

Public Document Pack



**Nottingham
City Council**

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of **City Council**

In the Council Chamber at the Council House on Monday 9 September 2024 at 2.00 pm to transact the following business

- 1 Apologies for absence**
- 2 Declarations of interests**
- 3 Questions from citizens** To Follow
- 4 Petitions from Councillors on behalf of citizens** Verbal
- 5 To confirm the minutes of the last Ordinary meeting of Council held on 8 July 2024** 5 - 22
- 6 To confirm the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of Council held on 5 August 2024** 23 - 28
- 7 To receive official communications and announcements from the Leader of the Council and/or the Chief Executive** Verbal
- 8 Questions from Councillors - to the City Council's lead Councillor on the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority** To Follow
- 9 Questions from Councillors - to a member of Executive Board, the Chair of a Committee and the Chair of any other City Council body** To Follow
- 10 Decisions taken under Urgency Procedures** 29 - 34
Report of the Leader of the Council
- 11 Amendments to the Constitution** 35 - 42
Report of the Chair of the Audit Committee
- 12 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24** 43 - 82
Report of the Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee
- 13 Motion in the name of Councillor Nayab Patel**
 - (1) Nottingham City Council recognises the necessity of achieving multi-lateral nuclear disarmament and creating a nuclear weapons-free world, and resolves to engage with the government on:
 - Continuing to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty terms under Article VI to *'pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective*

international control'

- Utilising all diplomatic avenues available to it to achieve this. Considering other international treaties that currently exist through the United Nations and whether the government would benefit from supporting them.

(2) In furtherance of its desire to create a peaceful city, Nottingham City Council also resolves to consider carrying out certain practical actions subject to them being cost neutral, by:

- Appointing an elected member as a Peace Champion to promote peace.
- Signing up as a member authority of Mayors for Peace.
- Encouraging local schools to deliver peace education to students.
- Marking the anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings.
- Requesting seeds sourced from Hibaku trees which survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima to raise as saplings. These can be planted in public parks and places as focal points for reflection and remembrance.

14 Motion in the name of Councillor Nayab Patel

Nottingham City Council is deeply concerned about the ongoing conflict in Palestine and Israel which has caused suffering over the last 75 years. Whilst we are aware that as a local authority we have limited or no powers in resolving the conflict we recognise the suffering of civilians on both sides.

We acknowledge the weekly peaceful demonstrations held in the City and we would like to join our communities and other local authorities in calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza with the safe release of hostages.

This council resolves to:

- Continue working with all our communities and partners to raise awareness and challenge all forms of racism, including Islamophobia and Antisemitism.
- Collaboratively work with the Nottinghamshire Police and Police and Crime Commissioner to maintain community cohesion and to ensure safety of the Muslim and Jewish communities.

The council further demands action from the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary to:

- Support the UN General Secretary's call for an immediate ceasefire.
- Demand removal of blockages that are hindering delivery of humanitarian aid.
- Further increase UK's contribution to provide humanitarian aid for

Gaza.

- Take steps to ensure that arms and military aid built in the UK is not used in acts that amounts to war crimes under International Law and cease arm sales to Israel.
- Bring a resolution to the United Nations Security council to immediately recognise an independent and viable state of Palestine.

15 Extraordinary Council Meeting

To agree to hold an Extraordinary Council meeting on 30 September 2024 at 6pm to consider the East Midlands Combined County Authority (Borrowing) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

Please note that questions to Council are received after the agenda has been published. Questions will be published as a supplementary agenda by 5pm on Friday 6 September 2024.

If you need any advice on declaring an Interest in any item on the agenda, please contact the Governance Services Team, if possible before the day of the meeting.

Citizens are advised that this meeting may be recorded, including by members of the public. Any recording or reporting on this meeting should take place in accordance with the Council's policy on recording and reporting on public meetings, which is available at www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk. Individuals intending to record the meeting are asked to notify the Governance Services Team in advance.



Dated 30 August 2024

Director for Legal and Governance

To: All Councillors of Nottingham City Council

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Minutes of the meeting of the City Council

held at the Council Chamber, the Council House

on 8 July 2024 from 2.00 pm - 3.30 pm

Attendances:

✓ Councillor Carole McCulloch (Lord Mayor)

✓ Councillor Saj Ahmad	✓ Councillor Sam Lux
✓ Councillor Liaqat Ali	✓ Councillor Sulcan Mahmood
✓ Councillor Leslie Ayoola	Councillor Farzanna Mahmood
✓ Councillor Cheryl Barnard	✓ Councillor AJ Matsiko
✓ Councillor Steve Battlemuch	✓ Councillor David Mellen
✓ Councillor Graham Chapman	✓ Councillor Sajid Mohammed
✓ Councillor Kevin Clarke	✓ Councillor Fozia Mubashar
✓ Councillor Audrey Dinnall	Councillor Salma Mumtaz
✓ Councillor Michael Edwards	✓ Councillor Sana Nasir
Councillor Nadia Farhat	✓ Councillor Devontay Okure
✓ Councillor Faith Gakanje-Ajala	✓ Councillor Nayab Patel
✓ Councillor Samuel Gardiner	Councillor Georgia Power
Councillor Sam Harris	Councillor Shuguftah Quddoos
Councillor Jay Hayes	✓ Councillor Ethan Radford
✓ Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora	✓ Councillor Nick Raine
✓ Councillor Imran Jalil	✓ Councillor Eunice Regan
✓ Councillor Corall Jenkins	✓ Councillor Sarita-Marie Rehman-Wall
✓ Councillor Maria Joannou	✓ Councillor Samina Riaz
✓ Councillor Kirsty M Jones	✓ Councillor Andrew Rule
✓ Councillor Kirsty L Jones	Councillor Naim Salim
✓ Councillor Helen Kalsi	✓ Councillor Michael Savage
✓ Councillor Angela Kandola	✓ Councillor Matt Shannon
✓ Councillor Anwar Khan	✓ Councillor Hayley Spain
✓ Councillor Zafran Nawaz Khan	✓ Councillor Maria Watson
✓ Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan	Councillor Adele Williams
✓ Councillor Neghat Khan	✓ Councillor Linda Woodings
✓ Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis	Councillor Audra Wynter

✓ Indicates present at meeting

18 Apologies for absence

Councillor Nadia Farhat – unwell
 Councillor Sam Harris - personal
 Councillor Helen Kalsi – personal
 Councillor Farzanna Mahmood - personal
 Councillor Salma Mumtaz - personal
 Councillor Georgia Power - personal
 Councillor Shuguftah Quddoos – leave

Councillor Naim Salim – unwell
Councillor Adele Williams - personal
Councillor Audra Wynter - leave

19 Declarations of interests

None

20 Questions from citizens

Engaging with Government on challenges facing the Council

A citizen asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:
In the event of a Labour victory in the General Election on 4 July, will the Council Leader write to the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to demand an urgent meeting and more importantly, immediate emergency funding for Nottingham City Council with the aim of achieving two important objectives: firstly, safeguarding all of the jobs and services put in jeopardy by the approval of the 2024/25 budget on 4 March; and secondly, resolution of the financial shortfall should lead to the removal of the three unelected Commissioners, and put political decision making and control back in the hands of the elected representatives, where it belongs.

Councillor Neghat Khan replied as follows:

Thank you, Lord-Mayor. As we are all aware, there definitely was a Labour landslide victory in the General Election. We have a new Prime Minister and a new Labour Government, and we should all take a moment to appreciate what that means for our city and for our country. We have an end to fourteen years of Tory chaos, and we have hope for better times to come. One incredible result for our country.

I will indeed be writing to Sir Kier Starmer to congratulate him on becoming Prime Minister. Labour has policies that will make real, material differences to people here in Nottingham - a New Deal for Working People with rights from day one; 40,000 more operations, scans and appointments every week; free breakfast clubs in every primary school; reforms to our planning laws stopping developers ducking their obligations; green investment in every community via the new National Wealth Fund and Warm Homes plans; Young Future Hubs, with drop-in mental health support services for the under-25s; a fair deal for renters, stopping no-fault evictions; and delivering a National Care Service, a policy that will be transformative just like Labour's National Health Service in 1948. It is clear to me that Labour's manifesto, as they deliver it, will make real improvements and savings for our city. As we return to the question of money, Sir Kier Starmer, in his visit to North Nottinghamshire earlier this year, committed to long-term funding settlements to councils, allowing us to better plan and budget for our services, and this will be a big help in our forecasting. I am also far more hopeful now of success in Levelling Up and Housing Infrastructure Fund bids put in by the Council than I ever was under the previous Government. However, I will not be asking for emergency funding. The citizen who asked this question is wrong to imagine there is a magic money tree. The Tories spent fourteen years thrashing this country and our economy. So much is now broken and in need of urgent repair. The new Labour Government does not have a quick fix, and throwing more money at a problem is not always the answer. In

Nottingham we have identified key areas where we know our Council needs to improve and do better for our citizens. That is the responsible thing to do. In this economic climate we are forced to change. There are services that we currently provide that will have to be reduced. There are other services that must change to be more efficient, and there are some things that we will simply have to stop doing and look at new ways of working with our partners to deliver them. This means we must continue our budget plan as agreed in the Council Chamber in March. I lay the blame for this overwhelmingly at the door of Rishi Sunak, Liz Truss, Boris Johnson, Theresa May and David Cameron. Their policies, economics, and austerity have set this country back and gutted our public services. I will add that the Commissioners are helping us in our planning and resilience. They have been very supportive in their advice on how we improve the way our Council is run. I am grateful for their guidance, and I thank them for this. We ask for no special treatment from the Government now that it is a Labour one. I am determined to do everything in my power to put Nottingham back where it belongs – a thriving Core City which delivers for the people who live, work, study and visit here – all of this under a Labour Government that puts country before party. I am certain we have a bright future ahead. Thank you.

Greyhound Street Toilets

A citizen asked the following question of the Executive Member for Carbon Reduction, Leisure and Culture:

Could I ask the Executive Member to reconsider the plans to charge for use of the currently free toilet facilities on Greyhound Street in Nottingham City Centre? These proposed charges will affect a range of key workers including street cleaners, bus and taxi drivers; disabled people; those with medical conditions; homeless people; pensioners; and many others who rely on these facilities. If rumours are true that it is a card-only payment system this will again hit those citizens who don't have these payment options. It is also a public health issue and the minuscule savings provide a false economy, compared to the public health risks and hazards inherent in these plans.

Councillor Sam Lux replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor, and I'd like to thank the citizen for the question. The proposal to charge a fee for the use of the Greyhound Street toilets was approved in the budget which was agreed by Full Council in March. The budget process last year sought to reduce services provided by the Council back to the levels against which the Council is required to deliver as a statutory duty. Unfortunately, the Council has no statutory duty to provide free public toilets, and charging for them was the only way which we could continue to keep them open. The maintenance and upkeep of the toilets is expensive, in part due to a high level of anti-social behaviour. There remain other free toilets in the city centre, such as at Broadmarsh Car Park and Victoria Shopping Centre. The payment mechanism will be card-based, as a cash-based system would be more costly to implement meaning the proposals would either be unviable or the increase would need to be passed on to the user. The proposal was supported by an Equality Impact Assessment through which the Council has committed to monitor the impact of the proposal. Thank you.

Library Service

A citizen asked the following question of the Executive Member for Carbon Reduction, Leisure and Culture:

Can consultation meetings be arranged in the four libraries earmarked for closure?

Councillor Sam Lux replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor, and again I'd like to thank the citizen for this question. To help us develop final proposals on better ways to reshape the Library Service and address the delivery of savings being sought, a comprehensive consultation exercise is currently underway and will run until the 19 August of this year. Since its commencement on 28 May, we have to date already received over 2,700 responses regarding the savings proposals being made and have had 3 in-person meetings in the Council House, Harvey Hadden and Bulwell Riverside Library. We've also held 1 online consultation session to discuss the issue and impacts of savings being proposed. There's no plan to hold any further public consultation sessions. At present Aspley Library is closed due to health and safety works being needed and Lenton and Radford Library, while operational, is reduced in capacity. Therefore neither we felt were suitable to hold public meetings, and since the necessary savings being discussed affect all libraries, we have tried to choose geographical locations appropriately to enable all library users to attend and contribute. We would really encourage every citizen to get involved with the consultation currently taking place to ensure that when final decisions are made we are able to reflect all the views and ideas being expressed and look at alternative solutions to achieving savings where practical options do emerge. The link to the survey will be shared in writing and the same webpage also hosts information about the proposal, frequently asked questions, and supporting documents. Paper copies of the survey are also available at all Nottingham City Libraries, where staff are willing to support if required. We encourage you to complete the survey in whichever way is convenient. Thank you.

21 Petitions from Councillors on behalf of citizens

Councillor Nick Raine submitted a petition on behalf of residents concerned about plans to charge for the use of public toilets on Greyhound Street, asking the Council to review the decision.

22 To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of Council held on 20 May 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2024 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

23 To receive official communications and announcements from the Leader of the Council and/or the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive made the following announcements:

I would like to thank all those colleagues across the Council who worked to deliver the General Election across the three constituencies in Nottingham on 4 July. There were over 500 people working on the election directly either staffing polling stations or assisting in the counting of votes. I would like to pay particular thanks to Sarah Wilson our Electoral Services Manager and her team for the high level of professionalism in which they have handled two major elections within weeks of each

other, with the smooth and efficient operation being a credit to both them, the Council and the city.

We remember Bob White who sadly passed away recently. Bob played an important role in promoting Robin Hood and Nottingham at home and abroad. Through his establishment of the Worldwide Robin Hood Society, Bob made sure that Robin Hood always remained synonymous with the City. The Society's website is recognised internationally as one of the leading archives of information about Robin Hood and how his legend symbolises the fight against oppression and tyranny. Bob was instrumental in Nottingham hosting the UK premier of the hugely successful movie 'Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves' starring Kevin Costner when it was launched in 1991. Bob also led the Council's communications team in the 1980s and 90s. We appreciate all his work and efforts to ensure the legacy of Robin Hood remains such a powerful one for Nottingham.

Neghat Khan, Leader of the Council, noted that Mel Barrett, Chief Executive would be leaving the Council in August to take up the role of Chief Executive at Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing. She thanked him for his service to the Council over the past four years.

24 Questions from Councillors - to the City Council's lead Councillor on the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority

None

25 Questions from Councillors - to a member of Executive Board, the Chair of a Committee and the Chair of any other City Council body

Chief Executive Pay

Councillor Andrew Rule asked the following question of the Chair of the Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee:

Does the Chair of the Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee agree with me that pay increases for the new Chief Executive should be wholly contingent upon the meeting of performance metrics and depart from the existing system where increases in pay do not seem to be linked to performance?

In the absence of Councillor Helen Kalsi, Councillor Steve Battlemuch replied as follows:

Thank you Lord-Mayor, and I thank Councillor Rule for his question. As he will know, we are currently going through the process of recruitment for a new Chief Executive at the moment and in doing so we advertise salary and terms and conditions in line with the rules of the Local Government Association and the position that is adopted nationally – we don't change the rules in Nottingham to adapt to that situation. So I'm quite happy to read a statement out that explains how we're doing that, and that's as follows: "The Chief Executive, Corporate Directors and Strategic Directors are currently paid on an all-inclusive, fixed spot salary drawn from a predetermined band. The pay and conditions of employment for Local Government Chief Executives is determined by the joint negotiating committee for Chief Executives. This means that the annual pay awards for Chief Executives in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland are currently a contractual entitlement and subject to a national pay review process

and negotiated centrally between national employers and the trade unions. The Council is committed, as part of its single status journey, to undertake a review to ensure that the grading structure for the Chief Executive and other senior roles is fit for purpose, with a recommendation to move away from fixed spot salaries to a performance assessment-led incremental-based structure. Recommendations regarding the broadening and enhancing of the Local Government Scheme employees, heads of service, and director pay grades were finalised over the summer of 2023 and were implemented through September and October 2023, which now include performance-related incremental progression. All employees of the Council are currently subject to annual individual performance reviews and further work will need to be undertaken to assess the cost implications and the options for the introduction of performance-related incremental progression for the Chief Executive, Corporate, and Strategic Directors.”

Cleaning of the Council House Façade

Councillor Kevin Clarke asked the following question of the Executive Member for Skills, Growth and Economic Development:

Could the Executive Member confirm whether sourcing external funding to clean up the façade of the Council House remains a priority over this Council term?

Councillor Ethan Radford replied as follows:

Thank you Lord-Mayor, and thank you Councillor Clarke for your question. Given the extent of the financial challenges this Council currently faces, while grappling with huge demand pressures on our services, I must admit looking for funding to spruce up the façade of this building is not high up on our list of priorities. Given our funding pressures we are only approving essential maintenance works currently. Council officers in all our services are already working with reduced capacity, and I would rather they were spending what time they do have looking for external sources of funding that could be put to better use for our residents than cleaning the pigeon guano off the Council House façade. We may have to be content with allowing the pigeons to roost in the façade of this building just a little while longer while we attend to more pressing matters, Councillor Clarke.

Clifton Town Board

Councillor Kirsty M Jones asked the following question of the Executive Member for Skills, Growth and Economic Development:

Will the Executive Member join me in congratulating the work of the Clifton Town Board who are in the process of completing an extensive engagement exercise ensuring that the views of Clifton residents are front and centre of the Board's priorities?

Councillor Ethan Radford replied as follows:

Thank you Lord-Mayor, and thank you Councillor Jones for your question. I'd be very happy to join you in congratulating the work of the Clifton Town Board. Having had the pleasure of attending Board meetings since I took up the post of Executive Member for Skills, Growth and Economic Development, I've seen for myself the passion, commitment, love and pride that residents have for their community in Clifton. To be party to the discussion of local residents and stakeholders like Nottingham Trent University, the police, local councillors and others, I can see a way

forward that empowers local people to take ownership of this huge opportunity to make long-lasting change for the better. I should like to think too that the Clifton Town Board has been, and could be, a good example of cross-party working, with Councillors Watson and Spain and myself on the Board because I know we all want the same thing, don't we? The liveable outcomes that will make a tangible difference to Clifton and leave an indelible mark of good on the local community. In the past I have attended too many meetings where the loud views of a small handful have dwarfed the quiet consensus of the many, where the lone loudest voices won out against a more moderately quiet majority. It should never be the case that one councillor, one resident, one community group or one Council officer should unduly smother the views of local people.

