

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at LB31-32 - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 3 June 2015 from 2:02pm – 3:40pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Brian Parbutt (Chair)
Councillor Glyn Jenkins
Councillor Azad Choudhry
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan (Vice Chair)
Councillor Neghat Nawaz Khan
Councillor Ginny Klein
Councillor Anne Peach
Councillor Leslie Ayoola
Councillor Josh Cook
Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim
Councillor Patience Ifediora
Councillor Jim Armstrong

Absent

Councillor Georgina Culley,
Substituted by Councillor Jim
Armstrong
Councillor Pat Ferguson
Beverley Frost
Councillor Corall Jenkins

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Ian Bentley - Strategy and Commissioning Manager, Crime and Drugs Partnership
Christine Oliver - Senior Performance and Governance Manager, Crime and Drugs Partnership
Lucy Lee - Head of Customer Access, Nottingham City Council

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Georgina Culley – Unwell (Councillor Armstrong Substituting)
Councillor Corall Jenkins – Personal
Councillor Pat Ferguson – Unwell
Beverley Frost – Other work commitments

10 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

11 MINUTES

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2015 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

12 CRIME AND DRUGS PARTNERSHIP - CRIMINAL JUSTICE SUBSTANCE MISUSE PATHWAY

Ian Bentley, Strategy and Commissioning Manager and Christine Oliver, Senior Performance and Governance Manager, both of the Crime and Drugs Partnership (CDP) gave a presentation to the Committee on the Criminal Justice Substance Misuse Pathway (the treatment routes followed by those in contact with the criminal justice system whose offending is related to the misuse of alcohol or drugs).

During the presentation the following key points were highlighted:

- (a) The new service has been in operation since 29 April 2015 and is being delivered by Framework, supported by the Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust and Double Impact, following a competitive tendering process. The contract with Framework is a one year contract with options to twice extend for a further year.
- (b) The previous structure was no longer viable due to a combination of financial pressures, significant changes to the probation service and the response to a needs assessment the findings of which formed the basis of the commissioning process.
- (c) The needs assessment established needs related to matters including treatment of misuse of alcohol and drugs other than crack cocaine and heroin; whether a wider range of offences should trigger drugs testing; whether greater use of coercive treatment could be made, particularly in relation to alcohol; and ensuring that service users gain access to “recovery capital” – additional support services such as debt and housing advice, counselling, employment training and health services.
- (d) Challenges posed during the procurement process included the impact of TUPE on organisations’ ability to bid for the contract.
- (e) The new service comprises of an Engagement Team who cover the custody suites and courts and a Treatment Team who deliver interventions for service users, engaging with them within 48 hours of court awards of treatment orders. Treatment includes rapid access to prescriptions but is much wider than this.
- (f) The functions of the new service include ensuring continuity of treatment for offenders who have been imprisoned. This includes those who have only been imprisoned for one day as all who have served custodial sentences are now released on license and can be subject to coercive measures in relation to drug misuse as part of their license agreement.

Ian Bentley and Christine Oliver then responded to questions from the Committee as follows:

- (g) Following the release of an offender from prison they are subject to a 12 month licence. This means they have to attend treatment and are offered wraparound care which gives them the opportunity to change their lifestyle and reduce their chances of reoffending. Attempts are also made to involve offenders’ families in their treatment which often involves rebuilding bridges with family.

- (h) Framework are known as a housing provider but they also deliver drug and alcohol services. They are new to criminal justice but they have taken on former Probation Service staff and are very fast learners.
- (i) Service users now have a clear pathway and will be supported by consistent staff.
- (j) The TUPE requirements related to pensions are likely to have restricted the number of potential bidders for the contract as smaller providers were unlikely to have the ability to cope with the requirements. Other services are also likely to be affected by this and the CDP are sharing their knowledge of this issue with other teams.
- (k) NHS England are about to take over the prison substance misuse service but efforts are being made to ensure there is a robust pathway between prison and community services, including the passing on of assessments. This is less robust in relation to female offenders as the nearest women's prison is in Peterborough but the majority of released female offenders are met at the station on their release. The CDP are represented on relevant NHS England Boards and the relationship with NHS England is covered in the Partnership Plan which will come back to this Committee and is going to Full Council.
- (l) Powers in relation to misuse of alcohol are much more limited, even for custodial offenders. If an offender tests positive for class A drugs they have to engage with treatment services but there are no similar coercive measures that can be taken in relation to alcohol misuse. This change would be extremely helpful but would need to go through Parliament. Despite this difficulty, there is currently no waiting time for alcohol services, the successful completion rate has increased to around 21% and the number of people accessing the service has increased.

