

Nottingham City Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 9 March 2022 from 2.02 pm - 3.28 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Anne Peach (Chair)
Councillor Georgia Power (Vice Chair)
Councillor Carole McCulloch (Vice Chair)
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor Jane Lakey
Councillor Toby Neal
Councillor Angharad Roberts
Councillor Andrew Rule

Absent

Councillor Corall Jenkins
Councillor Sajid Mohammed
Councillor Audra Wynter

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Beth Brown - Head of Legal and Governance Services -
Emma Powley - Governance Officer
Councillor Linda Woodings - Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Heritage

60 Apologies for absence

Councillor Audra Wynter (Other Council Business)
Councillor Corral Jenkins
Councillor Sajid Mohammed

61 Declarations of interests

None

62 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2022, were agreed as a true record.

63 Together for Nottingham Plan - Progress update by the Leader

Due to other Council Business, the Leader and the Portfolio Holder scheduled to update the Committee on the 'Together for Nottingham Plan' were unable to attend. The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Heritage attended as their representative.

Councillor Linda Woodings, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Heritage updated the Committee on the progress of the Together for Nottingham Plan (TfNP). The following information was highlighted:

- a) The Together for Nottingham plan acknowledges that a well-managed capital programme is a critical contributor to the overall financial recovery of the City Council and recommends a review of the capital programme which will look to stabilise the current programme and put it on a sustainable footing for the longer term. Development of an effective Capital Strategy and a strengthened governance and control framework supports the Council in achieving this. Implementation of the Plan is a key priority of the Council and the Capital Strategy forms a key component part.
- b) The Medium Term Financial Plan had been constructed to align with the City Council priorities as set out in the Together for Nottingham Plan and had been approved at Council meeting as part of the budget on the 7 March 2022.
- c) A budget consultation had been undertaken, the outcome of which had led to changes in the proposed budget. This included the retention of an additional children's centre, retention of posts in the Youth and Play Services and a commitment to keep the Greyhound Street public toilets free of charge.
- d) Work continued with the Companies Governance work-stream and whilst there was not the capacity of time to review all of the companies within a 6 month period, work on the Shareholder unit had been designed to ensure that best practice is embedded into each company.
- e) The sale of assets had generated capital receipts and had contributed to the additional funding available to Nottingham City Council.
- f) As part of the Transformation Programme, business cases had been developed and approved by the Transformation Board and covered the following areas:
 - Adult Social Care
 - Children's Services
 - Procurement
 - Customer First
 - Business Support

In response to questions asked, the following information was noted:

- g) The latest report from the Improvement and Assurance Board had just been made public (on 9 March 2022) and covered the period before November 2021. Since then significant progress had been made to improve the council's financial position both in the short and longer term.
- h) In order to anticipate increased inflation rates, contingency monies had been set aside. This would also assist in covering increases in costs and labour and

emphasis would be placed on project management to ensure projects came in on budget, whilst being controlled and monitored closely and work would be carried out with procurement to ensure that the Council were getting Value for Money (VfM).

- i) An internal investigation into the mismanagement of the HRA funding would soon be completed but the timings of the recommendations from CIPFA on the erroneous transactions.
- j) Reviews of current approved schemes would not be undertaken as contracts had already been entered into; for the schemes already in place, there was some contingency money, should costs increase. However, the calculation of contingency funding would have to be future proofed.
- k) The Transformation Programme had yet to be finalised but once in place, it would be regularly monitored, and it had been based on being financially sustainable. Updates would be presented to the Transformation Board including progress reported from Corporate Directors and Portfolio Holders which would provide a level of performance monitoring. Should inflationary pressures significantly change and additional funding was requested, Capital Board would have to be informed and consideration be given.

The Chair thanked the Portfolio Holder for attending the meeting and for providing the verbal update.

64 Scrutiny Action Plan Update

Beth Brown, Head of Legal and Governance updated the Committee on the progress against the Scrutiny Action Plan, including the completion of the Scrutiny Protocol.

Subject to minor amendments to the Protocol the Committee unanimously approved adoption of the protocol.

The following information was noted:

- a) Good progress had been made against the action plan
- b) A business case for scrutiny officer support was being developed but had been delayed, due, in part, to the significant structural reviews

The Committee thanked the Head of Legal and Governance for her hard work and for the Scrutiny Training workshops that were being held.

65 2022/23 Work Programme Development

Beth Brown, Head of Legal and Governance updated the Committee on her report which outlined a proposed approach to support the Committee's discussions on their work programme for the next Municipal Year.

The following information was noted:

- a) The work programme was an indicative guide which the Committee could use for guidance purposes and should be viewed as a fluid document and change as and when priorities of scrutiny emerge.
- b) There may be a need to split the list of items and differentiate between decisions effecting policy and strategy and organisational actions and decisions.
- c) The Committee discussed their remit in scrutinising the impact that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) having been incorrectly credited the General Fund had impacted residents. It was noted that this could only be done once the investigation had been completed and reported on to identify whether it should be considered by the Audit Committee, Scrutiny or both Committees
- d) The Committee requested bi-monthly updates from the Leader on the Together for Nottingham Plan.

The Committee agreed items listed to be included on the Committee's 2022/23 work programme and delegated to the Head of Legal and Governance the timetabling for the items identified on the list

66 Work Programme

Beth Brown, Head of Legal and Governance Services presented the Committee's work programme for the 2021/22 municipal year. The following points were discussed

- a) The Committee requested that they receive updates from the Leader on the Together for Nottingham Plan bi-monthly.
- b) Delegated to the Head of Legal and Governance Service to check time and availability to include the following on the agenda for the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 6 April 2022, in a change to the items list on the work plan:
 - i) The Consultation process of the Library Service redesign proposals
 - ii) Houses of Multiple Occupation and selective licensing