We must be realistic in our expectations though. £20 million sounds like a lot, but it will not address every need in Clifton, or fix every problem. Indeed, the restrictions placed on the terms of use for the funding from the last Tory Government are extremely restrictive and require an Olympic feat of acrobatic creativity to try and stay within those restrictions, while at the same time using the money in such a way as is of actual benefit to Clifton. Such is the shoddiness of the way the last Government went about allocating funding, depriving communities like Clifton of services via cuts from Central Government grants to the Council, only to hand them the cumulative difference years later. Nevertheless, the Clifton Town's deal is a deal this Council is committed to make work. The £20 million is a huge opportunity we won't let slip through our fingers and we will make sure this deal works for local residents in Clifton. The best way we can do that is by empowering them to be the ones who shape it. By using capacity funding, the Clifton Town Board has already surveyed hundreds of Clifton residents to seek input into the development of a ten-year vision and three-year investment plan into the area. This included holding a community day on 22 June which was attended by hundreds of local people. By using this deal as a catalyst, we will bring together all the levers of influence and power and put them in the hands of local people so that together we can make Clifton a more safe, connected and vibrant place to live.

Use of Council Resources

Councillor Andrew Rule asked the following question of the Executive Member for Finance and Resources:

At a time when the financial pressures on adult and children's services, which the Council has a statutory duty to provide, are well documented, does the Executive Member really think spending £600,000 on ANPR cameras is a prudent use of Council resources?

Councillor Linda Woodings replied as follows:

Thank you Lord-Mayor, and thank you Councillor Rule for your question. As you're no doubt fully aware as a very longstanding member of the Audit Committee, local authority finance is bound by innumerable rules and legislation as to how it can be spent. I'll give you a bit of a lesson if you haven't already figured that out. We have a General Fund – monies that can be spent on general council services – and that is made up of Council Tax, part of our Business Tax refund generated in the city and our Revenue Support Central Grant from Government which is now, if I need to remind you, £100 million less per year than it was in 2013. We then have the additional Social Care Levy we can add on to Council Tax and there are also specific

grants received that supplement the costs of Adult Social Care and Childrens' Services – that additional income can't be spent on anything else, although it is still insufficient for our needs as a city. In addition to this we have many other ring-fenced funding areas, in areas such as Public Health – can only be spent on Public Health funding; Education – can only be spent on Education funding; Licensing revenue can only be spent on Licensing enforcement; and specific grants we have successfully applied for such as Transforming Cities, Streets For People – they can only be spent in the areas specified. That is the case with this £600,000. The Council collects funds from traffic enforcement, and any surplus in those funds – which we can't budget for, by the way, because we don't know how much money there's going to be surplus at the end of each year – can only be spent on traffic safety and improvement schemes within the city boundary, and in line with our additional statutory obligations in respect of road safety and the effective management of our highway network. As you'll know, in October 2023 we accepted a Designation Order from the Department for Transport that granted us additional enforcement powers in the area of Moving Traffic Enforcement, to enable us to tackle inappropriate and unsafe driver behaviour at key locations across the city, thereby improving pedestrian safety, reducing congestion, reducing traffic accidents, and improving air quality. The four original sites were highlighted at the point of application for these powers, and I should also add that our Traffic and Highways Team meet regularly with the Police to ensure that this money is spent where it is most needed, and fully evidenced as necessary for the safety of road users and pedestrians. The four original sites were supported by the Police and are as follows:

the Victoria Embankment to have a Prohibition of Driving Order made (at the moment, there are barriers along there, but people are going around those barriers and driving along the Embankment. It's not for moving traffic. So, we will be able to allow emergency vehicles to go along there in the case of emergency, but we won't have to have a physical barrier because any driver who drives along there will be fined); the Shakespeare Street section from Goldsmith Street (a very heavily student-populated area with lots of pedestrian activity, significant risk of harm and injury to pedestrians, and there are also parents visiting for Open Days and Graduations, so we will be mindful that the signage is clear, and we have asked the University every year to make that clear in their communications to applicants); the Sheriffs Road/Queens Road Junction with Arkwright Street to regulate the No Left Turns, No Right Turns into Arkwright Street, because that is direct conflict with the green man pedestrian crossing phase, so that is a significant risk to road users, and it causes unnecessary congestion on Queens Road; and finally, the Maid Marian Way/Friar Lane junction (traffic u-turns there, in direct conflict with the signage, and again in conflict with the pedestrian crossing phasing of the 'green man', so you could effectively be u-turning into people crossing the road on the 'green man'. That is a significant risk to pedestrians and vulnerable road users, and therefore that was part of our original application for these powers.) Legislation restricts the use of these ring-fenced budgets generated from this type of traffic enforcement activity, meaning that expenditure on ANPR cameras does not impact the Council's General Fund, and it cannot therefore be used to directly support Adults' and Children's Services, although it certainly will prevent a lot of adults and children from getting injured in the first place. Thank you.

Rental Charges for Community Centres

Councillor Maria Watson asked the following question of the Executive Member for Communities, Waste and Equalities:

Can the Executive Member confirm that she, as her predecessor was, is committed to introducing a social value matrix as a means of mitigating rental charges for community centres and support the fantastic volunteers that run them?

Councillor Corall Jenkins replied as follows:

Thank you Lord-Mayor, and thank you for the question Councillor Watson. The current financial situation of the Council is widely known and we are having to review our position with regards to the Community Assets Policy. However, it is important to say that we, as a Council, remain committed to working with the voluntary and community sector to support social value. We cannot forget that given our commitment, that our efforts must be in the context of a Council with priorities, and the current financial situation but I think it's important just to repeat, that it is important point that we are committed to it. Thank you.

Victoria Centre Market

Councillor Kevin Clarke asked the following question of the Executive Member for Carbon Reduction, Leisure and Culture:

Following reconfirmation last month of the decision to withdraw all subsidies from the Victoria Centre Market, can the Executive Member confirm whether any savings generated from this make any provision for the prospect of legal action from market traders seeking to challenge their forthcoming evictions?

Councillor Sam Lux replied as follows:

Thank you Lord-Mayor, and thank you Councillor Clarke for the question. I'd like to reassure Councillor Clarke that any action taken by the Council will be in compliance with the terms of the traders' agreements and relevant law, and the Council is confident that this will minimise the risk of any successful legal challenge. Of course, each trader's circumstances are different, and it would be inappropriate to discuss individual details in a public forum. Thank you.

Impact of the General Election Results for Nottingham

Councillor Michael Edwards asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:

Can the Leader of the Council give their interpretation of the impact of the General Election results for Nottingham?

Councillor Neghat Khan replied as follows:

Thank you Lord-Mayor, and thank you Councillor Edwards. The Labour Party have a massive election victory. It ends fourteen years of Conservative mismanagement and five failed Prime Ministers who put Party before country and presided over a culture of incompetence, lies and greed. It was one rule for them and another for the rest of us. They have made us poorer and more divided as a society. At the ballot box, the message from the people of Britain was clear. Following on from Nottingham City's example at last year's local elections, vote the Tories out. This was a landmark day for our country and for our city. I'm proud that our three Nottingham MPs have all been returned and I offer my congratulations to Alex Norris, Lilian Greenwood, and Nadia Whittome who will now continue their tireless good work for people in our city. I would also like to congratulate my colleagues Councillor Saj Ahmad and Councillor

Zafran Khan on their campaigns in Newark, and Melton and Syston. Whilst they were unsuccessful in their bid to become MPs, they ran the Conservatives close in both seats and bit into their majorities. I am also a little selfishly pleased that I will still have them both here in Nottingham as valued councillors for Wollaton West. However, as I've said earlier, momentous as the Labour victory is, it brings no magic wand and no quick fix for the problems created by the Tories. It will take years to repair the harm done to our neighbourhoods, our towns, our cities and our country. We have a lot of hard work ahead of us. In Nottingham, we have our own improvement journey to be more financially stable and to change the way we deliver our services. I'm confident that we are on the right track to complete this journey, and Labour's policies on care, our NHS, homelessness, planning, and investment priorities will help Nottingham. We have what it takes to make our Council fit for purpose for the people of Nottingham, while the Labour Party nationally helps to fix broken Britain. There is a bright future ahead and I'm proud that we all will play a part in that.

Nottingham Forest

Councillor Steve Battlemuch asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:

Would the Leader of the Council be able to give an update on the situation with Nottingham Forest since the last Council meeting?

Councillor Neghat Khan replied as follows:

Thank you Lord-Mayor, and thank you Councillor Battlemuch for your question. The last time I stood in this Chamber I promised decisive action to secure the future of the world famous City Ground, which has been home to Nottingham Forest for over 125 years. Lord Mayor, I'm pleased to announce to you all today that talks with Nottingham Forest have resulted in in-principle terms being agreed for the Club to buy the land on which the City Ground sits. Football is staying home, here in Nottingham, and the mists will keep rolling in off the Trent for years to come. The terms of the deal will be presented to the Council's Executive Board for decision on 16 July. If agreed, subject to legal contracts and due diligence, this will be a historic day for the Club, for the fans and for our city. This is the result that everyone hoped for, and I thank Councillor Mellen and Councillor Battlemuch for their work on this. It will allow the Club to move forwards with its ambitious plans to expand the stadium whilst also securing a significant capital receipt for the Council. The Council and the Club have agreed that measures will be put into the sale contract that will protect the Council's position in a highly unlikely event that the Club should choose to relocate from the City Ground in the future. We understand that this has been an uncertain time for supporters, but property transactions like this can often be long and complex. We are legally bound to seek best value for our taxpayers, and we feel that the deal now on the table satisfies those requirements and also works for Nottingham Forest, entrusting the future of this important asset to the Club. The Council is incredibly proud of our supporting heritage here in Nottingham, and the great work the Clubs do in engaging with our communities. They are woven in the fabrics of our city, and we wish them every success on and off the pitch. As for Nottingham Forest, we hope this deal helps them realise their ambitions and, following on from Thursday's election results, many more victories for the team in red.

Challenges facing the Council

Councillor Hayley Spain asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:

Since being elected Leader in this Chamber at the last Council meeting, could the Leader give us an idea of the challenges this Council, and our City, will face in the coming year, and the work that will have to be done to rise to these challenges?

Councillor Neghat Khan replied as follows:

Thank you Lord-Mayor and can I thank Councillor Spain for her question. There is no doubt that our city faces many challenges and, as I've said in this Chamber today, there is no quick fix to the damage done over fourteen years of Tory austerity. There is no magic money tree or a Labour Government bailout that is coming to our rescue. We have to do this for ourselves. The challenges ahead are ours to meet, and as the new Leader of the Council I am determined to do everything I can to put our Council back on track. Let me be clear: the next two or three years will make or break this Council and many more across the country. We still face a large budget gap and an ever-increasing demand for our services. A Labour win on Thursday has not miraculously changed this. We still do not have the money to deliver all of the services people need or to support them how we would like. Demand is overwhelming us. The landscape in which we operate is changing, and we have sometimes been slow to adapt to deliver services in different way or working with partners. My priority so far has been to work with senior council officers and with commissioners to draw up a clear plan of action. Our Council needs a vision. We must be financially stable, and our systems and processes need to be fit for purpose. I am a problem solver and I'm confident that with the support of elected members and our brilliant council staff we can deliver for the people of Nottingham. We need a whole Nottingham solution. I am committed to working with partners and looking at the work other local authorities do to see how we can deliver better and smarter services. I want to work with partners in the public sector like our new East Midlands Mayor, with businesses, charities and the voluntary sector, and with our citizens to ensure our city is the best it can be for the people who live, work, study and visit here. I believe we all want the same. I say here today to politicians of all parties: my door is always open to discuss ideas, proposals and shared solutions that will benefit our city and our people. I am passionate about making sure everyone in Nottingham has the best opportunities to succeed and that we invest in the city for future generations. The people of Nottingham deserve nothing less.

Nottingham Economic Growth Plan

Councillor Matt Shannon asked the following question of the Executive Member for Skills, Growth and Economic Development:

Last month at Executive Board, the Council announced the Nottingham Economic Growth Plan. Could the Executive Member please explain the impact this Plan will have on Nottingham and for residents?

Councillor Ethan Radford replied as follows:

Thank you Lord-Mayor, and thank you Councillor Shannon for your question. The Nottingham Economic Growth Plan is a catalyst to ignite positive change, sparking constructive dialogue, stimulating collaboration, and uniting key stakeholders from across the private, public, voluntary community and educational sectors. Crafting this Plan has been a truly collaborative endeavour, with invaluable input from a diverse range of stakeholders, developed through a comprehensive four-stage process which I won't go through now, this Plan is rooted in evidence-based interventions, designed to deliver real results not lofty statements. The new Economic Plan is designed to drive our city forwards towards a shared agenda for

sustainable growth, and I'd like to thank my predecessor Councillor Battlemuch for kickstarting it in its early stages.

Built on extensive economic research and enriched by widespread consultation, this Plan reflects the collective vision and insights of partners across Nottingham, guided by the Nottingham Growth Board. We are setting our sights on a shared vision for 2030 and I am excited to embark on this journey together with our partners. The creation of the East Midlands Combined County Authority offers new opportunities to accelerate growth in Nottingham, benefitting the entire East Midlands. Through this powerful collaboration Nottingham can join forces with neighbouring local authorities to drive regional transport and infrastructure projects which unlock unprecedented growth. It is through the Combined Authority that we will elevate Nottingham's status to a regional hub of excellence in life sciences, digital and creative industries, and advanced manufacturing, paving the way for exciting new business opportunities across the region and beyond. The Plan puts Nottingham's ambitious goals front and centre within this regional context, and will serve as a reminder both inside and outside this Council that Nottingham is a Core City, not a borough or a district – a Core City with a focused, strategic plan to harness our city's potential and propel us towards a prosperous future as the capital of the East Midlands. This is not a plan for growth at any cost via deregulation, accepting the first offer, or chasing after the biggest bid. It's about smart, responsible, and sustainable progress committed to green growth, creating a safe and child-friendly city and tackling deprivation and growth inequalities head-on. Rooted in Nottingham's rich tradition of innovation and forward-thinking, this Plan sets us on course towards a bright and sustainable future. An impressive sustainable transport connectivity, just a few weeks ago the British Consulate in Canada reached out to us to enquire about the success of our trams, and we have an exciting regeneration agenda, and a strong cultural heritage and sporting offer, which we don't currently make enough of, considering our extensive sporting assets. Our city has the potential for greatness, but in today's challenging economic climate and an economy left in ruins by the last Government, we need bold and impactful strategies to drive us forward with the realisation that we cannot deliver in isolation. We must be outward-looking and collaborative in our approach, and we should count ourselves lucky too that this Plan has coincided with the election of a Labour Government.

Our initial targets include generating an additional £500 million in gross value added, creating 12,00 new jobs, and developing the infrastructure and services to support population growth in the future across both the city and the Greater Nottingham area to secure the next £4 billion worth of regenerative investment in our city. To deliver these ambitions, this Plan sets out 26 targeted actions to spur on positive change, both in the immediate and longer term. Key to the Plan's success is a strong partnership with stakeholders across Nottingham and beyond, and our approach underscores our commitment to unified growth and development, ensuring a prosperous future for all that isn't just reliant on the Council. Nottingham is the economic and cultural heart of the East Midlands, and our success is pivotal to the region's prosperity. As Board Members of the new Authority, Councillor Khan and myself are perfectly positioned to embrace the new East Midlands Combined County Authority, to grasp the new opportunities it presents, to drive forward impactful, large-scale interventions towards inclusive, clean and sustainable growth, and to have the political will to embrace change and to deliver for our city. The Plan is ambitious and forward-looking, with clear objectives to foster inclusive growth and build a united

community that works together towards shared successes. We are confident that by working together and leveraging our strengths, Nottingham will thrive and prosper, securing a positive and viable future for all our residents. Nottingham City Council will be dedicated in the process moving forward, and the Nottingham Growth Board will take the helm, keeping our partnership on track and ensuring our efforts are informed by insights and expertise from across the business community and key stakeholders. Together, we will bring our bold vision to life, realise our ambitious targets, and make Nottingham a model of innovation, collaboration, and shared economic success. Thank you.

Inclusion for LGBT People

Councillor Audrey Dinnall asked the following question of the Executive Member for Communities, Waste and Equalities:

Last month was international LGBT Pride month, with Nottingham Pride taking place on 27 July. Will the Executive Member confirm the work that the Council is doing to boost inclusion for LGBT people across the City?

Councillor Corall Jenkins replied as follows:

Thank you Lord-Mayor, and thank you Councillor Dinnall for the question. The work we are doing as a Council to boost inclusion for LGBT people across the city is led by the Council's LGBT+ Employee Network who in partnership with the Integrated Care Partnership will be marching together with our joint banner, raising awareness around the LGBTQ+ equalities issues across the city. Our joint partners include the NHS across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, the City and County Council. The Council's LGBT+ Network will also have various internal communications going out in the build up to Pride. We will be utilising social media platforms to raise awareness of the Event. Housing Services will also have a stall, and I can confirm that the Rainbow Road will be refreshed. There will also be a photoshoot taking place. As with other citywide major community events, Nottingham Events are supporting Nottinghamshire Pride with events and production management support. This support will comprise of the use of the Council's own events infrastructure and Events Staff resources both onside and during planning the event, which will have a value of around £10,000. The new route for the march incorporating a new stage and market is around Sneinton Market Avenue and Sneinton Market Square. This would not have been possible without the support of teams across the Council, notably Highways Network Management Team. Thank you.

Victoria Embankment Paddling Pool

Councillor Eunice Regan asked the following question of the Executive Member for Carbon Reduction, Leisure and Culture:

Will the Executive Member join me in welcoming the news that work has begun on the Victoria Embankment Paddling Pool, and confirm when this work will be completed?

Councillor Sam Lux replied as follows:

Thank you. It is indeed great to see the work has recently started on the improvement and redesign of the paddling pool at Victoria Embankment. This project is being delivered thanks to funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and also from the Council's own Section 106 contributions. For those who aren't familiar with the term, Section

106 contributions essentially means finance secured from private developers who build in our city, which is agreed ahead of the granting of the planning permission. The Paddling Pool project is one of several exciting park improvements that are soon to reach completion including the heritage restoration of the Victoria Embankment Memorial Gardens, a new skate park at Broxtowe Country Park, and proposals to upgrade the Forest Recreation Ground's Sports Zone. As always, our small but dedicated team in the Green Space and Natural Environments Service continue to maximise the use of Section 106 funds to secure additional external grant contributions, which enable them to deliver a wonderful Green Space Improvements Programme at practically no cost to the Council. These improvements are all designed to reduce the maintenance burden of existing facilities and will be delivered in line with the Council's new soon-to-be-adopted green space strategy, 'Greener, Healthier, Happier'. This is a really progressive and ambitious piece of work, one which I cannot take any credit for at all but nevertheless I am extremely proud of. With regards to the specific Embankment development in question, the facility will include an open paddling pool area and a new splash pad and, something I'm personally really excited about at the works, we'll also include a new water recycling and filtration plant that will help to ensure that the facility reduces annual running costs and operates more sustainably from an environmental perspective. The construction will be going on through this summer and is currently scheduled for completion later in the autumn, which will give the Green Space Team time to prepare ready for an opening in May 2025. Thank you.

