

Nottingham City Council

Companies Governance Executive Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held at Loxley House, Nottingham on 22 February 2022
from 3.19 pm - 4.44 pm**

Membership

Present

Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
Councillor Neghat Khan
Councillor Sam Webster
Councillor Linda Woodings

Absent

Councillor Sally Longford (Vice Chair)

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

David Astill	- Managing Director, NCT
Richard Beckett	- Head of Major Projects
Ian Edward	- Strategic Advisor for Companies
Clive Heaphy	- Interim Corporate Director for Finance and Resources
Rob Hicklin	- Finance Director, NCT
Phil Wye	- Governance Officer

Call-in

These minutes do not contain any decisions eligible for call-in.

60 Apologies for absence

Councillor Sally Longford – personal reasons

61 Declarations of interest

None.

62 Minutes

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2022 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

63 Work Programme

The Committee noted the refreshed work plan

64 Council owned company discussion - Nottingham City Transport

This item does not contain any decisions that are eligible for call-in.

The Committee received a presentation by David Astill, Managing Director at Nottingham City Transport (NCT) and Rob Hicklin, Finance Director, NCT, which highlighted the following:

- (a) NCT's Board is composed of 3 executive members, 4 non-executive Councillor members, and 2 other non-executive members. It meets 5 times a year to monitor financial and operational performance;
- (b) the last 2 years have been challenging for NCT due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In March 2020 the majority of staff were furloughed and a skeleton service was run, but a near full service has been run since July 2020. The industry was financed by the government through grants and payments;
- (c) bus patronage is returning at about the average for the UK at 70-80% of 2019 levels, and cash flow is reasonably stable. The ability to return to profitability will depend on these levels continuing to increase;
- (d) there are plans in place to convert all single decker buses to electric via ZEBRA funding in the next 2 to 3 years. Further bio-gas double decker buses will also be introduced, although the preference will be for electric vehicles in future;
- (e) the most important expectation from customers is buses turning up on time and running frequently, followed by friendly drivers. Over the past 8 years 3 NCT drivers have been recognised as Bus Driver of the Year;
- (f) non-cash payment is encouraged, and two thirds of all transactions are now made using smartcards or bank cards and 50% of day tickets are now purchased through the mobile app;
- (g) social distancing and masks are still encouraged on NCT buses, as well as encouraging passengers to keep the windows open. To help recovery, funding may be available from the government through the Bus Improvement Plan, and this will be known in the next few weeks.

During discussion and in response to questions from the Committee, the following points were raised:

- (h) it is possible that some former passengers are reluctant to return to bus travel due to other passengers not wearing masks and following guidelines, however most current passengers have reported that they feel safe;
- (i) if passenger numbers do not fully return and additional funding is not made available, then cuts to services may be considered, dependent on patronage. Some routes already have a reduced frequency compared to before the pandemic.

Resolved to record the thanks of the Committee to Mr Astill and Mr Hicklin for their attendance and informative presentation.

65 Exclusion of the public

The Committee agreed to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining items in accordance with Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, as the sensitive nature of the business affairs under consideration could, if made public, prejudice the ability of the companies concerned to operate effectively in a competitive market.

66 Council owned company discussion - Nottingham City Transport

This item does not contain any decisions that are eligible for call-in.

The Committee received a presentation by David Astill, Managing Director at Nottingham City Transport and Rob Hicklin, Finance Director, Nottingham City Transport.

67 Council owned companies - financial update

This item does not contain any decisions that are eligible for call-in.

Ian Edward, Strategic Advisor for Companies, presented the report, updating the Committee on the latest position in respect of Council owned companies.

68 Exempt minutes

The Committee agreed the exempt minutes of the last meeting held on 18 January 2022 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.