RESOLVED to

- (1) thank Ian Bentley and Christine Oliver for the presentation and responses to questions and to request that the Partnership Plan is brought back to this Committee after it has been to Council;**
- (2) consider the issue related to TUPE when scrutinising the commissioning of other services;**
- (3) write from the Committee to the 3 city MPs raising the issue of the lack of coercive treatment powers related to alcohol misuse to request that it is raised in Parliament.**

13 CUSTOMER ACCESS PROGRAMME

Lucy Lee, the newly appointed Head of Customer Access introduced, and took questions from the Committee about, her vision for the Customer Access Programme. Her update and responses included the following key points:

- (a) Agreement exists that customer service needs to change and that a cultural change is required where anything other than excellent customer service is unacceptable. Any systems or tools that the Council chooses to invest in must support this aim.
- (b) There is a history of unaccountability and a lack of training in customer service. Customer service training should be mandatory for all staff at all levels of the Council and we must not allow for learning to be forgotten. When things go wrong we need to be accountable and to say sorry.
- (c) Managers must be empowered to tackle incidents of bad customer service straight away and ongoing poor performance must be identified and addressed.
- (d) Response times need to be standardised and improved and we need to have an escalation process if citizens don't receive a response.
- (e) Customer Records Management (CRM) systems are available which record individual customer's interactions with the Council. However, a problem with introducing a system in the Council is that a large proportion of customer contacts are with Nottingham City Homes and with Revenues and Benefits, both of which already have their own CRM systems and any new system would be unable to link with both of these.
- (f) Modern call management systems log the number of calls received and the outcomes as standard. The system we currently use is outdated. We also need to ensure calls bounce on within teams if they are not answered on the initial line. Managers need to take action if teams are ignoring any calls.
- (g) Different options for contact need to be provided. We can make use of channels for smartphones and other internet based services but we mustn't neglect other forms of contact. For example, we need to deal with the queues at Loxley reception much more effectively by using floor walkers who can contact colleagues who have meetings with visitors rather than them having to wait in a long queue. When people phone us we should have an option at the end of every call where the caller can identify whether they were satisfied with the response they received.
- (h) We need to review what we measure to determine whether we provide good customer service. For example we have good records of casework but casework often arises because something has gone wrong or a citizen has not had a good response to their initial contact. We also measure how quickly we answer phones but people generally don't mind if a phone is answered within 3 rings or 6 provided their query is resolved effectively.
- (i) We also need to have a better understanding of consistent complainers and people who could potentially pose a risk to colleagues/councillors.
- (j) Colleagues are happy when they feel proud of their work, empowered, praised support and like they have made a difference.

RESOLVED to thank Lucy Lee for the information she provided and to invite her to attend a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the progress made in implementing her vision for Customer Access.

14 PROGRAMME FOR SCRUTINY

Rav Kalsi, Senior Governance Officer, introduced a 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

- (1) to agree the work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Review Panels for 2015/16, as summarised in the report;**
- (2) to appoint Councillors Neghat Kahn, Glynn Jenkins and Mohammed Ibrahim to the Review Panel examining school attendance for children with disabilities or Special Educational Needs to be held on 18 June 2015;**
- (3) to appoint Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim as Chair and Councillors Brian Parbutt and Glynn Jenkins as members of the Review Panel on the Citizen's Survey to be held on 22 July 2015.**

15 COMMITTEE DATE - APRIL 2016

RESOLVED to agree the change in date of the April 2016 meeting to Wednesday 6 April 2016.