

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 6 December 2023 from 2.02 pm - 3.10 pm

Membership

Present

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

Absent

Councillor Faith Gakanje-Ajala
Councillor Nayab Patel

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis - Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture
Patrick Loy - Head of Nottingham Events
Adrian Mann - Scrutiny and Audit Support Officer
Kate Morris - Scrutiny and Audit Support Officer

14 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Nayab Patel – personal reasons

15 Declarations of Interests

None

16 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2023 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair, subject to the correction of the 'Membership' section to include Councillor Faith Gakanje-Ajala.

17 Events

Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture, and Patrick Loy, Head of Nottingham Events, presented a report on the public events taking place in Nottingham and their impacts on the city's tourism, economy and environment. The following points were raised:

- a) The Council, through the in-house Nottingham Events team, supports a number of public events across the city, including regular, civic and commercial events. The key events organised directly by the Council are Goose Fair, the Riverside Festival, Light Night and Remembrance Sunday. The Council's budget for events was £500,000 in 2010/11, but this has reduced over time and now Nottingham Events seeks to be self-sustaining, with the events that it runs funded by its own income and support from partners and sponsors. All events commissioned directly

by the Council must clearly justify the use of public funds, so detailed business cases are produced to set out what each event is intended to achieve and the wider benefit that it will bring for the city.

- a) The Nottingham Events team also delivers one-off special events to mark occurrences of local or national significance. As these events often need to be organised quickly and at short notice, this can be done most effectively by the dedicated in-house team. The team also acts as a single point of contact for other promoters seeking to organise events in the city such as commercial, sporting and promotional events, and to coordinate requests for commercial filming in public spaces. All of these bring important economic benefits for the city and the direct income is invested back into the Council's commissioned events programme.
- b) Unfortunately, the Council is no longer able to fund other city-wide annual community events directly, but is instead able to provide 'value in kind' event management support to ensure that they remain a core part of the city's major events programme.

The Committee raised the following points in discussion:

- c) The Committee asked what work was being done to attract a breadth of partners and sponsors to invest in events in the city, and what engagement was taking place with existing networking groups. It was explained that a dedicated function to actively seek sponsorship had been in place in the past – but not currently. Engaging with potential sponsors effectively has a specialist element, but some successful collaboration has been achieved by making best use of the Nottingham Events team's available resources to fund certain one-off events such as Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee. Further work is being carried out to explore how sponsorship could be sought more actively in the current context.
- d) The Committee considered that, in the current context, as much work as possible must be done to engage effectively with potential sponsors of public events, including the local business community. Members recommended that work could be done to enable all City Councillors to develop initial links with potential sponsors as part of their work within their communities, and suggested that a handbook of upcoming events is circulated to Councillors to help facilitate advance engagement by informing what sponsorship is needed and when.
- e) The Committee asked how decisions are taken on which events can be supported and which cannot in the context of maintaining a self-funding model, how sporting events can be used to their best advantage, and how emerging communities can be supported in establishing their cultural events. It was explained that Nottingham Events is aiming to be fully self-sustaining in financial terms, while seeking to facilitate as many one-off events as possible – including local and national sporting achievements. It is important that all communities within Nottingham are supported in celebrating their cultural heritage, and it is often possible for them to secure their own sources of funding – while as much resource as possible is provided from Nottingham Events on a 'value in kind' basis. However, the current budget has an in-year overspend (contributed to by lower attendance at this year's Riverside Festival and the cancellation of some

planned events due to bad weather) and there is no baseline budget in place for reacting to arising one-off events.