26 Decisions taken under Urgency Procedures

Councillor Neghat Khan, Leader of the Council, proposed the report informing Council that, since the last report to Council in May 2024, there had been three decisions taken under the urgency provisions within the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and no decisions taken under the special urgency provisions within the Access to Information Procedure Rules. Councillor Ethan Radford seconded the report.

Resolved to note that:

- (1) the following decisions had been taken under the Call In and Urgency provisions of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Article 11) of the Constitution since the last report to Council;**

Decision reference	Subject	Decision Taker	Reasons for Urgency
5128	Installation of Temporary Accommodation – Bluecoat Wollaton Academy	Executive Member for Children, Young People and Schools	To enable the accommodation to be fitted in time for use from September 2024
5129	Transportation of Passenger Transport Services and School Trips, and	Leader of the Council	To enable continuation of service until a Dynamic Purchasing System

	School Meals Transport		is in place
5133	Midlands Net Zero Hub Grant Funding – Local Net Zero Programme	Leader of the Council	A draft Memorandum of Understanding had just been received from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero with sign off required by 11 June 2024

(2) no decisions had been taken under the special urgency provisions within the Access to Information Procedure Rules (Article 13) of the Constitution since the last report to Council.

27 Establishment of a New Accommodation Business Improvement District (Accommodation BID)

Councillor Ethan Radford, Executive Member for Skills, Growth and Economic Development, proposed the report regarding a proposed new Accommodation Business Improvement District (BID) and seeking approval to delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Growth and City Development to receive and consider the BID proposals and enter into an operating agreement with the newly established Nottingham Accommodation BID Company in the event of a successful outcome of the BID Ballot. The report was seconded by Councillor Steve Battlemuch.

Resolved to authorise the Corporate Director for Growth and City Development, in accordance with the requirements of The Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004 (“the Regulations”), to:

- i. receive the Accommodation BID proposals from the Nottingham BID Company (“the BID Proposer”) on behalf of Nottingham City Council (“the Council”);**
- ii. consider the proposals to establish whether or not they are of the view that the proposals conflict with Council policy, and if so to notify the BID Proposer of any such conflict;**
- iii. approve the Accommodation BID 5 year business plan;**
- iv. instruct the Council’s Returning Officer as Ballot Holder to hold a BID ballot for the proposed Accommodation BID;**
- v. in the event of a vote in favour of the Accommodation BID proposals to consider whether any prescribed circumstances as defined in the Regulations apply and if so to decide whether or not to exercise a veto having regard to matters prescribed in the Regulations;**
- vi. in the event of a vote in favour of the Accommodation BID proposal and subject to any veto, to enter into an Operating Agreement under which the Council will collect the levy due on behalf of the BID.**

28 Nottingham Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2024 - 2027

Councillor Corall Jenkins, Executive Member for Communities, Waste and Equalities, proposed the report asking Council to approve the Nottingham Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2024 to 2027. The Strategy was approved by the Nottingham Community Safety Partnership Board in March 2024 and is in line with the findings of the Strategic Assessment 2023 and the priorities and targets agreed by the Board. It sets out how the Council will work in partnership to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour over the next three years. The report was seconded by Councillor Neghat Khan.

In response to a question for clarification asked by Councillor Andrew Rule, Councillor Corall Jenkins replied that it was unlikely that Vernon Coaker would be continuing as Chair of the Nottingham Community Safety Partnership Board following his recent appointment as Defence Secretary.

Resolved to approve and adopt the Nottingham Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2024 to 2027, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

29 Review of Statement of Gambling Policy

Councillor Audrey Dinnall, Chair of the Licensing Committee, proposed the report asking Council to approve a draft Statement of Gambling Policy 2025 - 2028 to go out for an eight week consultation starting on 9 July. Consultation will take place with responsible authorities, local and national businesses and citizens. She highlighted that the draft Policy includes the retention of a 'no casino' resolution. Following consultation, the final Policy will be presented to Council in November 2024 for adoption and commencement from January 2025. The report was seconded by Councillor Corall Jenkins.

Resolved:

- (1) to approve the draft Statement of Gambling Policy 2025 – 2028 attached at Appendix 1 for release for consultation purposes; and**
- (2) to include the retention of a 'no casino' resolution as part of the public consultation.**

30 Amendments to the Constitution

Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis, Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, proposed the report recommending that Council amend the terms of reference for the Health and Wellbeing Board and update Article 9 Non-Executive Functions and Committees of the Constitution to reflect that amendment; and note that Article 10 Executive Arrangements of the Constitution had been amended to reflect a change made by the Leader of the Council to the terms of reference for the Companies Governance Executive Committee. The report was seconded by Councillor Ethan Radford.

Resolved to:

- (1) amend the terms of reference for the Health and Wellbeing Board to:
 - a. replace the Corporate Director for People and Director for Adult Health and Care with the Corporate Director for Children and Education (director of children’s services) and Corporate Director for Adult Social Care and Health (director of adult social services) as voting members of the Board; and**
 - b. change objective (f) to “agree and oversee delivery of the Better Care Fund, including discharge of all functions that are the responsibility of the Health and Wellbeing Board as set out in the Section 75 Agreement”;****
- (2) amend Article 9 Non-Executive Functions and Committees of the Constitution to reflect these changes to the Health and Wellbeing Board Terms of Reference;**
- (3) note that the Leader of the Council has amended the terms of reference for the Companies Governance Executive Committee to remove the requirement for a specific Executive Member to chair the Committee and appoint Councillor Ethan Radford to replace Councillor Linda Woodings as Chair; and that Article 10 Executive Arrangements of the Constitution has been amended to reflect this change.**

31 Extraordinary Council Meeting

Resolved to hold an Extraordinary Council meeting on 5 August 2024 at 6pm to consider the appointment of Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) and the Council’s Improvement Plan.

The Meeting concluded at 3.30 pm

Minutes of the meeting of the City Council (Extraordinary)

held at the Council Chamber, the Council House

on 5 August 2024 from 6.00 pm - 7.30 pm

Attendances:

✓ Councillor Carole McCulloch (Lord Mayor)	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Councillor Saj Ahmad ✓ Councillor Liaqat Ali ✓ Councillor Leslie Ayoola ✓ Councillor Cheryl Barnard ✓ Councillor Steve Battlemuch ✓ Councillor Graham Chapman Councillor Kevin Clarke ✓ Councillor Audrey Dinnall ✓ Councillor Michael Edwards ✓ Councillor Nadia Farhat ✓ Councillor Faith Gakanje-Ajala ✓ Councillor Samuel Gardiner ✓ Councillor Sam Harris ✓ Councillor Jay Hayes Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora ✓ Councillor Imran Jalil ✓ Councillor Corall Jenkins ✓ Councillor Maria Joannou ✓ Councillor Kirsty L Jones ✓ Councillor Kirsty M Jones Councillor Helen Kalsi Councillor Angela Kandola ✓ Councillor Anwar Khan ✓ Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan ✓ Councillor Neghat Khan ✓ Councillor Zafran Khan ✓ Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Councillor Sam Lux ✓ Councillor Sulcan Mahmood Councillor Farzanna Mahmood ✓ Councillor AJ Matsiko ✓ Councillor David Mellen ✓ Councillor Sajid Mohammed Councillor Fozia Mubashar ✓ Councillor Salma Mumtaz ✓ Councillor Sana Nasir ✓ Councillor Devontay Okure ✓ Councillor Nayab Patel ✓ Councillor Georgia Power ✓ Councillor Shuguftah Quddoos ✓ Councillor Ethan Radford ✓ Councillor Nick Raine Councillor Eunice Regan ✓ Councillor Sarita-Marie Rehman-Wall Councillor Samina Riaz ✓ Councillor Andrew Rule Councillor Naim Salim ✓ Councillor Michael Savage ✓ Councillor Matt Shannon ✓ Councillor Hayley Spain ✓ Councillor Maria Watson ✓ Councillor Adele Williams ✓ Councillor Linda Woodings ✓ Councillor Audra Wynter
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✓ Indicates present at meeting

1 Apologies for Absence

- Councillor Steve Battlemuch – leave
- Councillor Kevin Clarke - leave
- Councillor Patience Ifediora - leave
- Councillor Helen Kalsi - leave
- Councillor Angela Kandola – personal
- Councillor Fozia Mubashar - leave

Councillor Eunice Regan - leave
Councillor Samina Riaz - unwell

2 Declarations of Interests

None

3 Appointment of a new Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service and Proper Officer for Electoral Registration and Returning Officer of the Council

Councillor Neghat Khan proposed the report setting out a recommendation from the Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee to appoint Sajeeda Rose as the Council's Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service and Proper Officer for Electoral Registration and Returning Officer. The report was seconded by Councillor Ethan Radford.

Resolved to:

- (1) note the Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee's activity to identify a preferred candidate for the post of Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service and Proper Officer for Electoral Registration and Returning Officer of the Council;**
- (2) appoint Sajeeda Rose as Nottingham City Council Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service and Proper Officer for Electoral Registration and Returning Officer, as recommended by the Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee; and**
- (3) note that the salary agreed is within the range approved by Council.**

4 Nottingham City Council Improvement Plan

Councillor Neghat Khan, Leader of the Council, proposed the report recommending an Improvement Plan to address the issues and challenges which led to the current Commissioner-led intervention and to respond to the actions required by Commissioners. She highlighted that the Council is in a challenging position and needs to change quickly. The Improvement Plan is the mechanism for delivering the fundamental change necessary to become financially sustainable and this will involve new ways of delivery and stopping doing some things. Everyone will need to play their part in delivering the Plan. Executive Board considered the Improvement Plan at its meeting on 16 July 2024 and recommended its approval by Council. The report was seconded by Councillor Ethan Radford. During the debate the following points were made:

- a) It is recognised that the Council needs to change and the Plan sets out a range of positive activity to do that, including opportunities to learn from others.
- b) While the Council accepts responsibility for its own failings, it is operating in the context of significant cuts to funding from Government over many years

and years of austerity in public services which has had an impact on demand for some services. The Council needs to speak up for the City at a national level and challenge the level of local government funding and expectations about what a local authority should do and how it should deliver it.

- c) It is important for councillors to provide scrutiny and challenge to delivery of the Plan, and the Council needs to be better at holding to account. The overview and scrutiny and audit functions provide opportunity to do this.
- d) The Council wants to get to a position where Government intervention and Commissioners are not required.
- e) It is important for the Council to be citizen-focused, and it needs to ensure that it really listens to and works together with citizens. The listening exercises referred to in the Plan need to be carried out in a meaningful and inclusive way and councillors need to be part of that.
- f) The Plan continues many of the themes of the Together for Nottingham Plan, and some activity referred to in the Plan is already underway. The hard work that is taking place to deliver change is recognised, but there is more to do.
- g) Significant increases in Council Tax would be difficult for many citizens, and consideration of this is linked to decisions about the future use of Exceptional Financial Support from Government. The Plan is really important in getting the Council to a position of financial stability.
- h) The focus on improving the effectiveness of risk management is welcome as, despite work that has taken place in recent years, there is more to do.

Resolved to approve the Nottingham City Council Improvement Plan, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, as the Council's overarching improvement plan in response to the Commissioner-led intervention.

5 Motion in the name of Councillor Corall Jenkins

In accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Lord Mayor agreed that this item could be considered as a matter of urgency to allow a response to the demonstrations which took place in Nottingham City on Saturday 3 August 2024.

Councillor Corall Jenkins moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Saj Ahmad:

Nottingham City Council conveys profound sorrow over the devastation suffered by the residents of Southport this past week since the tragic murders of Elsie Dot Stancombe, aged seven, Alice Dasilva Aguiar, aged nine, and Bebe King, aged six. The Council acknowledges the injuries sustained by many others, who will be forever marked by this tragedy, and extends a heartfelt message of support for their recovery and long-term care. The rampant criminality by the far right that has followed this incident has only added to the suffering of the people of Southport and enhanced division and fear amongst communities across the United Kingdom. Nottingham City

Council condemns the Islamophobic violence from those that have targeted places of worship, incited racial hatred, caused damage to property and injured Police. We condemn those who have tried to divide our communities and who single out our Muslim communities and refugees in particular. The far right consistently exploit high-profile incidents as well as the general decline of living standards through austerity to peddle their hateful rhetoric and violence. Not only should we challenge this head-on but we should fight to improve things for everyone in our community to offer hope and unity.

The Council resolves to:

- write to the Leader of Metropolitan Borough of Sefton Council to offer our condolences;
- thank Nottinghamshire Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for their appropriate handling of protests in Nottingham;
- thank Community Protection Officers for reassuring local communities;
- thank NHS staff who have been treating those who have been injured;
- send a letter from the Leader and Chief Executive to staff to offer reassurance;
- thank our Cleansing Team for clearing up the City Centre after the demonstration;
- work with the Police and Crime Commissioner to address future risks;
- continue to promote community cohesion within Nottingham;
- condemn the far right, racism and discrimination in all its forms; and
- ensure Mosques in Nottingham are supported by the new rapid response process announced by the Home Secretary.

During the debate the following points were made:

- a) The Council stands alongside all those affected by this situation.
- b) Nottingham is a diverse city where all are welcome and promotes community cohesion. There is good work taking place to support refugees and asylum seekers in the city, but more that can be done.
- c) The families and friends of the girls who died in Southport should have had the opportunity for public and private grief. This was taken away by the demonstrations and protests which have taken place by people using this tragic event as an excuse to attack others.
- d) The targeting of minority communities, including people who have come to this country for refuge is unacceptable. It is not in the spirit of this country and does not represent communities in Nottingham.
- e) Everyone has a right to feel safe and the Council supports all measures to prevent violence and fear in the City.
- f) It is important to understand the context in which this is happening. Some people involved in the demonstrations and riots have been mis-guided by misinformation, and sections of the media, aspects of political discourse and social media have played a role in that. It is important to put forward a strong counter-narrative.

- g) The Council thanks Nottinghamshire Police and Police Community Support Officers for their work in keeping people in the City safe, and Council staff and other stakeholders for the commitment that they have shown, for example in caring for those affected and helping to tidy up in the aftermath of events.
- h) It is disappointing that action is having to be taken to protect Mosques, but the Government's announcement of a rapid response process is welcome.

Resolved to carry the motion.

A three minute silence was held for reflection and to honour the three girls who died in Southport.

The Meeting concluded at 7.30 pm

City Council – 9 September 2024

Report of the Leader of the Council

Corporate Director/ Director:

Beth Brown, Director of Legal and Governance

Report Author and Contact Details:

Jane Garrard, Senior Governance Officer

jane.garrard@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Title: Decisions taken under Urgency Procedures

Does the report form part of the Budget or Policy Framework?

Yes No

Commissioner Consideration

Has this report been shared with the Commissioners' Office? Yes No

Review by Commissioners not required

Does this report contain any information that is exempt from publication?

No

Relevant Council Plan Key Outcome:

Green, Clean and Connected Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping Nottingham Working	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carbon Neutral by 2028	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safer Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child-Friendly Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Living Well in our Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping Nottingham Moving	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve the City Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serving People Well	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Council's Constitution requires that decisions taken under urgency provisions within the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Article 11) and Access to Information Procedure Rules (Article 13) are reported to Full Council.
- 1.2 This report informs Council of decisions that have been taken under these provisions since the last report to Council in July 2024. During that period there have been two decisions taken under the urgency provisions within the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and no decisions taken under the special urgency provisions within the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the decisions taken under urgency provisions within the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Article 11) of the Constitution since the last report to Council, as set out in Appendix 1.

2.2 To note that no decisions have been taken under the special urgency provisions within the Access to Information Procedure Rules (Article 13) of the Constitution since the last report to Council.

3. Reasons for recommendations

3.1 The Council's Constitution requires that decisions taken under urgency provisions within the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Article 11) and Access to Information Procedure Rules (Article 13) are reported to the next available meeting of Council.

4. Other options considered in making recommendations

4.1 None. It is a Constitutional requirement that Council is informed of urgent decisions taken under provisions within the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Article 11) and Access to Information Procedure Rules (Article 13).

5. Consideration of Risk

5.1 A consideration of risk related to taking decisions referred to in this report took place at the time the decisions were taken and informed the decision making process that followed.

6. Best Value Considerations

6.1 The decisions referred to in this report were made in accordance with procedures set out in the Council's Constitution that are designed to support the efficient and effective discharge of Executive functions. These arrangements are regularly reviewed and, where necessary, amendments made.

7. Background (including outcomes of consultation)

7.1 Decisions taken under the Call-in and Urgency provisions of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules

7.1.1 The call-in procedure set out in Article 11 of the Constitution does not apply where the decision taken is urgent. A decision is urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests. A decision can only be taken under this urgency provision if the Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee (or in the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair; or in the absence of both, the Chief Executive) agrees that the proposed decision is reasonable in all circumstances and that the reasons for urgency are valid.

7.1.2 Since the last report to Council in May 2024, there have been two decisions taken under these urgency provisions. A summary of these decisions is set out in Appendix 1, and the decisions are available on the Council's website.

7.2 Decisions taken under the Special Urgency provisions of the Access to Information Procedure Rules

7.2.1 Where it is impracticable to give at least five clear working days notice of the intention to take a Key Decision, that decision may only be made in accordance with the special urgency provisions set out in the Access to Information Procedure Rules Page 24 (Article 13 of the Constitution). These special urgency provisions require

agreement from the Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee (or in the absence of the Chair, the Lord Mayor as Chair of Council; or in the absence of both, the Sheriff as Vice Chair of Council) that the decision is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred.

7.2.2 There have been no decisions taken under these urgency provisions since April 2023.

8. **Commissioner comments**

8.1 Review by Commissioners not required.

9. **Finance colleague comments (including implications and value for money)**

9.1 Comments from Finance colleagues in relation to the decisions referred to in this report were published as part of each of those decisions.

10. **Legal colleague comments**

10.1 Comments from Legal colleagues in relation to the decisions referred to in this report were published as part of each of those decisions.

11. **Other relevant comments**

11.1 None

12. **Crime and Disorder Implications (If Applicable)**

12.1 Where applicable, details of the crime and disorder implications of the decisions referred to in this report were published as part of each of those decisions.

