

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 12 November 2014 from 14.00 - 16.10

Membership

Present

Councillor Brian Parbutt (Chair)
Councillor Glyn Jenkins (Vice Chair)
Councillor Georgina Culley
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor Neghat Nawaz Khan
Councillor Thulani Molife
Councillor Anne Peach
Councillor Roger Steel
Councillor Marcia Watson
Councillor Carole-Ann Jones

Absent

Councillor Azad Choudhry
Councillor Ginny Klein
Councillor Mohammed Saghir
Councillor Pat Ferguson

Beverley Denby (third sector advocate)

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Ian Curryer - Chief Executive
Angela Probert - Strategic Director for Organisational Transformation
Jane Garrard - Senior Governance Officer
Rav Kalsi - Senior Governance Officer

33 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan was appointed as Chair for the meeting.

34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Azad Choudhry (personal)
Councillor Ginny Klein (other Council business)

35 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None

36 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting held on 8 October 2014 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

37 GOOD TO GREAT - CHANGING THE COUNCIL'S OPERATING MODEL

Ian Curryer, Chief Executive, introduced a report of the Head of Democratic Services about the new operating model for the Council introduced to provide a way of working and structure that puts citizens at the heart of decision making. He gave a presentation highlighting the following information:

- a) The concept of moving the Council from 'Good to Great' was introduced when Ian Curryer became Chief Executive in January 2013. It reflected his assessment that the Council needed a clear sense of direction going forward; the amalgamation of different sites required a single operating model; the strong corporate centre had a tendency to encourage a risk-adverse culture and a focus on process rather than service user outcomes; and that there was a lack of focus on 'the citizen' within the Council.
- b) The journey from 'Good to Great' is about putting the citizen at the front of the organisation and becoming a great customer services organisation. This requires service departments to identify customer need; and support from other departments to enable front line services to deliver what they need to. It requires a more balanced approach to risk, encouraging innovation and creativity; and a reduction in unnecessary bureaucracy, especially given the current financial challenges facing the organisation.
- c) Key features of the new operating model are:
 - i. an understanding of different types of leadership, that aren't just about management;
 - ii. clear expectations of employees that employees understand; and
 - iii. 'strategic enablers' to support a great customer services organisation. This includes putting commissioning principles and processes at the centre of the organisation; utilising commercialism principles; and having a customer services function as part of the organisation.
- d) A key aspect of the journey from 'Good to Great' has been speaking with colleagues about the new ways of working, with messages that are clear and simple to understand and engage with. The message emphasises the importance of having a great workforce to deliver a great City.
- e) Messages about 'Good to Great' are intended for an internal audience.
- f) As a 'Great' Council, citizens should experience the following differences:
 - i. ways of contacting the Council that are more convenient for the citizen and better reflect what people want – this will be based on consultation and listening to citizens
 - ii. seamless services with one point of contact for most transactions with the Council
 - iii. queries resolved at the first point of asking
 - iv. professional customer service experience

v. feedback used to improve services

Following questions from councillors the following additional information was provided:

- g) Councillors gather a lot of information about service user experience as part of their ward work and it would be useful to have a way of effectively capturing this and using it to improve services.
- h) Commercialism has been introduced as a principle and is not necessarily about making money. Sometimes the Council will be the best organisation to provide a service but other times it will be more appropriate for other providers to carry out a particular function. It is not an aspiration to expand into the private sector unless there is a particular gap that needs filling and the focus will remain on the Council's core business. It is important to empower local communities to take action themselves.
- i) Citizens use a range of different technologies and the Council needs to facilitate this. Access to technology is not necessarily linked to deprivation, it is more often about personal preferences on how to communicate.
- j) It is important to learn from compliments as well as complaints and use compliments as a way of raising expectations.
- k) A Challenge Group has been established which meets monthly and provides an opportunity for colleagues to suggest areas for improvement.
- l) Evaluation of whether the Council is 'Great' will partly be through self-assessment and partly through citizen feedback. With the abolition of the Audit Commission there is less national benchmarking information available but the Council does share information with the Core Cities Group and other comparable authorities. External inspections are still carried out in some service areas, e.g. OFSTED and this provides a way of checking performance and learning. The Council has requested that the Local Government Association carry out a Peer Review in 2015, focusing on the 'Good to Great' journey and this will provide useful feedback.
- m) There needs to be more focus on gathering citizen feedback.
- n) It is a challenge to fully understand the corporate overhead costs for each service area. A piece of work is being undertaken to better understand these costs and outcomes should be available by April 2015.