- f) The Committee asked what work was being carried out with voluntary Community Champions to support the staging of public events. It was reported that local Green Champions have been involved in events in green spaces to help ensure that they are kept clean. Volunteer schemes represent a potential opportunity to develop additional capacity beyond the in-house team to help support events across the city. However, the effective management and support of volunteers does require proper resourcing to be in place.
- g) The Committee noted that there are existing structures established already in the Council for coordinating volunteer activity, and suggested that consideration was given to whether these could be used to help resource public events.
- h) The Committee queried how the team ensures that services contracted by the Council in relation to public events secure best value. It was explained that Nottingham Events produces robust event specifications with clear best value requirements set out, and that any contacts for services are only entered into following input from the Council's Legal and Procurement teams. Many contracts are for a five-year duration, but have periodic review provisions in place.
- i) The Committee asked what impact holding Goose Fair over a 10-day rather than a 5-day period had on overall visitor numbers, the quality of life of nearby residents and resourcing requirements from associated Council services (such as managing anti-social behaviour, street parking around the event and the following clean-up of the neighbourhoods hosting the event). It was reported that a 10-day Goose Fair has been trialled over the last two years following the Coronavirus pandemic and that consideration is currently being given to whether this should continue for a third year. Running the event for this period does have an associated resourcing impact on a number of Council services – through this is accounted for in the funding model. Although overall attendance numbers were slightly less than in previous years, the Fair does bring a good level of income into the city across the 10-day period.
- j) It was explained that a great deal of work is carried out to ensure that problems such as anti-social behaviour and littering are mitigated against without drawing resources such as Community Protection Officers away from their usual areas for extended periods of time. Temporary street parking restrictions are only implemented for the duration of the event itself, and the Council's Waste Management teams carry out cleaning work across both the event site and the wider neighbourhood when an event ends.
- k) It was set out that residents affected by events are communicated with closely and a dedicated call-line is established so that they can be in touch with the team easily. Specific levies are in place with promoters to ensure that local communities see a direct benefit from events held within them. All complaints arising from an event are collated and reviewed to inform the planning of future events, and the positive impact of an event for the city as a whole is always balanced carefully against any negative effects that might be experienced by individual communities.

- m) The Committee asked how suitable venues and locations for large public events are chosen. It was explained that Nottingham has a number of good, large open spaces. Event layouts are planned carefully so that they can be suitably spread out across a site, and the number of events on each site per year is limited to ensure that no lasting damage is caused. Proper noise controls are always put in place, particularly in the case of music events.
- n) The Committee asked what impact large public events have on the levels of car traffic entering the city, and what planning is carried out to mitigate the effects of industrial action in public transport services during events. It was reported that travel information is collected from certain groups of event attendees, giving a snapshot indication – but not necessarily a full reflection of how people travel. In many cases, the official communications campaigns for public events specifically emphasise the benefits of travelling on public transport – and the usage of the tram network is often very high. A full risk analysis is carried out for any event, which includes mitigation measures in response to any industrial action on the travel network, which are planned with the Portfolio Holder for Transport and the relevant Council teams.

Resolved:

- 1) **To recommend that the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture gives consideration to:**
 - a) **how the participation of volunteers could be increased in supporting public events, and how a more joined up approach with other services across the Council could maximise this; and**
 - b) **how engagement with existing business networks in the city could be maximised to secure sponsorship for public events, and how all City Councillors could be involved in support this.**
- 2) **To recommend that a handbook of upcoming events and their funding needs is produced for all City Councillors to help them start initial engagement with potential sponsors within their communities.**
- 3) **To recommend that it ensured that all clean-up activity following a public event covers the appropriate wider area impacted.**
- 4) **To recommend that more information is collected on the level of car travel to public events, to better assess their overall traffic impact on the city.**
- 5) **To request further information on the formal decision-making process that will be followed to decide whether the next Goose Fair should be a five-day or a ten-day event.**

18 Additional Meeting Date

The Committee agreed to hold an additional meeting on Wednesday 24 January 2024 at 10:00am.

19 Work Programme

The Chair presented the Committee's current Work Programme. The following points were discussed:

- a) An additional meeting has been established in January so that the Committee can receive and consider information on the potential impacts of the proposed 2024/25 Council Budget on the Communities, Environment and Resident Services department, in addition to the deferred item to review the position at Nottingham Castle since its reopening.

The Committee noted the Work Programme.