-at-the-May-2015-polls.pdf

7. Wards affected

- 7.1 Citywide.

8. Contact information

- 8.1 Rav Kalsi
Senior Governance Officer
rav.kalsi@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
0115 8763759

Elections Review – Questionnaire

This appendix supplements the analysis of the processes and events of the combined parliamentary and local election held in May 2015 including nominations, polling and the verification and count. This includes responses to questionnaires completed by polling and count staff and candidates and agents.

Candidates and Agents

Out of 325 candidates and agents, 28 responses were received representing 8%.

The following questions were asked:

Question 1

The pre-election briefing and information pack provided me with the information I needed.

4 (14%) strongly agreed
16 (57%) agreed
8 (28%) neither agreed or disagreed
0 disagreed
0 strongly disagreed

In response to question 1, comments were made to electronically circulate the guidance and simplify the guidance.

Question 2

The Elections Team were easily accessible and able to answer my queries.

10 (35%) strongly agreed
8 (28%) agreed
10 (35%) neither agreed or disagreed
0 disagreed
0 strongly disagreed

Question 3

Communications from the Council (eg the Statement of Persons Nominated, the Count Arrangements) were clear and timely.

8 (28%) strongly agreed
15 (53%) agreed
3 (10%) neither agreed or disagreed
2 (7%) disagreed

0 strongly disagreed

The following comments were made in relation to question 3:

UKIP reported not having received their tickets for the count and communicating electronically was preferred.

Question 4

I felt well supported throughout the nominations process.

8 (28%) strongly agreed
12 (42%) agreed
7 (25%) neither agreed or disagreed
1 (3%) disagreed
0 strongly disagreed

Question 5

Polling Station arrangements were appropriate and managed effectively.

5 (17%) strongly agreed
15 (53%) agreed
6 (21%)
2(7%) disagree
0 strongly disagree

In response to question 5, there were reports of confusion amongst electors over the number of votes they were entitled to and some confusion over which polling station to attend.

Question 6

The verification and count arrangements were effective.

4 (14%) strongly agree
16 (57%) agree
4 (14%) neither agree or disagree
2 (7%) disagree
2 (7%) strongly disagree

In response to question 6, it was suggested that the same staff are not used in both polling station duties and the count. Seven respondents also commented on the delay in reporting the results and 4 respondents commented that staff members were under used.

Presiding Officers

Out of 125 presiding officers, 64 responded, giving a response rate of 51.2%

Question 1

The training and supporting information prepared me well for my polling duties.

- 23 (35%) strongly agree
- 36 (56%) agree
- 3 (4%) neither agree or disagree
- 2 (3%) disagree
- 0 strongly disagree

In response to question 1, respondents reported that the training felt rushed and that there were too many attendees at the training events. Two respondents reported that the supporting information was helpful.

Question 2

The arrangements for the collection of equipment before polling day were effective.

- 13 (20%) strongly agreed
- 22 (34%) agreed
- 11 (17%) neither agreed or disagreed
- 15 (23%) disagreed
- 3 (4%) strongly disagreed

The overwhelming comment in response to question 2 related to the Corresponding Numbers List and Ballot papers not corresponding.

Question 3

On polling day I felt confident in carrying out my duties.

- 34 (53%) strongly agreed
- 25 (39%) agreed
- 4 (6%) neither agreed or disagreed
- 1 (1%) disagreed
- 0 strongly disagreed

Question 4

My poll clerk(s) was effective in carrying out their duties

- 42 (67%) strongly agreed
- 15 (24%) agreed
- 2 (3%) neither agreed or disagreed

3 (4%) disagreed
0 strongly disagreed

In response to question 4, 9 respondents commented that poll clerks were good whereas 5 commented that poll clerks were slow and had made mistakes.

Question 5

The polling station met the needs of voters and polling staff.

28 (44%) strongly agreed
22 (34%) agreed
7 (11%) neither agreed or disagreed
4 (6%) disagree
2 (3%) strongly disagree

11 respondents felt that polling stations were good

Question 6

I had sufficient equipment and supplies to help me carry out my duties effectively.

28 (44%) strongly agree
25 (39%) agree
3 (4%) neither agree or disagree
6 (9%) disagree
1 (1%) strongly disagree

In response, respondents commented that phone lines through to the Election Team was busy and 3 respondents commented that a map of other polling stations would have been useful.

Question 7

The instructions for bagging up at the end of polling were clear.

