

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Loxley House, Nottingham on 3 October 2018
from 2.00 pm – 3.32 pm**

Membership

Present

Councillor Brian Parbutt (Chair)
Councillor Sue Johnson (Vice Chair)
Councillor Anne Peach (Vice Chair)
Councillor Jim Armstrong
Councillor Azad Choudhry
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora
Councillor Glyn Jenkins
Councillor Mohammed Saghir

Absent

Councillor Nicola Heaton
Councillor Cate Woodward

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Neghat Khan	- Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills
Elaine Fox	- Policy and Performance Officer
Jane Garrard	- Constitutional Services
Nicki Jenkins	- Head of Economic Development
Lucy Lee	- Head of Customer Services
Zena West	- Senior Governance Officer
Phil Wye	- Governance Officer

27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Nicola Heaton – work commitments

28 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

29 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

30 UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Lucy Lee, Head of Customer Services, delivered a presentation highlighting the following:

- (a) Universal Credit represents the largest ever reform of the welfare system since its inception, and replaces child tax credit, housing benefit, income support,

jobseeker's allowance, employment and support allowance and working tax credits;

- (b) the aim of Universal Credit is to reward work, encourage responsibility and support aspiration, and to ensure that citizens will be better off in work. Citizens will be responsible for the management of their own finances, with payments made monthly;
- (c) full Universal Credit will roll out on 17 October in Nottingham, being one of the last places for this to happen. From that date all new claimants or citizens with a change in circumstance will move to the new system;
- (d) 16.3% of Nottingham working-age citizens claim one or more benefit and so may be affected. Risks include a lack of digital skills to navigate the new portal, separate Council Tax support applications and a possible increase in evictions for rent arrears;
- (e) Nottingham City Council will prepare citizens with articles in the Arrow and on social media. Monthly meetings are taking place with stakeholders to identify and discuss issues and risks, and links have been established with authorities that are already on full Universal Credit such as Newcastle;
- (f) arrangements for Assisted Digital Support and Personal Budgeting Support are being finalised, which will be undertaken by Citizens' Advice.

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (g) Citizens Advice have received additional funding to provide the support services from the government, but they must ensure that they have the capacity to provide the support quickly;
- (h) the DWP have identified vulnerable citizens who require additional support if, for example, they suffer from mental health problems. Each claimant will be allocated a key worker;
- (i) council staff who work with citizens on benefits will be trained and made aware of Universal Credit and its requirements;
- (j) there has been assurance from the DWP that online applications for benefits will be processed on the same day;
- (k) sickness and disability benefit will remain separate and not covered by Universal Credit;
- (l) access to the online portal will be with a 16 digit key which will be provided on a laminated card. Messages are going out to not leave this together with email addresses and passwords.

Committee members suggested that the role of the Nottingham Credit Union could be enhanced to support people to manage their income, and that guidance would be

helpful for ward councillors if they are approached by a resident with Universal Credit issues.

RESOLVED to

- (1) thank Lucy for the information provided;**
- (2) prepare and distribute guidance to ward councillors on Universal Credit problems that may arise in casework or surgeries.**

31 DISCUSSION WITH THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Councillor Neghat Khan, Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills, gave a presentation outlining progress within her portfolio against the Council Plan priorities and the main priorities and challenges for 2018/19. The presentation focussed on the non-schools element of the portfolio and the following information was highlighted:

- (a) 8 of the 9 skills-related targets in the Council Plan are rated green with the 9th being amber;
- (b) work undertaken by Nottingham Jobs ensures that the council is able to offer all 18-24 year city residents a job, training place or further education, with 1,501 young people supported into work or education between April 2017 and June 2018;
- (c) the Get Ahead programme started in April 2018 and is designed to help 2,150 unemployed city residents into work. The Youth Engagement Initiative programme has also recently been extended to 2023;
- (d) graduate retention is now at its highest for three years, but is still not on track to meet the target of 2,400 by 2020. Work is being undertaken with both universities to support students and graduates into local jobs, as well as supporting local businesses with skills gaps;
- (e) Nottingham City Council now has its own graduate recruitment scheme, this year taking on six graduates;
- (f) all Nottingham City Council apprenticeships, entry level roles and Nottingham Jobs Fund opportunities are ring-fenced for city residents. 102 apprenticeships are currently in post with 24 new starters this year to date;
- (g) Nottingham College's new state of the art building is now on site with work due to complete in Summer 2020. All colleges in Nottingham City have been rated good by Ofsted;
- (h) Nottingham Trent University was named as Times Higher Education University of the Year for 2017, and both universities have been awarded a gold rating the government's Teaching Excellence Framework;

- (i) both universities run successful internship programmes;
- (j) the council has supported New College Nottingham to finalise the Basford Hall construction hub through provision on a £5m loan, and the site is now open and fully subscribed;
- (k) 14% of young people in Nottingham receiving free school meals currently go on to university, which is about the same as the Est Midlands average but lower than the national average of 24%;
- (l) both universities have Widening Participation programmes to raise aspirations and support young people into higher education, with support available to all city secondary schools and some primary schools.

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (m) funding has been secured for employment support to be put into the Leaving Care Service, to help care leavers through the process of gaining employment;
- (n) the council has a statutory duty to track all 16 year olds to make sure that are in employment, education or training. This is done by Futures on the council's behalf;
- (o) there are risks nationwide to lower skilled jobs from digitalisation and automation, but the extent of this is very difficult to predict.

RESOLVED to thank Councillor Khan for the information provided.

32 WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED to note the Committee's work programme for the remainder of the municipal year.