13. **Social value considerations (If Applicable)**

13.1 Where applicable, details of the social value considerations of the decisions referred to in this report were published as part of each of those decisions.

14. **Regard to the NHS Constitution (If Applicable)**

14.1 Where applicable, regard given to the NHS Constitution in decisions referred to in this report was published as part of each of those decisions.

15. **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

15.1 Has the equality impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No



An EIA is not required because this is a monitoring report, reporting on decisions that have already been taken. Where required, EIAs were published alongside each decision referred to in this report.

16. **Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)**

16.1 Has the data protection impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No



A DPIA is not required because this is a monitoring report, reporting on decisions that have already been taken. Where required, the data protection impact of the decisions referred to in this report was assessed and, where appropriate, details published as part of each of those decisions.

17. Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA)

17.1 Has the carbon impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No



CIA is not required because this is a monitoring report, reporting on decisions that have already been taken. Where required, the carbon impact of the decisions referred to in this report was assessed and, where appropriate, details published as part of each of those decisions.

18. List of background papers relied upon in writing this report (not including published documents or confidential or exempt information)

18.1 None

19. Published documents referred to in this report

19.1 Article 11 Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution

19.2 Article 13 Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution

19.3 The committee reports and minutes, and delegated decisions referred to in this report, as published on the Nottingham City Council website.

**Councillor Neghat Khan
Leader of the Council**

Appendix 1 - Decisions taken under the Call-in and Urgency provisions of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules

Decision reference	Date of decision	Subject	Decision taker	Consultee on urgency	Reason for urgency
5141	26/06/24	Inpatient detox service 'The Level'	Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health	Chair of Corporate Scrutiny Committee	The new contract had to be signed before the end of June 2024 to ensure there were no gaps in provision.
5146	15/07/24	Proposed extension to the Nottingham City Council Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) Dane Court	Executive Member for Communities, Waste and Equalities	Chair of Corporate Scrutiny Committee	To enable the PSPO to be extended before the current PSPO expired, which would have involved a lengthy and costly process.

Appendix 2 – Key Decisions taken under the Special Urgency provisions of the Access to Information Procedure Rules

There were no Key Decisions taken under the Special Urgency provisions of the Access to Information Procedure Rules during the period since the last report to Council in July 2024.

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City Council – 9 September 2024

Report of the Chair of the Audit Committee

Corporate Director/ Director:

Beth Brown, Director of Legal and Governance

Report Author and Contact Details:

Jane Garrard, Senior Governance Officer

jane.garrard@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Title: Amendments to the Constitution

Does the report form part of the Budget or Policy Framework?

Yes No

Commissioner Consideration

Has this report been shared with the Commissioners' Office? Yes No

Any comments the Commissioners wish to provide are listed below.

Does this report contain any information that is exempt from publication?

No

Relevant Council Plan Key Outcome:

Green, Clean and Connected Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping Nottingham Working	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carbon Neutral by 2028	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safer Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child-Friendly Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Living Well in our Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping Nottingham Moving	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve the City Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serving People Well	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1. Summary

- 1.1 Council can establish committees to discharge some of its non-executive functions and determines the functions they may exercise and their terms of reference. It has established an Audit Committee to provide an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk and control arrangements, giving greater confidence to all those charged with governance that those arrangements are effective; oversee the financial reporting and annual governance processes; oversee internal audit and external audit, together with the financial and governance reports helping to ensure there are adequate arrangements in place for both internal challenge and public accountability; and consider assurance of the Council's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the Council's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment. The terms of reference for the Committee are set out in Article 9 Non-Executive Functions and Committees of the Constitution. The terms of reference have been reviewed to ensure that they are in line with CIPFA guidance and good practice, and as a result Council is asked to approve a revised terms of reference for the Audit Committee.

1.2 Council is responsible for amending the Constitution. Therefore, Council is also asked to update Article 9 of the Constitution to reflect the changes to the terms of reference for the Audit Committee.

2. Recommendations

2.1 To approve a revised terms of reference for the Audit Committee, as set out at Appendix 1.

2.2 To amend Article 9 Non-Executive Functions and Committees of the Constitution to reflect these changes to the Audit Committee Terms of Reference.

3. Reasons for recommendations

3.1 Council can establish a committee to discharge some of its non-executive functions and determines the functions they may exercise and their terms of reference and their composition and make appointments to them. Amendments to these arrangements can only be made by Council.

3.2 In 2022 the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) issued guidance *Audit Committees: Updated guidance for Local Authorities and Police* intended to help local authorities to develop best practice and support the development of effective arrangements. At the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 26 July 2024 a new set of terms of reference were endorsed for approval by Council. The new terms of reference will bring the Audit Committee into line with the new CIPFA guidance, represents good practice and is designed to give greater confidence to all those charged with governance that those arrangements are effective.

4. Other options considered in making recommendations

4.1 The discharge of functions by committees is regularly reviewed. Not updating the terms of reference for the Audit Committee was rejected because the current terms of reference refer to outdated legislation, do not represent best practice and do not focus the Committee's attention on the most pertinent issues.

5. Consideration of Risk

5.1 It is important that the nature and extent of delegations of non-executive functions by Council are clearly articulated in the Council's Constitution to ensure clarity about their discharge and roles and responsibilities within the Council's governance framework.

6. Best Value Considerations

6.1 The report sets out proposals to amend the terms of reference for the Audit Committee to ensure efficient and effective discharge of functions that are the responsibility of the Committee.

7. Background (including outcomes of consultation)

7.1 Council can establish committees to discharge some of its non-executive functions. Details of the committees it establishes and the functions delegated to each committee can be found in Article 9 Non-Executive Functions and Committees of the

Constitution. In establishing non-executive committees, Council determines the functions they may exercise and their terms of reference; their composition and makes appointments to them; and appoints the chairs of those committees (unless otherwise specified in an individual committee's terms of reference).

- 7.2 The Audit Committee is necessary to satisfy the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 and Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, and fulfil certain requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. Its terms of reference were last updated in 2018 in response to the publication by CIPFA of the 2018 Position Statement. This revision brings the terms of reference up to date with the latest CIPFA guidance. The CIPFA Position Statement 2022: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police highlights that audit committees are a key component of an authority's governance framework. Their purpose is to provide an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk and control arrangements. The Committee's role in ensuring that there is sufficient assurance over governance risk and control gives greater confidence to all those charged with governance that those arrangements are effective. The Committee has oversight of both internal and external audit together with the financial and governance reports, helping to ensure that there are adequate arrangements in place for both internal challenge and public accountability.
- 7.3 The Audit Committee considered the proposed new terms of reference at its meeting on 26 July 2024 and recommended their approval by Council.

8. **Commissioner comments**

- 8.1 Commissioners have noted the report and have nothing further to add.

9. **Finance colleague comments (including implications and value for money)**

- 9.1 This report is seeking approval for a revision to the terms of reference for the Audit Committee and an amendment to the Constitution to reflect these changes to the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference.
- 9.2 The recommendations do not have any additional financial implications. Expenditure relating to councillors, external and internal audit will be funded from the annual budget allocations.

Alfred Ansong, Strategic Finance Business Partner. 31 July 2024

10. **Legal colleague comments**

It is an essential element of good governance that the Council has a clear, concise and up to date Constitution that sets out in a transparent manner how the Council conducts its business. The Constitution should reflect current legislative requirements, statutory guidance and where appropriate incorporate industry best practice.

Beth Brown, Director of Legal and Governance 2 August 2024

11. **Other relevant comments**

- 11.1 None

12. Crime and Disorder Implications (If Applicable)

12.1 Not applicable

13. Social value considerations (If Applicable)

13.1 Not applicable

14. Regard to the NHS Constitution (If Applicable)

14.1 Not applicable

15. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

15.1 Has the equality impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No



An EIA is not required because the proposals do not relate to a new or changing policy, service or function.

16. Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)

16.1 Has the data protection impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No



A DPIA is not required because the proposals do not involve use of personal or sensitive data.

17. Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA)

17.1 Has the carbon impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No



A CIA is not required because the proposals do not have any significant carbon impact.

18. List of background papers relied upon in writing this report (not including published documents or confidential or exempt information)

18.1 None

19. Published documents referred to in this report

19.1 Report to and minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 26 July 2024

19.2 Article 9 Non-Executive Functions and Committees of the Council's Constitution

19.3 Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) (2022) *Audit Committees: Updated guidance for Local Authorities and Police*

Councillor Adele Williams
Chair of the Audit Committee

Audit Committee

Terms of Reference

Description

The Audit Committee (the Committee) is a politically balanced Non-Executive Committee of Council. The Committee is necessary to satisfy the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 and Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, and fulfil certain requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The Committee is accountable to Council and will report annually to Council as set out below.

To ensure compliance with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 and Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Committee operates within the relevant sections of:

- Audit Committee – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police 2022 (CIPFA)
- Position Statement on Local Authority Audit Committees 2022 (CIPFA)
- Financial Management Code 2020 (CIPFA)
- Treasury Management in the Public Services Codes of Practice 2021 and Guidance Notes 2022 (CIPFA)
- Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (CIPFA)
- Relevant Internal Audit Standards (RIAS)
 - a new standard the Global Internal Auditing Standard (the Standard) was issued in January 2024 for implementation by January 2025
- the Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption 2014 (CIPFA)

and Risk Management Frameworks.

Purpose

The purpose of the Audit Committee is to:

- (a) provide an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk and control arrangements, giving greater confidence to all those charged with governance that those arrangements are effective
- (b) oversee the financial reporting and annual governance processes.
- (c) oversee internal audit and external audit, together with the financial and governance reports helping to ensure there are adequate arrangements in place for both internal challenge and public accountability
- (d) consider assurance of the Council's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the Council's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment including emphasis on:
 - governance risks around high level financial strategy and reserves
 - governance risks connected to asset realisation
 - governance of Capital Programme and projects
 - value for Money and Delivering Objectives
 - governance of linked incorporated bodies
- (e) review and advise on proposed and actual changes to the Council's policies and procedures pertaining to governance.

Objectives

The Audit Committee will:

Audit Committee Accountability Arrangements

- (a) report annually to Council on the work of the Committee and the Committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference and the effectiveness of the Committee in meeting its purpose during the previous year, including a conclusion on the compliance with the CIPFA Position Statement.
- (b) report to those charged with governance on the Committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the adequacy and effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks, financial reporting arrangements and internal and external audit functions.

Governance, Risk and Control

- (c) review the Council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework, including the ethical framework and consider the local code of governance
- (d) consider the Council's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements
- (e) receive and consider the results of reports from external inspectors, ombudsman and similar bodies and from statutory officers
- (f) monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the Council
- (g) monitor progress in addressing risk-related issues reported to the Committee
- (h) consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions
- (i) review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the Council from fraud and corruption
- (j) monitor the counter-fraud strategy, actions and resources
- (k) review the governance and assurance arrangements for Council owned companies, significant partnerships or other collaborations, including reports of companies assurance

Arrangements for Audit and Assurance

- (l) consider the Council's framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the Council

External Audit

- (m) support the independence of external audit through consideration of the external auditor's annual assessment of its independence and review of any issues raised by the Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA) or the Authority's auditor panel as appropriate
- (n) consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports and the report to those charged with governance
- (o) consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor
- (p) comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and ensure it gives value for money
- (q) consider additional commissions of work from external audit

- (r) advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between external and internal audit and other inspection agencies or relevant bodies
- (s) provide External Auditors with free and unfettered access to the audit committee chair, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the committee

Internal Audit

- (t) approve the internal audit charter including internal audit rights to documents, records, information, and explanations set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations
- (u) consider any impairments to the independence or objectivity of the Head of Internal Audit arising from additional roles or responsibilities outside of internal auditing and to approve and periodically review safeguards to limit such impairments
- (v) make appropriate enquiries of management and the Head of Internal Audit¹ to determine if there are any concerns regarding organisational independence of the internal audit activity or senior management support
- (w) approve the risk-based internal audit plan, including internal audit resource capabilities and the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources
- (x) approve significant interim changes to the risk-based internal audit plan and resource requirements if any
- (y) consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested
- (z) contribute to the QAIP and in particular to ensure that an external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years
- (aa) consider the Head of Internal Audit's annual report, including:
 - a. the results from the internal audit Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP) including the level of conformance to relevant internal auditing standards, compliance with laws and regulations and plans for improvement
 - b. the opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control, together with the summary of the work supporting the opinion.
- (bb) provide free and unfettered access to the Audit Committee Chair for the Head of Internal Audit, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the Committee.

Finance and Governance reporting

- (cc) review and approve the publication of the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council
- (dd) consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts
- (ee) effectively scrutinise, review and monitor treasury management strategies and policies including compliance with CIPFA Codes
- (ff) review the Annual Governance Statement prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances,

¹ As defined by Audit Committee – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police 2022 (CIPFA)

taking into account Internal Audit's opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control

- (gg) consider any appeals made by an employee against decisions made by the Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee relating to a grievance made against the Chief Executive. Members involved in considering these will not be able to participate in any further consideration of the matter at other committees.
- (hh) review the annual audit plan for East Midlands Shared Services (EMSS) including resource requirements and make recommendation(s) to the EMSS Joint Committee
- (ii) consider Head of Internal Audit's report(s) which will include updates on the internal audit plan including conclusions and key findings, assurance, advice, insights and monitoring results, issues of concern and actions in hand as a result of the internal audit work.

Membership and Chairing

The Audit Committee has 9 councillor members and up to 2 external independent members.

Members of the Executive are excluded from membership of the Committee.

The Chair of the Committee will be appointed by Full Council at its Annual General Meeting. If the Chair changes in year, the Committee will appoint a Chair for the remainder of the Municipal Year at its next available meeting.

Directors of any of the Council's Group of companies cannot be a member of the Committee.

External independent members will have full voting rights.

Substitutes

Councillor substitute members are permitted for this Committee.

Independent member substitutes are not permitted for this Committee.

Quorum

The standard quorum for Council committees applies to this Committee.

Frequency of Meetings

The Audit Committee will usually meet six times per year.

Duration

There is no limit on the lifespan of the Audit Committee.

City Council – 9 September 2024

Report of the Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Corporate Director / Director

Beth Brown, Director of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Report Author and Contact Details

Nancy Barnard, Head of Governance (Statutory Scrutiny Officer)

nancy.barnard@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Title: Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24

Does the report form part of the Budget or Policy Framework?

Yes No

Commissioner Consideration

Has this report been shared with the Commissioners' Office? Yes No

Any comments that the Commissioners wished to provide are listed below.

Does this report contain any information that is exempt from publication?

No

Relevant Council Plan Key Outcome:

Green, Clean and Connected Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping Nottingham Working	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carbon Neutral by 2028	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safer Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child-Friendly Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Living Well in our Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping Nottingham Moving	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve the City Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serving People Well	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report provides a summary of the activity carried out by the Council's five Scrutiny Committees during the 2023/24 municipal year, how they have worked to fulfil their terms of reference and the recommendations that they have made to the Council's Executive and other partners.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Full Council accepts the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2023/24.

3. Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 Article 11.4 (Overview and Scrutiny) of the Council's Constitution requires that the Overview and Scrutiny function reports to Full Council on an annual basis on its activity and outcomes during the previous year.

4. Other options considered in making recommendations

- 4.1 To not produce an Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report: as the Constitution requires that the Overview and Scrutiny function reports to Full Council on an annual basis, this option has been rejected.

5. Consideration of Risk

- 5.1 The statutory Overview and Scrutiny function represents a key component in ensuring that the Council's decision-making and governance processes operate efficiently and effectively. If the Overview and Scrutiny function did not work well, this could represent a risk to the assurance possible around the robustness of the Council's decision-making. As a result, the Annual Report is presented to Full Council so that it can take assurance that the Committees are carrying out effective scrutiny activity and delivering their terms of reference.

6. Best Value Considerations

- 6.1 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny carried out a review of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function in 2021. This included consideration of how good practice and benchmarking with other Local Authorities is applied to ensure that the function operates efficiently to fulfil the statutory duties and contribute effectively to the Council's recovery and improvement. The review made a number of recommendations for the development of the Overview and Scrutiny function, which were subsequently accepted by the Council and have now been implemented.

7. Background (including outcomes of consultation)

- 7.1 The role of the Overview and Scrutiny function within the Council's governance arrangements is to contribute to policy development and to ensure that the Council's Executive (and certain other partners) is held to account publicly for its decisions and actions. The function has a wide remit to explore how the Council and its partners could improve services and their outcomes for the people of Nottingham. Article 11 (Overview and Scrutiny) of the Council's Constitution sets out how the function operates, and an Overview and Scrutiny Protocol is in place that establishes the vision for the function and its conditions for success.
- 7.2 During the 2023/24 municipal year, the Overview and Scrutiny function was delivered through a new structure of five Scrutiny Committees: Children and Young People; Communities and Environment; Corporate; Health and Adult Social Care; and Housing and City Development. Each Committee has eight members and is politically balanced, and their new terms of reference have been established in the Council's Constitution.

7.3 The first Scrutiny Committee meetings under the new structure took place from September 2023, following an initial programme of training and development for Committee members (including carrying out work programming activity). The Annual Report summarises the activity that the Scrutiny Committees carried out during the 2023/24 municipal year, provides examples of the work that they undertook to fulfil their terms of reference, and sets out the recommendations that they made.

8. Commissioner comments

8.1 Commissioners have noted the report and have nothing further to add.

9. Finance colleague comments (including implications and value for money)

9.1 This report summarises the work undertaken by the Council's scrutiny committees during municipal year 2023/24. The activity was funded by the allocated budgets within Governance Services for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 Medium-Term Financial Plans. There are no additional financial implications as a direct or indirect result of this work.

Alfred Ansong, Strategic Finance Business Partner (19 August 2024)

10. Legal colleague comments

10.1 The requirement for a Local Authority operating executive arrangements to have one or more scrutiny committees is set out in Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000. Overview and Scrutiny is a fundamental part of the democratic process and of corporate governance.

10.2 This annual report to Full Council is made in accordance with Article 11 of the Council's Constitution.

Anthony Heath, Head of Legal Services (13 August 2024)

11. Other relevant comments

11.1 Not applicable

12. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

12.1 Has the equality impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No



An EIA is not required because the Annual Report outlines the Overview and Scrutiny work that has taken place already, so does not contain any proposals for new or changing policies or services. Where consideration has been given to equality impact as part of specific Overview and Scrutiny activity, this has

been reflected in the reports to and minutes of the relevant Committee meetings.

13. Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)

13.1 Has the data protection impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No

A DPIA is not required because the Annual Report outlines the Overview and Scrutiny work that has taken place already, so does not contain any proposals for new or changing policies or services. Where consideration has been given to data protection as part of specific Overview and Scrutiny activity, this has been reflected in the reports to and minutes of the relevant Committee meetings.

14. Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA)

14.1 Has the carbon impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No

A CIA is not required because the Annual Report outlines the Overview and Scrutiny work that has taken place already, so does not contain any proposals for new or changing policies or services. Where consideration has been given to carbon impact as part of specific Overview and Scrutiny activity, this has been reflected in the reports to and minutes of the relevant Committee meetings.

15. List of background papers relied upon in writing this report (not including published documents or confidential or exempt information)

15.1 None

16. Published documents referred to in this report

16.1 [Nottingham City Council's Constitution](#): Article 9 (Non-Executive Functions and Committees) and Article 11 (Overview and Scrutiny)

16.2 Reports to and minutes of (22 May 2023 to 20 May 2024) the:

[Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee](#)
[Communities and Environment Scrutiny Committee](#)
[Corporate Scrutiny Committee](#)
[Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee](#)
[Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committee](#)

**Councillor Leslie Ayoola (2023/24) and Councillor Samuel Gardiner (2024/25)
Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee**

City Council – 9 September 2024

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24

1. Introduction and Background

Overview and Scrutiny is a statutory function that supports both good governance and open and transparent decision-making. It works to enhance both the Council's policy and strategy development processes and the planning and delivery of services for the benefit of local people. It promotes democratic accountability by enabling non-Executive councillors to hold their Executive colleagues to account for their decisions and actions in a public way. It has a wide remit to explore how the Council and its partner organisations can improve services for Nottingham by offering constructive review, feedback and challenge on decisions, actions, policies, strategies and performance, so that decision-makers can maximise the robustness of their actions.

The overall purpose of Overview and Scrutiny is to:

- a) hold local decision-makers (including the Council's Executive and the relevant Boards of the Council's group of companies) to account for their decisions, actions, performance and management of risk;
- b) review the existing policies and strategies of the Council and other local decision-makers where they impact on Nottingham people;
- c) contribute to the development of new policies and strategies of the Council and other local decision-makers where they impact on Nottingham people;
- d) exercise the Council's statutory role in scrutinising local NHS healthcare services in accordance with the NHS Act 2006 (as amended) and the associated regulations and guidance;
- e) explore any matters affecting Nottingham and/or its people;
- f) make reports and recommendations to relevant local agencies with respect to the delivery of their functions, including the Council and its Executive; and
- g) review decisions made (but not yet implemented) by the Council's Executive in accordance with the Call-in Procedure.

As part of the Council's wider improvement work, the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) was commissioned in 2021 to undertake a review of the Overview and Scrutiny function. The CfGS identified some limitations to the then Scrutiny arrangements and, coupled with the Council's Improvement and Assurance Board's Instruction to have an efficient and effective decision-making process in place by the end of June 2023, significant work has taken place to address the issues – with a new structure for the Overview and Scrutiny function implemented from May 2023.

The new structure was developed following the consideration of a variety of different options, including a review of the approaches taken by other Core Cities. The number of individual Scrutiny Committees was increased to five, with each aligned to one of the Council's directorates, and full terms of reference for each Committee have been established within the Constitution. The previous Call-In Panel was discontinued, with each of the Committees now responsible for managing any call-ins within its remit. Each Committee is politically balanced, with a membership of eight councillors. In terms of resourcing, the Committees are

supported by the Statutory Scrutiny Officer and three Scrutiny and Audit Support Officers.

Holding their first meetings in September 2023, following an initial programme of training and development for Committee members (including the carrying out of work programming activity), the five new Scrutiny Committees are as follows:

- The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, chaired by Councillor Naim Salim, which focused on the issues and services relevant to the health, wellbeing and safeguarding of Nottingham's children and young people.
- The Communities and Environment Scrutiny Committee, chaired by Councillor Imran Jalil, which focused on the issues affecting local communities and the environment, including community protection, environmental health, waste and cleansing, energy, sport, culture and tourism.
- The Corporate Scrutiny Committee, chaired by Councillor Leslie Ayoola, which focused on the issues relating to the Council's corporate services such as IT, customer services, commercial strategy, financial management and commissioning and procurement, along with cross-cutting topics such as the development and delivery of the Strategic Council Plan, the annual budget, and overall transformation and improvement.
- The Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee, chaired by Councillor Georgia Power, which focused on the issues relating to the Council's provision of Adult Social Care and the physical and mental healthcare services delivered by the local NHS.
- The Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committee, chaired by Councillor Sam Harris, which focused on the issues relating to housing, economic development, employment and skills, business growth and inward investment, property and asset management, transport, traffic and parking.

All five Scrutiny Committees worked together to consider the Council's developing 2024/25 Budget, returning formal comments on the proposals to both the Executive Board and Full Council. The Committees also engaged with individual Executive members and directorates to examine the potential service impacts of the budget proposals on Nottingham people, and the outcomes of these discussions are set out under Section 4 of the report ('Corporate Scrutiny Committee').

As part of their evidence gathering, the Scrutiny Committees often invited Executive Members, Council officers and external colleagues and partners to attend meetings to provide information about their work, experiences and expertise. The Committee Chairs and members would like to thank all of those who participated in and contributed to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny activity during the 2023/24 municipal year.

2. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held six meetings during 2023/24 to review a range of issues, including:

- The Children's Services Improvement Journey
- Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities Improvement
- Nottingham City Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report
- Youth Justice Service
- The Priority Education Investment Area
- Early Help Strategy
- Children in Care Placement Sufficiency
- Preventing Child Exploitation

The Children's Services Improvement Journey

The Committee has played a pivotal role in monitoring the progress made in Children's Services following the 'inadequate' rating the Service received in July 2022. Members have received both verbal updates from the Executive Member and reports following Ofsted monitoring visits. The monitoring visits centred around specific themes within the Service. These were children in need and children with a child protection plan, care leavers aged 18+, and children in care (planning and achieving performance). Following each of the monitoring visits, inspectors have noted evidence of tangible progress being made with some areas of strong improvement. Areas that have required improvement have been identified, which the Committee are assured that senior leaders are aware of. Members have been keen to follow the improvement journey closely and will continue to do so as part of the Work Programme for 2024/25.

Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Improvement

The Committee scrutinised progress made in improving support and services for children and young people with SEND and their families, with a particular focus on communication, engagement and co-production with parents and families to improve outcomes. This followed on from an inspection from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in November 2021 into how well the City carried out its statutory duties which highlighted strengths and areas of improvement. The Committee had previously welcomed the largely positive findings of the inspection and looked forward to hearing how the service would strengthen on areas found to require some improvement.

A number of changes and improvements had been made including a new inspection framework for Local Authorities and a new set of strategic priorities for Nottingham. These included strengthening governance arrangements, increasing engagement opportunities for young people and parents, developing a revised SEND Strategy, increasing partnership working with partners such as the NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Nottinghamshire County Council, and reviewing the current local offer platform.

The Committee recommended that the Council should investigate publishing information outlining the support it offers in different languages, and it further considers how it can communicate its services better and to a wider audience.

Nottingham City Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report

The Committee considered the Nottingham City Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report, which outlined safeguarding arrangements provided by the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership (NCSCP). The report highlighted work undertaken during the course of the year and plans for the future. The partners responsible for the arrangements are the Council, the ICB and Nottinghamshire Police. The production of the report is a statutory requirement.

The Committee heard that the strategic priorities of the Safeguarding Partnership in 2022-23 were to promote, monitor, coordinate and evaluate multi-agency effectiveness in safeguarding children across the child's journey, to strengthen and support a competent and equipped workforce that is committed to learning and developing safeguarding practice with the assurance that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and to evidence the impact of the NCSCP. It also had a Business Plan which contained 7 priorities: tackling and reducing child exploitation, implementing the Harmful Sexual Behaviour Action Plan, ensuring that the voice and lived experience of children is integral to the development and delivery of services to children and families across Nottingham, recognising and responding to the diverse population of Nottingham's children, delivering the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership Neglect Strategy, understanding the impact of Covid-19, and providing leadership and ensuring core duties are met in line with Working Together 2018 and other relevant legislation.

The Committee welcomed the report and activity of the Safeguarding Partnership and recommended partners be proactive in regards to safeguarding concerns, disseminate information to other organisations about its work, and to continue to focus on the voice of the child.

Youth Justice Service

The Service received a full three-week joint inspection in November 2019 from HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) in which the service was graded 'requires improvement'. In November 2022, the Service invited a peer review team from across the country to provide their own assessment of the Service. The Committee considered the findings of the inspections and progress made since then. Members heard that the Service has addressed the recommendations from both the HMIP inspection and peer review through an operational delivery plan reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Youth Justice Management Board.

A further inspection was anticipated in 2024 and the Committee received assurance that management are aware of the improvements expected and that a further inspection will have better outcomes than the first.

The Priority Education Investment Area (PEIA)

The Committee received an update on partnership work between the Department for Education (DfE), Nottingham City Council and Multi-Academy Trusts operating schools in the city, who were working on local education priorities identified and being supported with additional Government funding as an identified PEIA. Nottingham was confirmed as one of 24 PEIAs in March 2022. PEIAs have particularly low attainment and high rates of disadvantage and there are a number of ambitions that underpin priority areas.

In order to drive this ambition and the programme in Nottingham, a Local Governance board was established by the Regional Director of the DfE working with the Local Authority and Multi-Academy Trusts operating in the city, and the two local universities. The Board agreed that local priorities were literacy and attendance. The Committee received presentations from several partners at the meeting who outlined work being done in their areas to advance the local priorities. The Committee commented that the dedication and commitment in those present was clear, and that they looked forward to further progress updates on the PEIA.

Early Help Strategy

The Committee considered progress made since the launch of the Early Help Strategy and website in October 2023 and whether it was achieving its intended outcomes. Partners had identified five priorities to drive initial activity:

- Embedding a whole-system approach to facilitate Early Help being an integral part of a city-wide service
- Partnership working
- Partnership workforce development and structure
- Measure the impact of Early Help
- Pool funding and identify sustainability

The Committee heard that an Early Help Partnership Steering Strategic Group had been established which has set up four sub-groups to address the priorities within the Strategy. These were Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Family Voice, Workplace Development, and Impact Monitoring. The Committee received an update on work done against these priorities.

Members made a number of recommendations which included amendments to the Strategy regarding the statistics outlining the local context in Nottingham and data outlining child criminal exploitation. They also recommended that the Council explored how it could make some of its buildings more teenage friendly and assessed how it could use existing provisions to better support families during the cost of living crisis.

Children in Care Placement Sufficiency

The Committee received a report on the Children in Care Placement Sufficiency Strategy, Action Plan, and Market Development. It was noted that the Council has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient accommodation for their looked after children and young people and that the Council has a mix of placement types for those that do.

As such, the Strategy responds to that duty by setting out the Council's vision in achieving its commitment to improving the life chances of children and young people who come under its care, and provide sufficient, safe and secure placements for looked-after children and care leavers.

The Committee heard and agreed that issues around placement sufficiency was not unique to Nottingham and was a national challenge. Members made a number of recommendations including enhancing work with community groups, and carrying out comparative analysis work to ascertain the outcomes between internal and external provision. The Strategy was refreshed annually and the Committee looked forward to considering the item as part of its Work Programme for 2024/25.

Preventing Child Exploitation

Members considered how the Council was preventing child exploitation following a number of recommendations previously made in regards to the production of a Tackling Child Exploitation Strategy. The Committee was presented with a report outlining the Tackling Child Exploitation Strategy 2024-26, and detailed how the Strategy was being implemented through the Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Partnerships and the Tackling Child Exploitation Steering Group. The aim of the Strategy was to create a single, whole system response to child exploitation aiming to reduce exploitation, and extra familial harm, protect communities and reflects the need for a cross-border approach. The Committee heard how the Strategy and various partnership working was being used to tackle child exploitation in its various forms.

The Committee welcomed the Strategy, however, it had a number of concerns regarding accountability and how performance would be measured. The Committee made a recommendation regarding ensuring that the Council was using the appropriate mechanisms and support available to children identified at risk of exploitation. This was in response to the number of children being referred by the Council through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) to the Home Office. They also made a number of requests including receiving a list of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and other measurables that the Strategy will be using to measure success and information on the waiting times for children referred to services as a result of exploitation. Members requested that the Strategy be brought back to Committee in the future to assess its progress.

3. Communities and Environment Scrutiny Committee

The Communities and Environment Scrutiny Committee held seven meetings during 2023/24 to review a range of issues, including:

- The Municipal Resources and Waste Strategy
- Carbon Neutral Nottingham 2028
- The District Heating Network
- Safety and Environmental Regulation
- Community Resilience and Environmental Services
- The Nottingham Community Safety Partnership
- Nottingham Events
- Nottingham Castle

The Municipal Resources and Waste Strategy

The Committee scrutinised the implementation plans for the Municipal Resources and Waste Strategy for 2023-50 and the options available in relation to domestic waste, green waste and recycling collection. The Committee considered how waste was collected from 31,950 properties across the city every day. Only one quarter of this waste was recycled, so a significantly improvement was required in recycling rates, including a need to collect and recycle food waste. The Committee reviewed the outcomes of the food waste recycling collection trial where 1.2 tonnes of food waste had been collected in one week, with the weight of residential waste collected being reduced by 2 tonnes. The Committee examined how the most effective collection of recycling was to achieve clean waste at source and the consideration being given to supporting residents in separating their waste appropriately for collection.

The Committee considered that clearer communications were needed on recycling and, as some areas within the city saw rapid changes in the people living there, information and education programmes needed to be ongoing. The Committee advised that the Council needed to work collaboratively with citizens to gain their support for the requirements, with the existing 'Clean Champions' network being engaged to help encourage recycling and promote a positive recycling culture. The Committee felt that there needed to be an ongoing focus on addressing fly tipping and ensuring that bin collections were not missed.

The Committee recommended that further work was done to explore the potential for temporary or pop-up recycling points in communities and how Ward Councillors, Green Champions and other community networks could contribute to increasing recycling rates and reducing contamination. The Committee also recommended that the balance between bulky waste collection and fly tipping clearance times was reviewed, and that the companies were approached regarding their social and corporate responsibilities as part of developing a Nottingham Waste Charter with businesses.

Carbon Neutral Nottingham 2028 (CN28)

The Committee scrutinised the approach to achieving a carbon neutral Nottingham by 2028, as an important part of the current Strategic Council Plan for developing a

healthy environment and economic growth in the city, and the ambitions for the delivery of CN28 going forward. The Committee reviewed the significant financial pressures that faced the Council, resulting in a number of challenges to progressing CN28 initiatives as the overall project was not a statutory requirement and it carried a certain level of cost.

The Committee considered the initial outcomes of the 'best value' thematic review has been done to identify how CN28 could continue to be delivered in an effective and efficient way, going forward. A great deal of data was fed into the review, which included interviews with internal staff and a range of external partners and stakeholders. CN28 represents an ambitious strategy with a strong level of commitment to its delivery by both the Council and its wider partners, and there has been a great deal of investment to date in green transport within the city for a sustained period. However, the direct funding and resourcing of CN28 activity would now be more difficult, particularly in the national context of wider economic issues and delays to the phasing out of petrol and diesel vehicles. As a result, there was a risk that the Council will need to focus on planning to address difficult issues in the short-term, making it harder to focus effectively on long-term projects such as CN28.

The Committee head that proposals were being developed for a strategic commercial partnership to secure large-scale investment from private sector stakeholders, particularly in the area of growing clean energy production within Nottingham itself. A detailed and costed investment programme plan for the Council was being developed, with the Council working to be in a position where it could deploy CN28 investment quickly and in a focused way while taking full advantage of any available funding available regionally, nationally or from partners.

The Committee welcomed the findings of the 'best value' review and recommend that the Council liaised with the local universities to explore research opportunities for green energy generation in Nottingham, engaged with sector leaders on the use of green technology for Council buildings and considered how commercial partnerships could be used to progress the work towards delivering the CN28 targets.

The District Heating Network

Nottingham's district heating network was created in 1968 to provide heat and power to homes and businesses across the city. The heat energy is produced from the incineration of 170,000 tonnes of municipal waste at the Eastcroft Incinerator. Options for the future of the heat network beyond 2030 are now being considered and, as part of this process, the Committee established a Spotlight Review Group to participate in the consideration of the options open to the Council at the appropriate point in the development timeline.

Safety and Environmental Regulation

The Committee scrutinised the performance of the Council's Safety and Environmental Regulation Services, reviewing the challenges that they faced and the impact they had on the Council's revenue budgets. The Committee examined the Council's wide range of regulatory responsibilities for environmental health and

public safety. In term of food safety, the Committee learned that there were nearly 3,000 food premises in Nottingham, where problems of access due to the Coronavirus pandemic had led to a significant inspections backlog that the Environmental Health team was working to address with support from Community Protection Officers.

The Committee also reviewed how the Council was delivering its statutory responsibility for inspecting workplaces in the context of health and safety, and carrying out detailed investigations of any workplace accidents that resulted in either death or serious injury. The Committee learned that there could be two to three workplace-related deaths per year on average, with around 30 cases of serious injury. The results of investigations into deaths are fed into the Coroner's inquest processes, and the Council could take a business to court if a death or serious injury arose due to corporate negligence. Council officers were also part of the Safety Advisory Group for large-scale events, alongside other organisations such as the Police and the Fire and Rescue Service, to ensure that these could take place safely.

The Committee felt that it had been very positive to highlight the important statutory duties that the Council delivered in this area, and recommend that consideration was given to how communications with the public could be used to emphasize the importance of the good work carried out by the Council's Safety and Environmental Regulation Services.

Community Resilience and Environmental Services

The Committee scrutinised the outcomes of the 'best value' review relating to Community Resilience and Environment Services. The Committee considered how 'best value' reviews were carried out to ensure that Council assets were being used efficiently to improve and safeguard services, and generate savings. The initial review of Community Resilience and Environmental Services sought to better understand the investment needs and costs of community assets, and to identify potential disposal opportunities to support ongoing transformation work. Part of the review included detailed consideration of rent and lease arrangements for community assets using the Corporate Landlord model and a Social Value framework, with a view to moving rents to market rates with discounts offered where the services provided demonstrate social value or represented savings across Council services.