23 (35%) strongly agree
30 (46%) agree
10 (15%) neither agree or disagree
1 (1%) disagree
0 strongly disagree

Five respondents commented that the bagging up instructions were clear, whereas another 5 commented that the instructions were unclear.

Question 8

The checking in arrangements at the count were effective.

25 (39%) strongly agree
23 (35%) agree
8 (12%) neither agree or disagree
5 (7%) disagree
3 (4%) strongly disagree

9 respondents commented that the checking in procedure took a long time and 9 respondents commented that all of the items were difficult to carry.

Question 9

Would you work as a presiding officer again?

45 (70%) strongly agree
16 (25%) agree
1 (1%) neither agree or disagree
1 (1%) disagree
1 (1%) strongly disagree

DLROs and Supervisors

Out of 48, 27 DLROs and Supervisors responded, giving a response rate of 56%.

Question 1

The training and supporting information prepared me well for the count.

6 (22%) strongly agree
11 (40%) agree
5 (18%) neither agree or disagree
5 (18%) disagree
0 strongly disagree

Question 2

I felt confident in carrying out my duties at the count.

6 (22%) strongly agree
11 (40%) agree
5 (18%) neither agree or disagree
5 (18%) disagree
0 strongly disagree

Question 3

Instructions given at the count were clear and timely.

3 (11%) strongly agree
13 (50%) agree
7 (26%) neither agree or disagree
2 (7%) disagree
1 (3%) strongly disagree

Question 4

My Count Assistants worked efficiently and effectively.

14 (57%) strongly agree
9 (33%) agree
1 (3%) neither agree or disagree
2 (7%) disagree
1 (3%) strongly disagree

Question 5

Equipment and supplies were sufficient and appropriate.

3 (11%) strongly agree

10 (37%) agree
7 (25%) neither agree or disagree
5 (18%) disagree
2 (7%) strongly disagree

Question 6

Count paperwork was clear and easy to follow.

5 (18%) strongly agree
20 (74%) agree
1 (3%) neither agree or disagree
1 (3%) disagree
0 strongly disagree

Question 7

The Tennis Centre was an effective venue for the count.

21 (77%) strongly agree
6 (22%) agree
0 neither agree or disagree
0 disagree
0 strongly disagree

Count Assistants

Of the 310 count assistants employed by Nottingham City Council, 155 responded to the questionnaire giving a response rate of 50%.

Question 1

The training and supporting information prepared me well for the count.

38 (24%) strongly agree
91 (59%) agree
15 (9%) neither agree or disagree
8 (5%) disagree
1 (0.6%) strongly disagree

Question 2

I felt confident in carrying out my duties at the count.

68 (44%) strongly agree
76 (49%) agree
8 (5%) neither agree or disagree
2 (1%) disagree
0 strongly disagree

Question 3

Instructions given at the count were clear and timely.

53 (36%) strongly agree
78 (50%) agree
12 (7%) neither agree or disagree
7 (4%) disagree
3 (1%) strongly disagree

Question 4

The Count Supervisor/ Deputy Returning Officer I worked with gave clear guidance and ran the count effectively.

72 (46%) strongly agree
62 (40%) agree
13 (8%) neither agree or disagree
5 (3%) disagree
2 (1%) strongly disagree

Question 5

I had sufficient equipment and supplies to help me carry out my duties effectively.

67 (43%) strongly agree
74 (47%) agree
6 (3%) neither agree or disagree
8 (5%) disagree
0 strongly disagree

Question 6

The Tennis Centre was an effective venue for the count.

77 (51%) strongly agree
67 (44%) agree
4 (2%) neither agree or disagree
1 (0.6%) disagree
1 (0.6) strongly disagree

Poll Clerks

Out of 264 poll clerks employed by Nottingham City Council, 135 responded to the questionnaire, giving a response rate of 51%.

Question 1

The training and supporting information prepared me well for my polling duties.

38 (28%) strongly agree
77 (57%) agree
12 (8%) neither agree or disagree
8 (5%) disagree
0 strongly disagree

Question 2

On polling day I felt confident in carrying out my duties.

53 (39%) strongly agree
76 (57%) agree
4 (3%) neither agree or disagree
0 disagree
0 strongly disagree

Question 3

The polling station met the needs of voters.

50 (37%) strongly agree
65 (48%) agree
5 (3%) neither agree or disagree
14 (10%) disagree
0 strongly disagree

Question 4

The polling station met the needs of polling staff.

51 (37%) strongly agree
73 (54%) agree
3 (2%) neither agree or disagree
7 (5%) disagree
1 (1%) strongly disagree

Question 5

My Presiding Officer was effective in carrying out his/her duties.

