

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 8 November 2017 from 2.02 pm - 4.18 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Brian Parbutt (Chair)
Councillor Anne Peach (Vice Chair)
Councillor Azad Choudhry
Councillor Josh Cook
Councillor Georgina Culley
Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor Jackie Morris

Absent

Councillor Sue Johnson
Councillor Ginny Klein
Councillor Carole McCulloch
Councillor Mohammed Saghir
Councillor Marcia Watson

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Sam Webster – Portfolio Holder for Business, Education and Skills
Councillor Leslie Ayoola – Executive Assistant for Business and Employment

Robert Dixon – Head of Business Growth and International Strategy
Titu Hayre-Bennett – Head of Transformation
Alvin Henry – Head of Waste Services
John Marsh – Head of Street Scene and Grounds Maintenance
Noel McMenamin – Governance Officer
Steve Stott – Anti-Social Behaviour Manager
Laura Wilson – Senior Governance Officer

27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Sue Johnson – other Council business
Councillor Ginny Klein – personal
Councillor Marcia Watson – work commitments

28 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

29 MINUTES

Subject to recording Councillor Woodings' attendance, the minute of the meeting held on 6 September 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

30 DISCUSSION WITH THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR BUSINESS, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Councillor Sam Webster, Portfolio Holder for Business, Education and Skills, updated the Committee on the priorities and challenges in respect of the business and skills elements of his portfolio. Councillor Leslie Ayoola, Executive Assistant for Business and Employment, and Robert Dixon, Head of Business Growth and International Strategy, were also in attendance.

Councillor Webster highlighted the following:

- (a) Nottingham has been able to offer all 18-24 year olds a job, training place or Further Education place. Over 950 young people have received targeted support, and European Social Fund has been secured to provide the service until December 2019;
- (b) Creative Quarter and Growth Hub support has helped Nottingham establish itself as a hotbed for fast-growing businesses, and there was lots of activity in respect of creating additional creative, digital and clean technology hubs at no.2 Science Park and Basford Hall;
- (c) while Nottingham's rate of new business VAT registration needed improving, new business survival rates were higher than in 6 of the other 7 Core Cities;
- (d) progress continued to be made with establishing the Nottingham Skills Campus, with a final delivery date of the summer of 2020;
- (e) while there has been an improvement, Nottingham continues to have the lowest rate of graduate retention among Core Cities, and with Good to Great funding ending in March 2017, the target of 2,400 by 2020 will be difficult to achieve.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- (f) a lot of developmental activity currently relies on European funding streams, and Councillor Webster expressed concern about where alternative funding might come in the longer term;
- (g) Councillor Webster acknowledged the need for greater local recruitment to Nottingham's universities in order to boost graduate retention rates. Only 17% of those receiving free school meals went on to University, and widening local participation was key to delivering better graduate retention rates;
- (h) it was confirmed that the Creative Quarter has historically been defined geographically to tie in with funding requirements, but as existing funding arrangements ended other creative business hubs, such as that on Derby Road, could become incorporated into the Quarter;
- (i) the next bidding round will focus on engaging with hard-to-reach groups, including emerging communities. With the roll-out of Universal Credit, it will be become more difficult to gauge the effectiveness of engagement over time;

- (j) the Committee was reassured that investment by the Local Government Pension Scheme in the Midlands Engine's Local Investment Fund represented a very small and closely regulated proportion of the overall pensions pot;
- (k) Councillor Webster advised that Nottingham Futures has a walk-in centre on Maid Marian Way, offering a range of help to support those of working age in getting into employment, including help with transport costs and interview skills.

RESOLVED to thank Councillor Webster for the information provided.

31 FLY-TIPPING IN NOTTINGHAM

John Marsh, Head of Street Scene and Grounds Maintenance, Alvin Henry, Head of Waste Services and Steve Stott, Anti-Social Behaviour Manager, attended the meeting to provide evidence and answer councillors' questions on combatting fly-tipping in Nottingham. The committee had received previous information at its September 2017 meeting – minute 25 dated 6 September 2017 refers.