The Committee considered that it was vital for a place-based approach to be used to draw together the Council's resources to make the best use of assets, staff and technology in a holistic way to ensure the continuation of sustainable community assets. The Committee recommended that further work was done to explore how the funding available could be used to enable community centres to be run by their communities effectively, how the Social Value framework was used as a clear part of informing decisions, and how Nottingham businesses could be further engaged in investing in local communities.

The Nottingham Community Safety Partnership (CSP)

The Committee scrutinised the performance of the CSP in its delivery of the priorities set out as part of the CSP Strategy for 2023-26. The CSP (previously the Crime and Drugs Partnership) is a multi-agency group responsible for tackling crime, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and reoffending. It is made of up five statutory 'Responsible Authorities' and a number of other public sector partners who participate on a voluntary basis. The Committee examined how the new Strategy had been put in place to set out how the CSP would meet its responsibilities, with the current three-year priorities being addressing slavery and exploitation, domestic abuse and sexual violence, radicalisation and violent extremism, substance use, anti-social behaviour and serious violence. The CSP also had an additional focus on tackling hate crime on a Nottinghamshire-wide basis, working with partners across Local Authority boundaries.

The Committee reviewed the strategic assessment exercise underway to understand the current service needs and required provision, how partnership work could be used to improve services, and how service impact could be measured effectively. A series of key performance indicators were in place so that the outcomes being delivered can be seen and assessed easily. A great deal of the funding used by the CSP to support its initiatives and interventions was granted by central Government on a fixed-term basis, so this can make it difficult to plan activity in the long-term. Currently, £5.7 million of funding will end in March 2025, so the Committee examined the work underway to seek to mitigate against any potential future financial shortfalls. Fully supporting all potential priorities was extremely challenging, as there was a shrinking level of resourcing for a growing level of need.

The Committee considered that it was important for the CSP to fully understand the reasons behind first-time youth offending effectively. The Committee noted that the Council's Community Protection provision formed an important part of the delivery of the CSP Strategy, and the potential restructuring of neighbourhood policing should be considered carefully in partnership with other stakeholders.

Nottingham Events

The Committee scrutinised how large-scale events were held across the city and their environmental, tourism and economic impacts, examining how the Council supported a number of public events (including regular, civic and commercial events) through the Nottingham Events team, which had to be self-sustaining – with the events that it ran funded by its own income and support from partners and sponsors.

The Committee considered how all events commissioned directly by the Council needed to clearly justify the use of public funds, with detailed business cases produced to set out what each event was intended to achieve and the wider benefit that it would bring for the city. The Committee also explored how the Events team acted as a single point of contact for others seeking to organise events in the city such as commercial, sporting and promotional events, and coordinated requests for commercial filming in public spaces. The Events team further provided 'value in kind' event management support to help community events to continue to form a core part of the city's events programme.

The Committee welcomed the activity being carried out to support events in the city, but recommended that as much work as possible should be done to engage effectively with potential sponsors of public events, including the local business community, and that consideration should be given to how the existing structures for coordinating volunteer activity could be used to help resource public events. The Committee also recommend that it should be ensured that all clean-up activity following an event covered the appropriate wider residential area impacted, and that more information was collected on the level of car travel to public events as opposed to the levels of public transport usage.

Nottingham Castle

The Committee scrutinised the performance of Nottingham Castle following its reopening, including the current commercial risks and opportunities. The recent restoration, redevelopment and operation of the Castle under an independent charitable trust had not been successful, so the Council resumed direct management from November 2022. The Committee reviewed how a sustainable business plan had been developed and a straightforward 'pay once, visit all year round' ticket structure had been put in place. A medium-term financial plan had been implemented and was on target to ensure the delivery of a best value service in the long term.

Since reopening in June 2023, the Castle's annual visitor numbers had nearly reached the target of 200,000. The Committee considered the work that had been carried out to learn from the Castle's first six months of operation, and from the feedback that had been received when the castle was open under the previous trust. A great deal of engagement had been carried out with partners to ensure that the Castle provided a strong local offer and to emphasise to Nottingham communities that the castle was open to all and represented good value. Low-cost community days were run at £1 per person and these had seen a strong overall attendance of above 30,000. A volunteer programme had been established with a number of people engaged from across a range of city communities.

The Committee felt that the work done to reopen and operate the Castle since June 2023 had been extremely positive. The Committee considered that it was important to further develop engagement with new and emerging communities. The Committee recommend that consideration should be given to how pricing and special offers could achieve additional benefits for Nottingham residents, and that further consideration was given to how local businesses could be engaged with to support the Castle.

4. Corporate Scrutiny Committee

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee held six meetings during 2023/24 to review a range of issues, including:

- The 2024/25 Budget
- Improvement and Assurance Board Updates
- Transformation Performance
- Performance Management
- The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-28
- The Strategic Council Plan

The 2024/25 Budget

The Committee met on three separate occasions to consider the development of the Council's 2024/25 Budget, at its meetings on 13 September 2023, 17 January 2024, and 14 February 2024. The Committee considered the Council's Budget Strategy and Methodology, the proposals that Executive Board agreed to send out for public consultation on 19 December 2023 and in which the Committee responded to it as a formal consultee, and the final budget that the Executive put forward to Full Council for formal decision and setting of Council Tax on 4 March 2024. The Committee provided Full Council with its views on the budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2024-2028 in the form of a report that summarised the key findings, observations and conclusions from its budget meetings. The full report can be viewed [here](#) and is also attached as Appendix 1.

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee reviewed the potential impacts of the 2024/25 budget proposals on the services delivered by the Children's and Education departments. The Committee highlighted that it was crucial for all Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to be published as soon as possible. Committee members raised concerns with a number of proposals, including those impacting the Bulwell Riverside Centre and the Ridge Adventure Centre. The Committee stressed the importance of preventative and early intervention services, highlighting that this work reduced pressure on statutory services in the long-term.

The Committee sought assurance on work being done to ascertain the impacts of the proposals stopping the Area-Based Grant, highlighting that this was likely to impact a high number of services across different directorates. Committee members also raised concerns about the impact that a reduction in the Household Support Fund may have on young people's access to school uniforms and the implications this may have for them in a wider setting.

The Communities and Environment Scrutiny Committee reviewed the potential impacts of the 2024/25 budget proposals on the services delivered by the Communities, Environment and Resident Services directorate. The Committee considered that everything possible should be done to ensure that city streets were kept clean and free of waste, and to maintain the vital services delivered by Community Protection Officers. The Committee stressed that very clear engagement should be carried out with all community centres to seek to reduce the very high levels of uncertainty that they were facing. The Committee was also concerned about the potential impacts of proposals on the Council's Bereavement Services, the

Museums, Galleries and Library Services, and the ambitions to achieve a carbon neutral city.

The Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee reviewed the potential impacts of the 2024/25 budget proposals on the services delivered by the Adult Social Care department. The Committee stressed that all Equality Impact Assessments relevant to the budget proposals must be reviewed and published as soon as possible, and that the capacity requirements required within Adult Social Care to deliver the savings proposals effectively must be scoped very clearly – particularly in the context of ensuring properly supported transitions of care. The Committee advised that there must be close monitoring of any changes to waiting list times in the context of the proposed restructure of the Adult Social Care Assessment function. The Committee recommend that full consideration should be given to how the Council’s relationships with external providers could be maximised to ensure that the most vulnerable people were supported to the required level of care.

The Committee expressed very significant concerns regarding the proposals relating to residential respite care, homecare and residential care home services, as it considered that the level of anticipated savings was low relative to the potential substantial impact on people and the real risks to delivery. The Committee recommended that full consideration must be given to how these services could be maintained and continued on an in-house basis (such as through utilising any commercialisation opportunities) given the potentially high risk relative to the value of the projected savings, and the possibility that it might not be achievable to source an external provider to an equivalent service standard at a viable cost.

The Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committee reviewed the potential impacts of the 2024/25 budget proposals on the services delivered by the Growth and City Development directorate. The Committee stressed that full account must be taken of the associated Equality Impact Assessments (as updated where appropriate following the results to the public consultation) in the development of the final proposals for delivering savings, given the potential for the service changes put forward to widen existing inequalities.

The Committee was extremely concerned about the impacts on the most vulnerable people in the city and recommended that everything possible must be done to mitigate against the future demand for statutory services in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping being increased as a result of the proposals, and that full consideration was given to how the free use of accessible toilet facilities could be provided. The Committee also recommend that full consideration should be given to how live information on public transport times could be made easily accessible to everyone travelling in the city by alternative means (particularly when there was service disruption), and that everything possible was done to maintain capacity within the directorate to apply successfully for relevant grant funding opportunities for supporting the services that it delivered.

Improvement and Assurance Board (IAB) Updates

Prior to the Section 114 report issued by the Corporate Director for Finance and the subsequent appointment of Commissioners, the Committee had been receiving

updates on instructions issued by the IAB. This was done at the request of the previous incarnation of the Council's Scrutiny function, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee was updated on progress made against 39 instructions that had been issued by the IAB in February 2023 to bring about change at an increased pace in several areas including governance, finance, transformation, corporate planning, companies, workforce culture, and performance. Members heard that the Council was waiting on the Government's response to the latest report, which was issued in July 2023 with the outcome potentially determining whether Commissioners were appointed and/or a change in status to the IAB. There was a consensus that good progress was being made, however, the Committee queried whether the pace of change was sufficient enough to prevent any further Government intervention.

Transformation Performance

The Committee considered progress made on delivery of the Council's Transformation Programme, including an in-year position. It was outlined that gross 2023/24 transformation savings are made up of both service-led (£3.134 million) and transformation-led savings (£12.537 million). As at period 2, across the total target of £15.671 million, 5.4% had been delivered, 15.6% were on track to be delivered, 28.9% were at amber risk of non-delivery and 50.10% were at red risk of non-delivery. Transformation-led savings were made up of five key programmes: Adults, Children's, Homelessness, Customer Support and Corporate Landlord.

As part of this item, the Committee requested reports on how the overspends within the Children and Adults departments were being addressed given that 50.1% of transformation savings were at risk of non-delivery and these were predominantly within those departments. The Committee expressed concern with the amount of savings at risk of non-delivery and the pressure this was placing on the Council's finances. The Committee also queried how urgent corrective action would be implemented, sought assurance on how the transformation savings could be steered back on course, asked how forecasting could be more accurate, queried the impacts of increased demand, and queried challenges surrounding recruitment and retention.

Members heard that costs had significantly increased due to high demand and the cost of care. Urgent corrective action was being taken to address the shortfall and find savings. This included a mitigation action plan to speed up the delivery of savings and regular involvement of the Transformation Oversight Board to oversee the programmes. As a key workstream within the Committee's remit, Transformation Performance will continue to be reviewed in future Work Programmes, particularly given the importance placed on it within the Council's Improvement Plan.

Performance Management

The Committee was consulted on the new Performance Management Framework (PMF) as an approach to enhance performance monitoring and management. The redevelopment aimed to embed a robust and consistent approach to the use of data,

business intelligence and performance management across the Council, creating a step change in the Council's analytical and performance management offer.

Previously, the Council's approach to performance management focused primarily on the delivery of political manifesto commitments. However, the Council also carries out a wide range of other statutory duties, so the PMF will now report on progress in these areas – which can then be measured both nationally and in relation to other similar Local Authorities. The PMF will have a clear hierarchy of metrics, with reporting to be targeted to the right level at the right time, and monthly and quarterly performance reviews built into the current corporate reporting structures. Members also received an overview of the emerging Office for Local Government (Oflog), which was a new performance body with an aim to provide authoritative and accessible data and analysis. Oflog was established in the summer of 2023 and was in its early stages.

The Committee queried how the performance of the new PMF will be assessed against the previous system to demonstrate better value, and what benchmarking had been done with other core cities to demonstrate that this new framework was appropriate for Nottingham. Members looked forward to reviewing the new PMF once it was fully operational and would work with officers to ascertain how performance data will be assessed by the Council's Scrutiny Committees in the future.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2024-28

The Committee considered the draft EDI Strategy as part of its policy development function and heard that a new EDI Strategy was being produced as part of the Council's continued commitment to tackling inequality and promoting diversity, and to outline the vision for a fully inclusive Council. The draft Strategy sets out four primary strategic outcomes, with focused action plans for implementation to be produced once the Strategy had been finalised. It had been developed to reflect the core values set out in the Council Plan and took into account the views expressed by a wide range of partners and stakeholders.

Although the Committee welcomed the Strategy, a number of queries were raised including action taken to address EDI concerns within the Council, clarification on how stakeholders would be appropriately consulted, ensuring the Council's workforce reflected the diversity of the City, how the success of the Strategy would be measured, and ensuring there are appropriate reporting channels for employees raising concerns. Fifteen recommendations were made to the Executive Member as part of suggested improvements to the Strategy and EDI within the Council. Members requested the Strategy return to the Committee as part of its Work Programme for the 2025/25 municipal year prior to it being formally approved by Executive Board.

The Strategic Council Plan (SCP)

The Committee was updated on the refresh of the SCP, which had been approved at Council on 4 March 2024. The refreshed SCP has been subject to a review of its contents to ensure the statutory and 'business as usual' work remained deliverable

within the available financial envelope. The refresh also included pledges from the Labour Manifesto for 2023's Local Election, which have been assessed for their deliverability within the available finances. This means that the SCP remains fully integrated with the Council's Divisional Business Plans and the MTFP.

The SCP sets out a vision that 'Nottingham is Healthy, Safe, Clean, Green, Proud and Ambitious'. It contains ten outcomes across the three themes of 'People', 'Neighbourhoods' and 'City'. The SCP contains both the statutory duties that the Council discharges and the Administration's 111 pledges made in its Manifesto.

The Committee queried discrepancies and deliverability of the SCP within the context of the 2024/25 budget and MTFP. Members focused on the deliverability of the Plan, ensuring that it reflected the Council's ambitions and the services it was able to offer to residents given its challenging financial situation, and how it would mitigate any impacts on residents as a consequence of service reduction. There were also a number of pledges paused due to a lack of funding and the Committee tested other viable options of achieving those for example through partners such as the City's universities.

5. Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee

The Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee held nine meetings during 2023/24 to review a range of issues, including:

- Recovering and Sustaining General Practice
- Access to NHS Dental Services
- Hospital Development
- Maternity Services
- Mental Healthcare Services
- Ambulance Waiting Times
- NHS Provider Quality Accounts
- Adult Social Care Transformation
- Winter Preparedness
- The Nottingham City Safeguarding Adults Board

Recovering and Sustaining General Practice (GPs)

The Committee scrutinised access to GPs, the impacts on patient experience and outcomes, and the knock-on issues for other areas of the health system. There are national challenges facing primary care, with GPs representing 90% of patient contact with it. There were 166,000 GP appointments in the Nottingham in July 2023, which was approximately 20,000 higher than the same period in the previous year – 47% were same day appointments and 77% were held face-to-face.

The Committee reviewed the work carried out by the NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) to develop its Primary Care Strategy to empower patients to manage their own health, implement modern GP access to provide rapid assessment and response, build capacity and tackle workforce challenges, and cut bureaucracy – particularly across the interface between primary and secondary care.

The Committee noted the work being done by the ICB to ensure good access to GPs, but considered that more engagement was required with both frontline staff and the most vulnerable patients (who would be particularly difficult to reach) for the Primary Care Strategy to be delivered effectively. The Committee recommended that the ICB considered how it could influence the priority that GPs place on ensuring continuity of care by the same care professional when scheduling and booking appointments for patients, and how to facilitate joint working between secondary care providers and GPs to ensure that patients on waiting lists for specialist care were supporting in 'waiting well'.

Access to NHS Dental Services

The Committee scrutinised the ICB's approaches to improving access to dentistry as part of its new remit for the commissioning of local NHS dental services (including primary care dental services, specialist dental services in primary care and dental services provided by hospitals). The Committee also reviewed how this connected with the Council's Public Health activity in delivering a package of interventions at the individual, community and population levels focused on preventing people from

experiencing poor oral health, improving health and wellbeing outcomes and reducing health inequalities.

The Committee examined the significant challenges both locally and nationally in accessing NHS dental services, with a lack of registration of new NHS dentists and many dentists not taking on new NHS patients. It was estimated that around 631,000 appointments had been lost across the Midlands in primary care dentistry as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, and a treatment backlog still remained. Access for children and young people had been particularly badly affected. A Nottinghamshire Oral Health Needs Assessment was being produced to support the development of the current and future ICB commissioning and procurement plans to meet the requirements of the local population, with a risk assessment undertaken of the potential equality impacts going forward, particularly in the context of the most vulnerable people and communities.

The Committee noted that the ICB was working hard to identify local need and increase provision, but that there was still much more to be done for people to be able to access local NHS dental services easily. The Committee recommended that the ICB should establish an indicative timeline for the planned recovery of access to NHS dental services, with indicators to show what recovery would look like and how it would be measured, and what current recovery initiatives had achieved to date. The Committee also recommended that the ICB engaged with the Council to consider where new housing was being developed to inform dental service commissioning and procurement planning in the context of where future population growth within Nottingham was projected to be, and that consideration was given to whether there was the potential or capacity for more dentists to be trained in the local area.

Hospital Development

The Committee had previously reviewed the development of the 'Tomorrow's Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust (NUH)' programme, which is a capital and service change scheme for the City Hospital and the Queen's Medical Centre funded through the national NHS New Hospital Programme. The ICB and NUH attended Committee meetings on six occasions between September 2020 and May 2022 to provide information and receive feedback on the development of the Tomorrow's NUH project, including sharing details of the public and clinical consultation and engagement carried out and how this had informed the development of the proposals. The ICB then completed a Pre-Consultation Business Case in advance of a public consultation on the proposals, which was planned to be carried out over a 12-week period at a minimum with a target of achieving 10,000 responses.

The Committee scrutinised the proposed scope and conduct of the public consultation. The Committee considered that there should be an appropriate 'green' theme delivered as part of the Tomorrow's NUH proposals, and recommended that detailed work must be done to ensure effective consultation with Nottingham communities (particularly those close to the two hospitals), NUH staff and their unions, and people who primarily use public transport to get to hospital. The

Committee considered that it was vital that the consultation was fully inclusive and accessible.

However, in January 2024, the ICB announced that a new period of strategic development would now take place around the Tomorrow's NUH project, so the public consultation process would be delayed. As such, the Committee will review any revisions to the overall project scope, and the intended approach to carrying out the formal public consultation, with the ICB and NUH at such time as the further developed proposals are put forward.

