

Nottingham City Council

Communities and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 8 November 2023 from 2.01 pm - 3.22 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Imran Jalil (Chair)
Councillor Liaqat Ali
Councillor Neghat Khan (Vice Chair)
Councillor AJ Matsiko
Councillor Andrew Rule

Absent

Councillor Nayab Patel
Councillor Faith Gakenje-Ajala

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Laura Wilson - Senior Governance Officer
Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis - Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture
Councillor Sajid Mohammed - Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods, Safety and Inclusion
Colin Wilderspin - Director of Communities
Kate Morris - Scrutiny and Audit Support Officer

9 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Nayab Patel (Personal)

10 Declarations of Interests

None

11 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2023 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair

12 Best Value Reviews

Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture and Councillor Sajid Mohammed, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods, Safety and Inclusion attended the meeting to present the reports detailing the work of the Best Value Reviews for Community Resilience and for Environmental Services. Colin Wilderspin, Director of Communities also attended to provide additional information. They highlighted the following points:

- a) A number of Best Value Reviews are taking place across the Council with the aim of making more efficient use of Council assets, including better use of

buildings and teams, with a view to improving and safeguarding services alongside generating savings.

- a) At present the proposals from the Best Value reviews on Community Resilience and Environmental Services are not finalised, and any proposals will be subject to consultation and any comments or suggestions from members are welcome.
- b) An external review by Arcadia is underway to better understand the investment need and cost of community assets, and to identify potential disposal opportunities to support the ongoing transformation work.
- c) A number of proposals are being broadly considered, including the creation of three community hubs co-locating services for citizens, creating cross cutting efficiencies for services and ease of access for citizens. There will also be more focus on developing self-service style access to services.
- d) Part of the review includes detailed consideration of rent and lease arrangements for community assets using the Corporate Landlord model, with a view to moving rents to market rates with discounts offered where the services provided demonstrate social value, or represent savings across Council services, using a Social Value framework.
- e) Once proposals are more developed there will be a period of consultation, co-production and co-design with partners, citizens, and service users to ensure frontline services are protected and that there is continuity of service for citizens.

In response to questions from the Committee and during discussion the following further points were highlighted:

- f) Although the process of moving rents to a commercial footing has begun it is also important to consider running costs of community asset buildings. One option for consideration is how grant funding can be used by community groups to allow them to take on the buildings, how the Council can support that, and the transition for groups to being responsible for building up-keep. Best practice and lessons learned should be taken from the various Councils across the country that have successfully transitioned to this framework.
- g) The option for 3 community hubs will still allow services and staff to respond to ward level issues in a timely manner and would protect frontline staff ensuring that their visibility within the community remains. Services and staff in these hubs will have a detailed knowledge of the demographics of the area and be able to respond to resident's needs. This model focuses on improving sustainability and maintaining frontline visibility whilst developing efficiencies through management structures.
- h) The ongoing Transformation Programme across the Council has led to a more cohesive working structure with "One Council" at the heart of it. Both councillors and officers agreed that there is less silo working and, that with the introduction of new technology, officers are more able to report issues that

they see whilst working. This has led to better services for residents with issues being reported and addressed sooner.

- i) The Place-Based approach aims to draw together the Councils resources, and make best use of assets, staff and technology. These reviews are looking to establish what efficiencies can be identified by drawing together services, assets, staff and technology in a holistic way. Further work is required in terms of due diligence, consultation and robust risk assessment before proposals are finalised. Final proposals will be subject to SWAT analysis and full, detailed Equality Impact Assessments.
- j) Transformation work and the existing internal reviews of services are being fed into the Arcadia review and will inform the proposals that come from that report. Additional work from the implementation of the Corporate Landlord model and other transformation programmes are also being used to help develop a consistent approach to rent rates and maintenance expectations.
- k) Officers conducting the Best Value Reviews are meeting regularly with Portfolio Holders, and discussions are taking place across all divisions. When considering the social value framework it will be important to ensure that costs are not transferred, and that any reduction is an accurate reflection of savings for services made elsewhere within the Council without adding additional pressures to already stretched budgets.
- l) There have already been a number of cuts to these services and to create further efficiencies a fundamental difference in service delivery needs to be considered. The multifaceted skills of Community Protection Officers (CPO's) across the city allowed them to perform safe and well checks through Covid lockdowns, and has allowed them to take on a number of other responsibilities such as initial food hygiene inspections. Their presence and visibility are important and reassuring to residents. All options are being considered but, wherever possible, frontline services will be protected.
- m) Discussions are underway with a number of different partners and stakeholders to understand what input they can have to this process and where they are able to support the service continuity. Discussions are also underway looking at alternative funding streams to ensure that funding for CPO's is aligned to the functions they are carrying out.
- n) Through the process of the Best Value Reviews for Community Resilience and Environmental Services, alongside Best Value Reviews from other divisions in the Council, it has become clear that the One Council approach offers better co-ordination of services, efficiencies and savings.
- o) Where external risks have been identified whilst considering proposals, the programme of works has been updated and the risks explored with officers and the Portfolio Holders. This process will continue throughout the review to ensure there is an understanding of the risks associated with all options and proposals before any formal decision making takes place.

- q) Nottingham City has a strong track record of partnership working. Strategic level discussions are underway with the Voluntary and Faith sectors and the Business sector to collaborate and work together on a whole system approach to deliver outcomes for residents with consistent good practice embedded across the network. On a more local level work is underway to collate information to ensure that duplication in offer is reduced, that funding covers a wide spread of services and ensure that priorities for partners across the city are aligned.
- r) The opportunities to establish more efficient, effective and economic ways of working through the Best Value Reviews are significant. Where possible Portfolio Holders are committed to protecting staff visibility and services for residents but there are a number of challenges to creating the efficiencies needed.

Resolved to:

- 1) Note the progress to date of the Best Value Reviews on Community Resilience and Environmental Services.**
- 2) Make the following recommendations to the Portfolio Holders:**
 - a. To examine how specific funding available can be used to enable community centres to be ran by the community.**
 - b. To explore how the Social Value Framework is used and considered in progressing the Best Value Reviews and how it might shape their recommendations.**
 - c. To explore how businesses in Nottingham can be further engaged through Corporate Social Responsibility in relation to investment in the city and local events, etc.**
 - d. To ensure that SWAT and PEST analysis is completed on all proposals to be considered arising from the Best Value Reviews.**
- 3) Receive a further report on the proposals, consultation and methodology resulting from the Best Value Reviews.**

13 Work Programme

Laura Wilson, Senior Governance Officer, presented the Work Programme to the Committee highlighting that the item on the Castle will not be ready for the meeting in December and that it will be rescheduled for a later meeting and that, as a result of the discussion on the previous item, the Best Value Reviews will need to be scheduled to come back.

Resolved to:

- 1) Note the Work Programme, including the changes highlighted above.**
- 2) Agree that the Scrutiny and Audit Support Officer responsible for the Committee liaise with the relevant officers and the Chair of the Committee to schedule the Castle and Best Value Review items.**