Mr Marsh, Mr Henry and Mr Stott provided the following information:

- (a) in response to previous requests for costings information, it was estimated that waste management cost £28 per household, Street Scene services cost £38 per household. The average cost of fly-tipping clear-up was estimated at £56, but there was a wide variation, depending on the size and materials involved;
- (b) Nottingham had an additional 4,500 households in the period 2011-16, and delivered better-value service on a cost-per-head basis than any other Core City, despite a reduction in capacity;
- (c) the only difference between litter and fly-tipping was the scale of material involved. Overall, there has been a downward trend in recent years, with a temporary increase each summer. A relatively recent increase in bulky waste fly-tipping appears to have coincided with the linking of the free bulky waste disposal service to being on the electoral register;
- (d) during the Council's Keep it Clean campaign earlier this year, there was a 4% drop in fly-tipping incidents. The team managed to clear 94% of reported fly-tipping incidents within 48 hours of being reported, which was just below the 95% target;
- (e) work was ongoing to reduce bin contamination, with a focus on student areas at this time of year.

The following points were made during discussion:

- (f) it was confirmed that fly-tipping hotspots did not feature on NOMAD, but were mapped from jobs recorded. Those wards with higher incidents of fly-tipping, including Arboretum, Berridge, Radford and St Ann's, often had a more transient population;

- (g) on enforcement, the choice between considering an issue to be littering or fly-tipping could be made on an individual basis. Littering could be prosecuted quickly, but where the incident significant, enforcement colleagues would press for a full prosecution;
- (h) fly-tipping was by definition a crime of stealth, and often the material was not easily identifiable as belonging to an individual. Enforcement colleagues could not rely on hearsay – prosecutions went to Court, where those giving evidence would be open to cross-examination;
- (i) it was confirmed that private sector landlords had been charged where student material had been identifiable to a particular property. It was also stated that landlord behaviour was improving, with more and more using skips and other appropriate means of getting rid of bulky waste:
- (j) the Team also passed intelligence on to the Licensing Team where it was suspected that houses were in multiple occupation on an informal basis;
- (k) it was confirmed that there were 250 volunteer litter champions across the city.

RESOLVED to thank Mr Marsh, Mr Henry and Mr Stott for their attendance at the meeting.

32 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE

Titu Hayre-Bennett, Head of Transformation, gave a presentation on the City Council's response to the Corporate Peer Challenge findings arising from the 3-day challenge event in May 2017. Ms Hayre-Bennett highlighted the following points:

- (a) the Corporate Peer challenge examined the Council's approach to priority setting, leadership of place, financial planning, capacity, leadership and governance, performance management, systems, processes Citizens at the Heart and the Council's transformation journey;
- (b) key positive messages emerging from the Challenge included recognition that it is a good, innovative effective Council with a talented 'can do' loyal workforce, the permeation of Citizens at the Heart throughout the organisation, strong and consistent leadership and positive councillor/colleague relations;
- (c) less positive observations included a tendency to create an unsustainable over-dependency culture among its citizens by trying to directly deliver solutions, and needing to tackle the future in innovative ways;
- (d) the Peer Team made a number of recommendations, focussing on enhancing the role of the Council in Nottingham, revising long-term planning arrangements revising governance arrangements;

- (e) in response, the Council was working with a range of partners on delivering a suite of strategies and programmes, including the Metro Strategy, the City of Culture 2023 bid, an emerging Digital Strategy and Agile Working Programme;
- (f) steps were also being taken to de-risk and provide longer-term financial planning, maximise income and procurement opportunities, develop statutory performance indicators and a revision of the existing Scheme of Delegation

The Committee commended the overall positive outcomes, and raised the following issues during discussion:

- (g) Ms Hayre-Bennett advised that with graduate retention, the local economy had capacity to support first and second jobs and positions, but that senior positions were at a premium, making senior retention more difficult;
- (h) in response to a question on the Metro strategy, Ms Hayre-Bennett said that Derby and Nottingham can each be centres of excellence within their areas of expertise, providing skill-sharing opportunities for both councils. She did acknowledge that successful devolution remained a significant and ongoing challenge;
- (i) the Committee signalled its willingness to be involved with any action plans being drawn up to address the Peer Team's recommendations.

RESOLVED to thank Ms Hayre-Bennett for her update.

33 WORK PROGRAMME

Laura Wilson, Senior Governance Officer, introduced a report setting out the Committee's work programme for 2017/18.

RESOLVED to note the report.