Maternity Services

In December 2020, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) published a report that re-rated the maternity services provided by NUH from 'requires improvement' to 'inadequate'. The CQC also raised concerns about a potential culture of bullying and racial discrimination within the NUH workplace. After receiving a number of reports from NUH, considering the lived experience of a range of parties, engaging with the NHS commissioners and speaking to the union representatives of NUH staff, the Committee wrote to the Secretary of State in March 2022 to raise concerns that NUH had been unable to demonstrate that the necessary improvements were taking place at sufficient pace to provide assurance on the safety and quality of services provided.

In September 2022, the independent Ockenden Maternity Review was established at the national level, in light of the significant concerns raised regarding the quality and safety of maternity services at NUH. The Ockenden Review intends to seek information and recommend actions to help improve the safety, quality and equity of maternity care and the handling of concerns at NUH when they are raised by women and/or their families and staff members. A separate Police inquiry into NUH's maternity services was also begun.

The issues identified by the CQC were significant and reports on NUH maternity services came to ten meetings of the Committee prior to 2023/24. The CQC carried out further inspections in April 2023 and June 2023 and the Committee scrutinised the key findings in relation to maternity services, NUH's leadership, governance and culture, NUH's performance in addressing its 'must-do' and 'should-do' actions, and the intended outcomes of NUH's new Workforce Inclusion Strategy as part of driving improvements within the organisation's leadership and workplace culture.

The Committee recommended that further support was provided to staff to ensure that they had the skills and capacity to engage effectively with patients in writing in relation to any problems or complaints following their discharge from hospital, and that the learning and improvement within maternity services in terms of the duty of candour, addressing complaints, workplace culture, and equality, diversity and inclusion were applied effectively to all other services provided by NUH, as appropriate. The Committee also recommended that the effectiveness of standard operating processes should not be overlooked as part of the wider improvement journey, and that the cultural improvements achieved in engaging internally with staff must also be replicated in the engagement with patients, to ensure that they feel safe and able to speak out if needed.

The Committee reviewed how NUH had carried out a 'People First' review exercise, leading to a new Workforce Inclusion Strategy being adopted on January 2024 as an overarching part of the seven NUH Board priorities for 2024/25. The Strategy incorporated four objectives with 23 high-impact actions for identifying and addressing key barriers to inclusion to ensure that this is integrated within NUH's organisational culture to create a safe and inclusive work environment where every voice is heard, valued and actioned to improve patient care.

The Committee welcomed the Strategy and recommended that it should make clearer reference to the importance of intersectionality and the detail of the particular communities from which NUH staff are drawn, and how overcoming barriers to full inclusivity and belonging would be approached on an appropriately individualised basis, as well as drawing out what inclusivity and belonging means to NUH in terms of gender identity. The Committee also recommend that appropriate positive action should continue to be developed with disadvantaged communities in Nottingham to show that NUH was an accessible and inclusive local employer, with employment opportunities available across a wide range of areas.

Ultimately, the Committee considered that NUH still faced significant challenges, but that it had moved forward towards a good culture of honesty. The Committee's view was that NUH would need to continue the work that has been done over the last year to address the longstanding challenges that remained and implement the improvement activity still required, while the Committee would continue to engage with NUH closely as its transformation journey moves forward to ensure good, safe and accessible services for Nottingham people.

Mental Healthcare Services

The Committee scrutinised the outcomes of the CQC's series of inspections between June and December 2023 of the Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's (NHT's) mental healthcare service provision, as the CQC had received information that raised concerns about the safety and quality of these services. The CQC published its reports in early 2024 alongside a rapid 'Section 48' review that had been commissioned by the Secretary of State, with the ratings levels going down from the 'requires improvement' assessment given previously in 2022 to 'inadequate'. As a result, NHT was placed within Segment 4 of the NHS National Oversight Framework, which is for NHS Trusts where there are very serious and complex issues in relation to service quality and/or finance concerns that require intensive support.

The Committee had engaged with NHT on a number of previous occasions in relation to both its overall service delivery and individual provision, including the transformation work carried out in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic, future mental health service commissioning, psychological services, eating disorder services, the support available to people with co-existing substance misuse and mental health needs and the support offer to people in mental health crisis. A number of the concerns that the Committee had raised with NHT previously were demonstrated in the findings of the CQC reports.

The Committee examined how NHT was working to develop an integrated plan to address the actions and recommendations arising from the CQC reports, and also from associated Prevention of Future Death notices issued by the Coroner and other external reviews. The Committee had substantial concerns about the position at NHT and questioned why it had taken such a long time for it to be recognised that there were significant issues within the organisation, and what elements of the organisational culture had enabled problems to continue for such a period. The Committee considered that ensuring the basic safety of all patients, particularly the most vulnerable, was vital – particularly in the context of supporting them when waiting for assessment and access to services.

The Committee recommended that NHT considered the provision of a local women-only ward for acute mental health emergency care (as the current provision options were either private or out of area), developed effective key performance indicators (fed into by both quantitative data and direct input from patients on their experiences of care, to ensure that the planned improvement outcomes were specific, relevant and measurable), and that feedback from patients on their experiences of care was fully publicised to demonstrate how it has informed improvement planning and delivery.

The Committee also recommended that everything possible was done to ensure that a diverse and representative range of voices of both patients and frontline staff were heard, amplified and listened to as a vital component in improving services through effective co-production, and that past complaints from patients were fully reviewed as part of this process. The Committee considered that an effective communications strategy needed to be delivered in partnership to ensure that people were aware of what was being done by NHT as part of its improvement process, to seek to rebuild trust with both current and past patients and with future service users – particularly in the context of reaching past patients who might be reluctant to re-engage with NHT due to their past experiences.

In terms of specific mental healthcare services, the Committee scrutinised the progress and outcomes of the transformation of NHT's mental health crisis service offer. The NHS Long Term Plan set out an ambition for there to be 24/7, age-appropriate crisis care available via NHS 111. This included a Crisis Resolution Home Treatment service for all adults, integrated crisis provision for children and young people under 18 and their families, the development of local crisis services in addition to those offered within hospital Emergency Departments, a programme for mental health and ambulance services to work together to deliver services, and all general hospitals to have mental health liaison services.

The Committee reviewed how an assessment of NHT crisis services by the ICB identified 19 areas where improvement was needed. NHT commissioned Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to undertake a project that aimed to understand the experiences of people accessing local clinical mental health services and was working together with the ICB to develop an action plan with both service users and partners to address the key recommendations for improvement.

The Committee considered that it was vital to ensure early support to help prevent people from reaching a position of crisis (particularly in the context of preventable

suicide), to enable ease and equality of access to services from wherever a person enters the system, to reduce waiting times and help people to 'wait well', to ensure that transformation is developed through effective co-production with service users, and to ensure proper resourcing of services to meet the required demand.

The Committee recommended that full consideration was given to developing a whole-system approach to the provision of joined-up mental health services, to ensure that a person presenting to one service in the system was not directed to another service simply to then be directed on again. The Committee also recommended that there should be connectivity between different services in delivering the right support centred around the specific needs of the individual, and that NHT worked as closely as possible with other partners both regionally and nationally to generate and apply learning in a systematic and planned way to improve the delivery of effective mental health crisis services for people in Nottingham and improve their care outcomes.

The Committee also scrutinised how psychological therapies were delivered through a stepped care approach, where NHT was responsible for the delivery of Step 4 psychology and psychotherapy interventions for people with severe and recurrent mental health needs and serious mental illness. The Committee considered that there was a clear service gap for people who were in need of longer-term therapy, as the Centre for Trauma, Resilience and Growth that had offered therapies for a period of two years had been closed in May 2023 on the grounds that the services it provided could be moved into the wider Secondary Care Psychological Therapies Pathway for delivery in substantively the same way.

The Committee raised a substantial concern that the longer-term therapeutic support that had been delivered by the Trauma Centre was now not replicated via the thirty sessions available through Step 4. The Committee was also deeply concerned that, if services had been reduced to a significant degree (or even decommissioned), it did not appear to have been consulted by the ICB on this service change, as is required – and that it would raise this matter with the Secretary of State, if necessary.

As a result, the Committee recommended that the service need for longer-term psychological therapy beyond the current Step 4 offer should be assessed and considered for further support provision within existing services where possible, or through additional services commissioned by the ICB. The Committee also recommended that more information was published on the Step 4 service offer and the pathways to it (particularly on NHT's website), and that the ICB gave very careful consideration to how a parity of esteem between the resourcing of physical and mental healthcare needs could be achieved.

Ultimately, the Committee will continue to engage with NHT closely as its significant improvement programme moves forward, and it will be vital to understand how NHT's final Integrated Improvement Plan will be delivered.

Ambulance Waiting Times

The Committee scrutinised the local position in relation to the waiting times for an ambulance, which had seen a significant downturn in performance across the winter

of 2023, and the system-wide approaches that had been put in place by the ICB, the East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EMAS) and NUH to improve performance.

The Committee examined EMAS' response to achieving general service recovery following the Coronavirus pandemic as part of the NHS' national Urgent and Emergency Care Recovery Plan, which included objectives to address the increasing response times to emergency incidents across all ambulance services. EMAS had been asked to produce plans to increase capacity and manage demand to achieve a national emergency incident response time of 30 minutes for 2023/24. The Committee reviewed EMAS' plan, which had been developed around three main focuses to improve the response time to emergency incidents (increasing capacity, managing demand and supporting staff) to deliver an average response time target of 39 minutes 49 seconds for the year. However, a quarter of patients still met with prolonged waits during January 2024 – though the proportion of patient safety incidents and serious incidents remained stable.

The Committee considered the collaborative improvement plan that had been put in place between EMAS and NUH to support ambulance and hospital staff in handing over patients in a timely and effective way, so that ambulances could be freed to respond to new incidents more quickly. NHS England's 'Getting It Right First Time' team had visited NUH and produced a report identifying six areas of focus for improvement, and EMAS, NUH and the ICB were working closely together in order to track and refine the collaborative improvement plan in response.

The Committee welcomed the actions being taken by partners to improve the position, but noted that there was still much more work to be done to deliver an average wait time for an ambulance of under 30 minutes. The Committee recommended that all possible partnership action must be taken to ensure that patients were handed over from ambulances to hospital Accident and Emergency Departments quickly and safely, and then transferred on to the right department within the hospital swiftly and effectively. The Committee also recommend that all appropriate methods were developed to ensure that people who called for an ambulance accessed the right pathway for the appropriate urgent and emergency care for their needs from the triage stage – particularly in the context of someone experiencing mental health crisis.

NHS Provider Quality Accounts

The Committee scrutinised the 2023/24 NHS Quality Accounts, which represent an annual report by healthcare providers on the standard of the services that they provided over the last year. Quality Accounts are published, so they are an important way for local NHS services to highlight their performance and demonstrate the improvements being carried out to the services that they deliver to Nottingham people. The quality of services is assessed by measuring patient safety, the effectiveness of treatments that patients receive and the feedback from patients on their experiences of care.

The Committee received the draft Quality Accounts for NUH, NHT, EMAS and the Nottingham CityCare Partnership Community Interest Company. These were

considered by working groups of Committee members, which met directly with representatives of NHT and NUH in particular to discuss their draft documents.

Although the Committee took assurance from the majority of the Quality Accounts that it reviewed, fundamentally, it was not reassured that NHT's document represented a full and balanced reflection of the significant challenges currently faced by the provider, or that the complete range of patient experiences were reflected. Whilst the Committee recognised that there were examples of good quality care provided by NHT, it had now become widely acknowledged that this was not the universal experience for all patients.

The Committee's ultimate view was that NHT must learn from its past mistakes and, to begin to rebuild trust with patients, it must be honest and transparent about the patient experience. The Committee did not consider that this was properly reflected in the current Quality Account, but it hoped to be able to continue to engage with NHT as it established and developed its transformation journey to ensure the delivery of good, safe and accessible mental healthcare services for Nottingham people.

Adult Social Care Transformation

The Committee scrutinised the ongoing transformation of Adult Social Care services as a key priority for the Council in terms of improving outcomes and delivering savings integral to the Medium-Term Financial Plan. The Committee reviewed the establishment of an online Adult Social Care Portal to act as a quick access point for Social Care advice and support. Online practitioner-facing forms developed as part of the Portal included a Contact and Action Tool, a Strength and Needs Assessment and an Outcome-Focused Care and Support Plan, supported by a tool to provide an Indicative Personal Budget for the Care and Support Plan that was sensitive to the particular care needs.

The Committee also considered the development of the Mental Health Reablement project, which aimed to implement a service that maximised independence, provided more short-term mental health interventions and reduced the need for longer-term care following hospital discharge. The primary objectives were that more citizens with mental health support needs were engaged with and supported with outcome-focussed interventions that delivered financial efficiencies, that more citizens with mental health support needs had strength-based conversations that place the person at the centre of the service to increase choice, control and independence, and that 375 people with mental health needs were engaged with and supported by the Council each year. The Reablement Service was intended to be preventative, with support being offered up to a 12-week period, in advance of any assessment of long-term need being carried out under the Care Act – with the reablement needs of the majority of people to be met within the 12-week period, with only 30% then requiring a Care Act assessment.

The Committee advised that care must be taken to ensure that the proposed 12-week mental health reablement process did not result in unnecessary delays for people with clear, long-term needs from receiving an appropriate Care Act Assessment. The Committee was concerned that ease of access to services

remained an issue and considered that a clear plan of action was required to reduce the current waiting times to reach the Nottingham Health and Care Point.

More broadly, the Committee reviewed the findings of the CQC's pilot assessment of how the Council was meeting its Adult Social Care duties under the Care Act 2014, and scrutinised the work planned to address the overall indicative rating of 'requires improvement'. The CQC inspection focused on the 2022/23 period to a framework that used nine quality statements mapped across four overall themes of 'Working with people', 'Providing support', 'How the Local Authority ensures safety within the system' and 'Leadership'.

The Committee considered the strengths and areas for development within Adult Social Care set out in the CQC report, with areas for improvement including caseload pressures in some teams, confusing or duplicate pathways between some teams and partners, the need to enhance co-production and participation, delays caused by sourcing and availability of suitable accommodation, and the accessibility of information and support for a diverse population. Particular reference was made to how advocacy support could be improved, in addition to access to mental health services. The Committee noted that, nevertheless, the CQC had found that senior staff showed a good awareness of areas that required improvement, and that there was evidence both of progress made to date and plans to achieve further development. However, the CQC considered that there was still work to be done, with this being demonstrated in the mixed feedback from staff and the number of areas identified where transformation work was required.

The Committee sought assurance that work was being developed to move the Council's assessment rating from 'requires improvement' to 'good' in all areas, and that services were fully accessible to the people who needed them. The Committee noted that the results of the CQC inspection would be factored into the development of the Adult Social Care Transformation Single Integrated Delivery Plan (SIDP), and recommended that full consideration was given to how the work with partners across the system could be developed and expanded to ensure that 'every contact counts' for the delivery of Adult Social Care support to vulnerable people at the community level.

The Committee will continue to scrutinise the delivery of transformation within Adult Social Care as it moves forward, particularly through the development of the SIDP.

Winter Preparedness

The Committee scrutinised how lessons learned from the 2022/23 winter period were being used to inform the Winter Plan for 2023/24 and the extent to which services were prepared to manage pressures and respond to need. There are national challenges for winter pressures, including consistently high levels of hospital admissions and demand for social care services. The Committee examined how Adult Social Care worked with the ICB to meet people's care needs at home in winter as much as possible, and to ensure that patients discharged from hospital had appropriate places to go, supported through the Transfer of Care Hub as part of a full system approach to take people from discharge to their preferred care pathway within 24 hours.

The Committee considered how Adult Social Care worked as part of a full system partnership approach to maintaining a good flow into the community from hospital as part of a resilient and responsive process. As part of transformation work within the Council, online projects have been developed as part of a 'reduce, prevent, delay' approach to health and social care intervention. Processes are underway to accredit more homecare providers, with support provided to people being discharged from hospital by booking times for discharge, booking transport and enabling homecare access to their property at the right time.

The Committee considered that the Council and the ICB were taking good steps in partnership to support vulnerable adults during the winter, but advised that careful note should be taken of the feedback from service users on the outcomes they experienced following the changes being made to the processes for the transfer of care.

The Nottingham City Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB)

The Committee scrutinised the work that the SAB had undertaken to safeguard adults in Nottingham through a partnership approach, to what extent it had achieved its Strategic Priorities, and how the experiences and learning arising from 2022/23 influenced the development of the SAB's strategic priorities for 2023/24.

The Committee reviewed the SAB's annual report for 2023/24 to seek assurance that it was discharging its three core duties effectively, being to publish a Strategic Plan to set how had meet its primary objective and what the SAB members did to achieve this, to publish an annual report detailing what the SAB had done during the year to achieve its primary objective and implement its Strategic Plan (and what each SAB member had done to implement it), and the conducting of Safeguarding Adults Reviews.

The Committee welcomed the oversight activity carried out by the SAB, but encouraged it to further develop engagement with under-represented communities and use their feedback to improve outcomes, and strengthen the involvement of service users in safeguarding arrangements. The Committee recommended that close partnership working across the whole system was vital so that victims of domestic abuse did not fall between services. The Committee considered that it should be ensured that the service pathways for support are fully clear to the people who need them, and that all partners are able to signpost people to the right service pathway from wherever in the system they first make contact. The Committee also recommended that all partners across the system should be as consistent and clear as possible in the ways in which they define categories of vulnerability and abuse, so that communities are supported in identifying potential victims and vulnerable people at risk effectively.

6. Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committee

The Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committee held six meetings during 2023/24 to review a range of issues, including:

- The Nottingham Economic Plan for Growth
- The Nottingham Housing Strategy and the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan
- The East Midlands Combined County Authority
- Social Housing
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping
- Asset Rationalisation

The Nottingham Economic Plan for Growth

The Committee reviewed and provided input into the refresh of the Council's Economic Plan for Growth. This Plan followed on from the Post-Covid Recovery Plan and was a requirement of the Council's Improvement and Assurance Board. Most Core Cities have a clear economic growth strategy, so there is a recognised responsibility within the Council to renew the Economic Plan regularly based on the current economic situation faced by the city – particularly in the context of the establishment of East Midlands Combined County Authority.

The draft Plan contained vision statements for how interventions would be delivered in the areas of Infrastructure and Regeneration, Enterprise and Investment, People and Skills, and City Centres and Neighbourhoods. The Committee explored how the draft Plan considered the urban area of Nottingham as a whole, with neighbouring Local Authorities consulted alongside business partners, Nottingham's universities and other identified stakeholders. The Committee reviewed the emphasis of the Plan on growing and improving the economic activities that Nottingham did well while focusing on areas in need of improvement, and its aim to be inclusive and consider the impact upon identified groups and communities.