78 (57%) strongly agree
40 (29%) agree
8 (5%) neither agree or disagree
5 (3%) disagree
4 (2%) strongly disagree

Question 6

I had sufficient equipment and supplies to help me carry out my duties effectively.

63 (46%) strongly agree
62 (45%) agree
5 (3%) neither agree or disagree
5 (3%) disagree
0 strongly disagree

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
7 OCTOBER 2015
PROGRAMME FOR SCRUTINY
REPORT OF HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

1. Purpose

To consider and set the overall programme and timetable for scrutiny activity for the forthcoming year.

2. Action required

The Committee is asked to

- 2.1 note the items scheduled on the work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Review Panels for 2015/16.

3. Background information

- 3.1 One of the main roles of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is setting, managing and co-ordinating the overall programme of scrutiny work. This includes:

- mapping out an initial programme for scrutiny at the start of the municipal year
- monitoring progress against the programme throughout the year, and making amendments as required
- evaluating the impact of scrutiny activity and using lessons learnt to inform future decisions about scrutiny activity.

- 3.4 In setting the programme for scrutiny activity, the Committee should aim for an outcome-focused work programme that has clear priorities and is matched against the resources available to deliver the programme. It is intended to hold fewer, but more in depth reviews which will enable panels to explore and challenge more.

Commissioning scrutiny reviews

- 3.5 Delivery of the programme will primarily be through the commissioning of time-limited (2 to 3 meetings maximum) review panels to carry out reviews into specific, focused topics. All reviews must have the potential to make a positive impact on improving the wellbeing of local communities and people who live and/or work in Nottingham; and to ensure resources are used to their full potential, reviews must have a clear and tight focus and be set a realistic but challenging timetable for their completion.

- 3.6 In setting the programme of scrutiny reviews, it is important that the programme has flexibility to incorporate unplanned scrutiny work requested in-year. However, the Committee will only be able to schedule unplanned work after it has reassessed priorities across the scrutiny programme and considered the impact on existing reviews of the diversion of resources. When the Committee monitors the overall programme for scrutiny at each meeting there will be opportunity to do this.
- 3.7 The Committee held a workshop session in March 2015 and identified a number of areas for consideration during 2015/16. These topics have been identified and are listed in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.8 When establishing a review panel, the Committee needs to decide on:
- a clear and tight remit for the review
 - a timescale within which the review should be carried out
 - size of review panel, including whether any co-opted members should be involved
 - chair of the review panel (to be appointed from the pool of five scrutiny chairs)

and should have regard to the need over the year to engage as many councillors as possible in the scrutiny process.

Policy briefings

- 3.9 Through the process of developing the programme for scrutiny, the Committee may identify issues which call for a policy briefing. The purpose of these briefings is to inform councillors about a current key issue or to prepare councillors for review work that has been commissioned. These informal briefings will not be occasions for scrutiny to be carried out, although they may result in a suggestion for a new scrutiny topic, which would need to be considered by this Committee against the current programme for scrutiny and available resource.
- 3.10 Policy briefings will not form part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's agenda but will be held separately and be open to all councillors to attend.

Monitoring programme for scrutiny

- 3.11 On an ongoing basis the Committee will be responsible for managing and co-ordinating the programme for scrutiny and assessing the impact of scrutiny activity. At all future meetings the Committee will monitor the progress of the programme, making amendments as appropriate.

4. List of attached information

The following information can be found in the appendices to this report:

- Appendix 1** – Feasibility criteria for topics
Appendix 2 – Long list of main scrutiny topics
Appendix 3 – Policy Briefing topics
Appendix 4 - Long-list of potential future OSC/SRP topics

5. **Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information**

None

6. **Published documents referred to in compiling this report**

None

7. **Wards affected**

Citywide

8. **Contact information**

Contact Colleagues

Rav Kalsi
Senior Governance Officer
Rav.kalsi@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
0115 8763759

Appendix 1 - feasibility criteria includes:

Decision making and being a critical friend	Is it a topic/key decision which requires consultation with Overview and Scrutiny <u>prior</u> to the decision being taken.	Yes – include. No – apply other criteria and consider removing
Public Interest and relevance	Is the topic still relevant in terms of it still being an issue for citizens, partners or the council in terms of performance, delivery or cancellation of services?	Yes – apply other criteria and consider inclusion No – apply other criteria and consider removing
Ability to change or influence	Can the Committee actively influence the council or its partners to accept recommendations and ensure positive outcomes for citizens and therefore be able to demonstrate the value and impact that scrutiny can have?	Yes – apply other criteria and consider inclusion No – apply other criteria and consider removing
Range and scope of impact	Is this a large topic area impacting on significant areas of the population and the council’s partners <u>or significant impact on minority groups</u>. Is there interest from partners and colleagues to undertake and support this review and will it be beneficial?	Yes – apply other criteria and consider inclusion No – apply other criteria and consider removing
Avoidance of duplication of effort	Is this topic area very similar to one already being scrutinised in another arena or has it already been investigated in the recent past?	Yes – consider involvement in the existing activity or consider removing No – apply other criteria and consider inclusion.

<p>7 October 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of combined local and parliamentary elections 2015 To consider the effect of the change to the electoral registration process and the management of the 2015 election process. To include input from a number of political parties and their staff, Portfolio Holder and Democratic Services staff (Democratic Services, Nottingham City Council) • Work Programme To agree a draft work programme for 2015/16
<p>4 November 2015</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 33</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report and actions arising from Ofsted inspection in May 2014 To consider the NCSCB's annual report and progress against the actions arising from the Ofsted inspection in May 2014 (NCSCB Independent Chair, Corporate Director for Children and Adults, Portfolio Holder for Early Years and Early Intervention) • Nottingham Plan – Annual Report • Work Programme To agree a draft work programme for 2015/16
<p>9 December 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nottingham Growth Plan To consider an update from the Portfolio Holder for Job, Growth and Transport on the progress of the Growth Plan in Nottingham. (Economic Development, Portfolio Holder for Jobs, Growth and Transport) • Council Plan and Priorities To consider an update from the Leader of the Council on his Council plans and priorities

	<p style="text-align: right;">(Leader of the Council)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Programme To agree a draft work programme for 2015/16
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 34</p> <p>6 January 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good to Great Operating Model To consider an update from the Chief Executive on the Council's transition from 'Good to Great' and the resulting changes to the Council's operating model. (Chief Executive, Nottingham City Council) • Housing Strategy in Nottingham To consider the development of the housing sector in the city of Nottingham (Major Programmes, Nottingham City Council) • Work Programme To agree a draft work programme for 2015/16
<p>3 February 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of Children with complex needs, disabilities or from minority/ethnic backgrounds To consider the process for the adoption of children. (Children in Care, Nottingham City Council) • Combined Authority To consider the process and plans for the formation of a combined authority in Nottingham. (Development and Growth, Nottingham City Council)
<p>9 March 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDP Annual Partnership Plan To consider an update on the CDP's partnership plan. (Crime and Drugs Partnership) • Commercialisation of Council Services

	To consider an update on the commercialism agenda, with a view to identifying a number of topics requiring closer scrutiny. (Commercial and Neighbourhood Services, Nottingham City Council)
5 April 2016	

List of potential policy briefings

The Committee can identify any topics to be put forward as ideas for potential policy briefing sessions at this stage – this process can be ongoing throughout the year.

Date	Topic	Comments

Scrutiny Review Topics 2015/16

	Topic	Comments
1	To review school attendance for children with disabilities or special education needs and the support mechanisms in place to support them to improve attendance and the progress of the transition from the Statement of Special Educational Needs or 323 assessments to the new Educational Health and Care Plans arising from the Children and Families Act 2014 Act	<p>Status – to be scheduled</p> <p>Proposed by Beverly Denby, 3rd Sector Advocate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair and membership needs appointing at OSC • Panel will include the co-opted representatives for educational issues • Scope to be finalised and submitted for approval to OSC
2	<p>NOTTINGHAM CITIZEN'S SURVEY</p> <p>To review the responses of sub-groups of the population, including the differing views by area and demographic factors such as age, ethnicity and disability</p>	<p>Status – to be scheduled</p> <p>CHAIR: To be determined</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified as a review at the Overview and Scrutiny workshop held in March 2014 • Scope needs to be finalised with chair and submitted for approval to OSC • Membership needs to be appointed
3	Equalities within the Commissioning and Procurement process	First review held in December 2014, follow up review planned for June 2016 with Cllr Jenkins to chair
4	Kin fostering regulations	
5	The changing landscape of demographics of children in care	
6	The specialist skills required for adoption and foster families	
7	The wider impact of commercialism on services and the balance between delivering outcomes for citizens	
8	The commercialisation of garage services	
9	The commercialisation of cemeteries and crematoriums	
10	Term time holidays	

11	Correlation between school attendance and behaviour and the impact on attainment	
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