RESOLVED to

- 1) request that Ian Curryer provide information to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on how scrutiny can support the Council on its journey from 'Good to Great';**
- 2) request that information be provided to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on how information and feedback from councillors can be fed into the Corporate Performance Board; and**
- (3) include the findings and recommendations from the Council's Peer Review in 2015 on the scrutiny work programme for 2015/16.**

38 IMPLICATIONS FOR SCRUTINY FOLLOWING THE PUBLICATION OF THE JAY REPORT INTO CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN ROTHERHAM

Rav Kalsi, Senior Governance Officer, introduced a report of the Head of Democratic Services setting out information about the implications for scrutiny arising from publication of the Jay Report into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham, including a paper produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny entitled 'What Rotherham and Mid-Staffordshire tell us about scrutiny, and where it's lacking'. He reminded the Committee that while the Jay Report was primarily about child sexual exploitation issues, it highlighted lessons for all aspects of scrutiny and not just scrutiny of child safeguarding.

During discussion about the implications for scrutiny in Nottingham the following comments were made:

- a) Too often scrutiny just relies on the views of internal Council officers and it is important for scrutiny councillors to consider other sources of evidence in order to obtain an understanding of wider views and experiences.
- b) It can be useful for councillors to visit services and organisations to see things for themselves.
- c) There are limited resources to support scrutiny activity and this sometimes has implications for the range of evidence that can be obtained.
- d) There are examples of scrutiny reviews that have made use of a wide range of evidence sources but there is scope to do this more.
- e) Identification of evidence sources should start at an early stage when the Committee identifies future topics for scrutiny so planning can commence.
- f) Conclusions of the Jay Report raise similar issues about scrutiny as the Francis Report into care at Mid-Staffordshire Hospitals. Health scrutiny is learning from the lessons of the Francis Report, with a greater focus on getting alternative perspectives, engaging more with the public, and undertaking scrutiny training etc.
- g) Councillors would benefit from training on scrutiny techniques to enable them to carry out their role effectively.
- h) When the Committee looked at child sexual exploitation in December 2013, evidence was taken from professionals outside the Council in addition to Council officers.
- i) Scrutiny of child safeguarding issues should take place at least annually.

RESOLVED to

- 1) use the Scrutiny Chairs meetings to plan ahead for forthcoming scrutiny items, to identify appropriate sources of information and evidence with the aim of getting a perspective beyond Council officers and/ or Portfolio Holders for every scrutiny topic;**
- 2) have two substantive items on each Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda to accommodate the need for more regular consideration of issues such as child safeguarding, educational attainment etc;**
- 3) consider the implications for scrutiny arising from the Jay Report into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham in more depth at the next Scrutiny Chairs meeting, inviting Councillor Culley to attend;**
- 4) support scrutiny training for councillors following City Council elections in May 2015; and**
- 5) consider future scrutiny of child safeguarding issues following the Committee's meeting in January 2015.**

39 PROGRAMME FOR SCRUTINY

Rav Kalsi, Senior Governance Officer, introduced a report of the Head of Democratic Services setting out the overall programme and timetable for scrutiny activity during the remainder of 2014/15.

RESOLVED to

- 1) appoint Councillors Culley and Peach to sit on the review panel looking at how equalities can be promoted through the Council's Procurement Policy;**
- 2) appoint Councillor Jones to Chair the review panel looking at school attendance for children with disabilities or special educational 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;**
- 3) add progress in delivery of the Council and City's priorities 2011-2015 to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda for January 2015; and**
- 4) add consideration of the draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda for February 2015.**