The Committee welcomed being consulted on the Economic Plan for Growth in its development stage, recommending that the Executive did everything possible to engage all City Councillors in the production of the document so that their detailed knowledge of the needs and opportunities of their individual wards could be taken into account. Following public consultation, the Economic Plan for Growth 2024-30 was adopted in May 2024.

The Nottingham Housing Strategy and the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan (GNSP)

The Committee reviewed and provided input into the development process for both the new Nottingham Housing Strategy and the GNSP for the future delivery of housing across the wider area. The draft GNSP represents a voluntary partnership between the Greater Nottingham Local Authorities and sets out the strategic planning policies for the area in the context of a consistent policy framework established on a common evidence base to meet the fully assessed need for housing and other developments.

The Committee explored how Nottingham's population was projected to increase by over 15,000 during the next 10 years and the Council's target was for the delivery of an additional 1,170 homes annually until 2028. However, the Government also instructed England's 20 largest cities and towns to increase their housing targets by 35% on top of the base housing need calculation, so the Council's latest Housing Needs Assessment had identified a net requirement for over 1,100 additional rented affordable homes to be delivered each year until 2038.

The Committee reviewed how, as a result, a new Housing Strategy for Nottingham was being developed as a partnership document with input from a range of organisations to set out how the Council and its partners could tackle the housing challenges faced in the city, the vision for housing in Nottingham and the priorities for delivering homes and related services. The Committee examined how the Strategy was intended to set out how a framework to underpin the work being undertaken in the housing sector; establish the relevant national, regional and local context and challenges; aid local decision-making founded on robust evidence; target activity and the investment of limited resources; support actions that best meet citizen needs and expectations; and encourage partnership working to address Nottingham's housing issues.

There have been several rounds of consultation on the content of the GNSP over a long period, and the Committee was able to review the position to date ahead of the publication of the draft GNSP for final consultation. The Committee was also able to provide input before the formal public consultation on the draft Nottingham Housing Strategy took place.

The Committee welcomed the development of these two strategic documents to address future housing needs in the city, and considered that the local Housing Strategy should set out a clear definition of what represents affordable housing for Nottingham communities and embed this within the wider strategic planning for the delivery of genuinely affordable homes. The Committee also recommended that effective business cases for the strategic housing developments identified within the GNSP were put in place so that the upfront funding required to commence these projects could be sought from the new East Midlands Combined County Authority as soon as possible.

The East Midlands Combined County Authority (CCA)

The Committee considered the Council's preparedness for engaging effectively with the new CCA ahead of the election the first Mayor in May 2024. Following the Government's publication of the Levelling Up White Paper in February 2022, the Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire County, Derby City, and Derbyshire County Councils agreed to develop a local devolution deal to improve investment in the area, expand local decision-making, improve living standards and deliver better opportunities and outcomes for residents, businesses and communities. As a result, a devolution deal was agreed between the four Councils and the Government in August 2022. The investment package for the deal was worth more than £4 billion, including a £1.14 billion investment fund and a new City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement of £1.5 billion.

The Committee explored how, working closely in partnership with the CCA's constituent Councils, other public service providers and the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire District and Borough Councils to deliver on local priorities, the Mayor and the CCA would focus on the strategic issues that affected the whole region, including transport, carbon net-zero initiatives and housing provision. The Committee reviewed the Council's preparations for the CCA coming into effect, including the key priority areas of housing and land, skills, transport infrastructure and carbon net zero ambitions. An evidence base had been developed for both strategic-level and delivery workstreams, and there was activity underway to establish a regional investment strategy for the CCA.

The Committee considered that it was vital for the Council to do as much as possible to help local people understand the purpose behind the CCA and its importance for both Nottingham and the wider area, and that the Council continued to work to identify the future workforce skills needs in the city to develop a vision for how investment in these at all ages could be supported through the CCA.

Social Housing

The Committee carried out a great deal of work in relation to the Council's provision of Social Housing, in the context of maintenance and repairs, tenant engagement and consumer standards. The new Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 has strengthened the role and rights of tenants in terms of their influence over the services provided by their landlords. The national Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) now also has new powers to inspect all landlords proactively and regularly, and observe both how landlords makes decisions and how they take account of the tenants' perspective as part of this process.

The Committee reviewed how, since the arm's-length Nottingham City Homes (NCH) was brought back in-house in April 2023, the Council had taken on direct responsibility for housing management and maintenance services, as well as operating the tenant and leaseholder involvement function. With the Council now acting as a corporate landlord, the Committee examined how a new Housing Assurance Board (HAB) was being established so that tenants were empowered to have a meaningful influence on Council decision-making within a formal process.

The Committee considered the Council's response to the RSH's new Consumer Standards for all social housing providers, which came into effect from April 2024. Four Standards, alongside further Tenant Satisfaction Measures, will form the basis of the new regulatory regime, which constitutes a stronger and more proactive approach to improving standards in the sector and holding landlords to account for the service that they provide to their tenants. Given that the RSH inspects larger landlords around every four years and would give around six weeks' notice before an inspection, the Committee sought assurance on the Council's preparedness for inspection, where an internal review of the Standards had been undertaken and been used to develop an Action Plan that was being embedded into each relevant Service Plan.

Repairs and housing maintenance are the most important satisfaction measure for tenants, so performance in this area was examined closely by the Committee, which

reviewed how the Council was aiming to invest around £149 million to improve its social housing stock over the next 4 years, with funding for improvements to make homes warmer and more energy-efficient by installing new kitchens and bathrooms, windows, solar panels and external wall insulation. The Committee sought assurance on how the housing maintenance and repairs service was on an improvement journey and, following NCH being brought in-house, how the Council was developing its understanding of the needed processes following its assuming a corporate landlord function.

The Committee was grateful for the wide range of detail provided in relation to the Council's delivery of social housing and its support for tenants, and intends to keep performance in relation to repairs and maintenance under regular review. The Committee recommended that complaints and resolution statistics were fed into the Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Structure at the appropriate point, and that particular consideration was given to how younger and working tenants could be supported in participating effectively within it. The Committee advised that tenants should be able to engage with Housing Patch Managers easily and accessibly, and that the Patch Managers should be trained and supported in delivering the proposed Involvement Structure effectively at the local level.

The Committee recommended that work was carried out as rapidly as possible to ensure that the Council's first inspection assessment rating from the RSH was not adversely affected by 'technical failures' arising from the recent transition for responsibility from NCH, and that investment was made in the development of an enhanced IT system to enable the integrated management of issues raised by Council tenants and the efficient planning of work at their homes.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

The Committee carried out detailed investigations into how the Council responded to its statutory duties in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping, as this was a significant national issue. Specific features of the local housing market, economy and other circumstances had led to the city having a particularly acute problem, so a restructure of the Council's Housing Solutions service was underway as one of the key interventions needed to help address the current need.

The Committee considered the Council's existing Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which was developed in 2019 and was currently in the process of being updated, and how the Strategy draws upon a cross-sector partnership of organisations that have committed to take actions to help prevent and respond to homelessness and its causes. The Committee reviewed how most of the factors leading to increased homelessness often also impact on the number of people rough sleeping, while many people sleeping rough had multiple complex issues and, if housing was provided without appropriate wrap-around support, this would often result in the person sleeping rough again.

The Committee recommended that all possible steps should be taken to engage with both the Home Office and the Probation Service to seek viable advance notice of upcoming evictions and releases of people who could be at risk of homelessness, and that partnership work was progressed with other local Councils both on where

temporary accommodation could be provided effectively and in supporting refugees and asylum seekers to present for housing support within the right Local Authority area. The Committee considered that appropriate steps should be taken to ensure an effective communications campaign at the community level so that people at risk of homelessness were aware of the Housing Solutions support offer, and that all appropriate steps should be taken with partners to ensure the safety of rough sleepers, prioritise support effectively, provide appropriate refuges and combat exploitation.

Asset Rationalisation

The Committee scrutinised the policy, processes and delivery of the Council's Asset Management Programme to identify surplus property assets that could be sold to generate capital receipts, to seek assurance that appropriate assets were being identified for disposal in a way that was timely and transparent.

The Council is a major owner of property assets, which are used to deliver services and support the priorities of the Council Plan. The Committee examined how property assets owned by the Council were used as public resources and how the Council demonstrated a clear benefit to holding them – such as for the direct delivery of services, supporting service delivery, generating a financial return to help fund service delivery or otherwise contribute to the Council's wider economic and strategic objectives. The Committee reviewed how the delivery of capital receipts through property disposals had a direct impact on the Council's cashflow and borrowing requirements and the presumption that, when a property asset became surplus to requirements, it should be disposed of unless there was a strong business case for an alternative use.

The Committee considered the development of the Asset Management Strategy to govern how the Council's significant operational and non-operational buildings would be managed, prioritised for investment or ultimately disposed of if surplus to requirements, and the operation of the interim Asset Disposals Policy to ensure that property decisions were made with clarity, transparency and integrity.

The Committee recommend that it was vital for a formal framework to be completed as soon as possible for considering the balance of community benefit, wider service impact and best value when assessing the potential disposal of a property asset, to inform and support effective decision-making. The Committee considered that a clear, strategic vision for the development opportunities of surplus property assets should be set out so that developers could be engaged with proactively to achieve the best possible returns. The Committee also advised that clear management plans and effective risk assessments should be in place for all void property assets, to reduce the costs incurred during the disposal process as much as possible.

7. Scrutiny Development and the Forward View

The Chairs of the Children and Young People, Communities and Environment, Health and Adult Social Care, and Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committees are also members of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, to seek to ensure that the whole Overview and Scrutiny function delivers a joined-up approach to addressing the major and cross-cutting issues affecting the Council and Nottingham people. Periodic catch-up sessions were held between the Chairs of the five Scrutiny Committees and the Chair of the Audit Committee outside of the formal meetings, to further enhance their visibility of the wider issues. The Scrutiny Committee Chairs also worked to engage with Executive and senior officer colleagues on a regular basis for the purposes of informed horizon scanning.

Starting from early 2024, all of the Scrutiny Committees began to consider what their priority and focus topics could be for the 2024/25 municipal year, producing initial Work Programmes. To support this process, full Action and Recommendation Tracker documents were maintained for each Committee, to help identify and highlight business that Scrutiny would need to focus on, return to or progress further in the future. Appropriate training for new and returning Committee members was also planned to take place from June 2024.

Looking forward, a major focus for all Scrutiny Committees in the 2024/25 municipal year will be to review the delivery and impacts of the extremely challenging 2024/25 Council Budget, and the development of the following 2025/26 Budget. Given the expansion of the Overview and Scrutiny function to constitute five Committees rather than the previous three, Scrutiny is now able to cover a larger field of topics in more detail. As a result, the Committees have been working hard to bring added value to a wider range of issues in the context of how the Council provides its services and the outcomes that they have for Nottingham people – and the Committees will continue to do so during the 2024/25 municipal year and beyond.



Report of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to City Council on the Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 – 2027/28

04 March 2024

Introduction

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee is the Committee responsible for scrutinising finance and is providing its view to City Council ahead of the decision on the budget and setting of Council Tax on 04 March 2024.

As part of its Work Programme for 2023/2024 the Committee has met on three separate occasions to consider the budget. This has included the overall budget strategy and methodology, the proposals that Executive Board agreed to send out for public consultation on 19 December 2023 and in which the Committee responded to it as a formal consultee, and the final budget in which the Executive has put forward to Council for final decision and setting of the Council Tax on 04 March 2024. In addition to this, the Council's services scrutiny committees scrutinised the impacts of the budget proposals on service provisions within their directorates at their meetings in January. Each of those Scrutiny Chairs are a member of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and have thus fed those discussions back to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14 February 2024.

Key Findings and Observations

On 13 September 2023 the Committee met to scrutinise the budget strategy and methodology, including composition and changes, the duties and powers review which looked to establish a legal minimum in which the Council discharged its services, and an overview of the national and economic context in which the Council found itself in. The Committee expressed its concerns with the level of non-delivery of transformation savings and the pressure this was placing on the accounts. It also sought assurance from Corporate Directors about what was being done to address the significant budgetary overspends from the Council's directorates and how officers intend on steering the Council back on a sound financial footing. The Committee noted the duties and powers review underway which looked to assess where the Council has a legal obligation to deliver a function, and where it can exercise functions on a discretionary basis in all budget areas to establish a legal minimum of service provisions and where extensive savings could be found. At the time of this meeting there was a projected net overspend of £25.894 million.

At its meeting on 17 January 2024 the Committee considered the budget proposals which Executive Board had agreed to send out for public consultation. The Corporate Scrutiny Committee responded to the budget as a formal consultee. At its meeting on 14 February the Committee considered the final budget in which was proposed to be put forward to Council for final decision and setting of the Council Tax on 04 March 2024.

The Committee expressed concern with the public consultation, specifically how accessible and representative it was. Members agreed that it should have been available in different languages, and that proposals should have been explained more clearly, particularly the nature and impact of those proposals. The Committee highlighted the open letter submitted to the Council which raised concerns about this. The Committee recommended that the Council listened to those concerns and ensured that the design-phase consultations which sought to ascertain views on the delivery of the savings following approval were as broad and as accessible as possible. It further recommended that a 'lessons learnt' document is produced and that the Committee is consulted ahead of the 2025/26 budget consultation. The Committee requested to view a more detailed demographic breakdown of those who responded to the consultation. It was noted that some proposals had changed as a result of the consultation, predominately proposals affecting public transport.

The Committee did not have sight of all the Equality Impact Assessment's (EIA's) and therefore were unable to give assurance that the proposals are not having an impact on equalities. Some EIA's had been provided to the individual services committees, however there were a number that were yet to be published. A number of the services Committee's requested that these were published as soon as possible.

The Committee sought assurance on the deliverability of the proposed savings and that a balanced budget for 2024/25 could be delivered in the context that the significant savings proposed would still leave a substantial budget gap. It was explained that the full 'Duties and Powers' approach taken had generated budget proposals that had been challenged robustly to ensure that they are credible, while also taking into account the cost of investment needs and delivery requirements. A number of proposals highlighted during the individual scrutiny committee meetings were considered high risk and queries were raised as to the practicalities of their deliverability. The S151 Officer explained that in accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 he must report to Council on the robustness of the estimates and in part has relied on the professional assessments of the Corporate Leadership Team who have identified savings within their directorates. Due diligence processes will be carried out on a continual basis to identify any proposals at risk of not being deliverable and appropriate mitigation measures will be taken.

The Committee asked what additional spending controls would be in place for 2024/25, and how emerging financial pressures would be addressed. It was set out that there would be direct officer accountability within directorates for the delivery of approved savings. The Council's financial resilience is dependent on its overarching reserves, so work has been carried out to ensure that a robust level of reserves is in place. Currently, the Council has very limited financial resilience for an organisation of its size, so it is unlikely to be able to deploy further resources from reserves for the foreseeable future. In addition, the 'Duties and Powers' approach taken to make savings now will mean that there will be a lesser ability to make similar savings in the future, as service delivery will already have been moved back towards the statutory minimum level – placing a reliance on transformation work to create further efficiencies.

The Committee expressed concern that the 2023/24 budget had developed a significant gap and queried whether there was confidence in the current 2024/25 budget forecasts. It was

set out that budget forecasting is a challenging process and that a number of emerging significant material variations had been experienced within the 2023/24 budget. A great deal of work has been carried out to manage cost growth and ensure that increasing and complex needs for statutory services are accounted for, and that there is appropriate investment in place for the delivery of a balanced budget in the following year. All possible planning will be done to ensure that the 2024/25 budget can respond effectively to unforeseen material variations.

As of February 2024, a budget gap of £41 million remained despite the savings proposed. Subsequently, an application of £65 million had been made to the Government for Exceptional Financial Supports (EFS) which would enable the Council to capitalise revenue costs and fund them through asset sales or prudential borrowing. The Committee asked when a decision would be made on the agreement of EFS, and whether there was a risk of EFS not being granted. It was reported that a decision is expected during the week of 26 February, following the completion of a full assessment by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). A great deal of work has been carried out with DLUHC to ensure that the best case has been put forward, but consideration has been given to every possible contingency. The Committee queried whether any EFS agreed could require the raising of Council Tax above the normal maximum threshold. It was reported that this has been discussed with the DLUHC. Ultimately, if the Government agrees the establishment of EFS, it could stipulate that a proportion of the funding is raised through a greater than normal increase in Council Tax. It was established that support would remain available to residents through the Council Tax support scheme.

The Committee raised concerns that the savings proposed in discretionary services would increase costs and pressures within statutory services. It was explained that full risk assessments have been carried out for each proposal and where it is identified that a short-term saving would result in a long-term cost, proposals are reviewed and changed. The MTFP has been developed to seek to manage likely service demand growth going forward. Ultimately, the Council must work to deliver a balanced budget in the immediate context and then plan a clear, self-directed transformation and recovery process for sustainable service delivery in the future on the basis of the resources available – working in close cooperation with communities, stakeholders and partners to ensure that the best outcomes possible are achieved for the most vulnerable people.

Summary

The Committee appreciates the Council's unprecedented financial challenges and notes the instructions from the Improvement and Assurance Board (IAB) which stipulate the Council must find the maximum level of savings that Corporate Directors believe can be delivered. It does, however, have concerns in regards to the deliverability of the proposed budget savings and the significant impact these will have on the City's residents.

The Committee will continue to undertake budget scrutiny during the course of the next municipal year which may include scrutiny of the delivery plans for the proposed savings, alongside budget monitoring during the year.

I have provided links to the Minutes of the Committee's meetings as outlined within this report which provide a summary of the meetings and a synopsis of the views expressed.

13 September 2023 - <http://resmodw2k121/documents/g10271/Printed%20minutes%2013th-Sep-2023%2010.00%20Corporate%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

17 January 2024 - <http://resmodw2k121/documents/g10411/Printed%20minutes%2017th-Jan-2024%2009.30%20Corporate%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

14 February 2024 - [http://resmodw2k121/documents/g10345/Printed%20minutes%2014th-Feb-2024%2009.30%20Corporate%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1&\\$LO\\$=1](http://resmodw2k121/documents/g10345/Printed%20minutes%2014th-Feb-2024%2009.30%20Corporate%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1&LO=1)

Councillor Leslie Ayoola

Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Members of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee:

Councillor Devontay Okure (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Sam Harris (Chair of the Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committee)

Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora

Councillor Imran Jalil (Chair of the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Committee)

Councillor Georgia Power (Chair of Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee)

Councillor Andrew Rule

Councillor Naim Salim (Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee)