

Nottingham City Council Executive Board

Minutes of the meeting held in the Ground Floor Committee Room, Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on Tuesday 21 June 2022 from 2:01pm to 2:23pm

Membership

Present

Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
Councillor Adele Williams (Vice Chair)
Councillor Cheryl Barnard
Councillor Neghat Khan
Councillor Sally Longford
Councillor Toby Neal
Councillor Linda Woodings
Councillor Audra Wynter

Absent

Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis
Councillor Rebecca Langton

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Kevin Clarke

Adrian Mann - Governance Officer
Sajeeda Rose - Corporate Director for Growth and City Development
Catherine Underwood - Corporate Director for People

Call-in

Unless stated otherwise, all decisions made by the Executive Board are subject to call-in. The last date for call-in is **Thursday 30 June 2022**. Decisions cannot be implemented until the next working day following this date.

11 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis - unwell
Councillor Rebecca Langton - maternity leave
Councillor Andrew Rule - on leave

Mel Barratt - Chief Executive
Clive Heaphy - Interim Corporate Director for Finance and Resources
Frank Jordan - Corporate Director for Resident Services
Malcolm Townroe - Director for Legal and Governance

12 Declarations of Interests

None.

13 Minutes

The Board confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2022 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

14 Rent Policy for Housing Revenue Account Properties

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Human Resources presented a report on the introduction of a written Rent Policy for Housing Revenue Account properties. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the Regulator of Social Housing has set out a framework to ensure that social landlords have sound governance and financial practices in place, and that they manage their homes effectively. Financial and governance arrangements are in place for Local Authority landlords already but, from April 2020, the framework's Rent Standard became applicable to Local Authorities and housing associations;
- (b) as a result, the Council has drawn up its usual practice into a written Rent Policy, to demonstrate to tenants and the Regulator how rents are set and annual increases applied, in compliance with the Rent Standard. The production of the Policy has been informed by proper engagement with tenants and wider stakeholders, as part of the drafting process.

Resolved:

- (1) to approve and adopt the Housing Revenue Account Rent Policy;**
- (2) to note that the Policy will be kept under regular review in relation to any new national directives and changes in the Council's approach, and to delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Growth and City Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Human Resources, to amend and update the Policy as appropriate.**

- **Reasons for the decision**

The Government has rules about how rents for social housing should be set and has provided these in a policy statement on rents for social housing. The principles have been incorporated into the Regulator of Social Housing's Rent Standard. As a stockholding Local Authority, it is important that the Council sets out how it will comply with the requirements of the policy statement and the Rent Standard in the form of a written Rent Policy. This will bring greater transparency to the rent-setting processes and will benefit tenants by showing how their rents have been calculated, and any increases applied.

- **Other options considered**

To not have a written Rent Policy: this option is rejected as, although it is not a statutory requirement to have a written rent policy, it is good practice to do so. Not having a written policy risks inconsistency of approach and a lack of transparency, to which rent payers are entitled. Furthermore, the Social Housing White Paper has made clear that the Government intends to bring much more robust regulation and scrutiny to the sector, including inspections. One of the fundamental ways of assessing landlords will be via the regulatory standards. Demonstrating clear compliance with the Rent Standard is, therefore, essential preparation for this.

15 Nottingham Youth Employment Joint Strategy

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools presented a report on the implementation of a joint Youth Employment Strategy for Nottingham, to increase employment, improve skills attainment and create better futures for young people. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the Youth Employment Strategy has been developed in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to address structural inequalities preventing young people from developing their full career potential, to help more young people into work, and to provide more training opportunities for young people under the age of 16. The Strategy fits within the Council's wider context of supporting economic recovery in the city following the Coronavirus pandemic, during which young people were impacted significantly. It also drives the ambitions of the Council Plan to improve employment generally through the provision of good, sustainable jobs with a positive future;
- (b) work is underway with both the DWP and employers to ensure the delivery of inclusive employment pathways. Targeted engagement will be carried out with underrepresented young people (including those with protected characteristics, care leavers and those within the Youth Justice System) to help combat inequality, reduce barriers and maximise employment opportunities. A series of robust key performance indicators are in place, to monitor progress and the effectiveness of delivery.

Resolved to endorse Nottingham City Council's and the Department for Work and Pensions' joint Youth Employment Strategy for Nottingham.

- **Reasons for the decision**

The joint Youth Employment Strategy is intended to address systemic failures in Nottingham's youth employment system, bringing together policy, expertise and resource to tackle structural inequalities that prevent underrepresented young people aged between 16 and 24 from achieving their career potential. Young people, especially those who have left education recently, have been hardest-hit by the economic impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. They are more likely to have lost their jobs and experience long-term wage scarring, with the economic slowdown and sectoral disruption meaning that there are fewer opportunities for them to find meaningful and sustainable work. Coronavirus has also deepened existing inequalities for young people, particularly those with protected characteristics.

- **Other options considered**

To not deliver the joint Youth Employment Strategy: this option is rejected as young people in the city would otherwise not have the opportunity to benefit from much-needed employment support following the Coronavirus pandemic.

16 School Capital Maintenance Grant Allocations 2022-2023

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools presented a report on the annual Capital Maintenance Grant allocation from the Department for Education

(DfE) for 2022/23, to improve the condition of school buildings maintained by the Council. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the Capital Maintenance Grant allocation for 2022/23 will be prioritised to a number of school sites to address any building health and safety issues that are likely to impact on children and staff, ensure that school buildings are structurally sound and can be safely evacuated in the event of an emergency, and safeguard pupils within the school site. It will also be used to address any building condition issues that are likely to impact on the operation of the schools, to ensure that the buildings are warm and dry, and so mitigate against the potential for school building closure due to maintenance problems;
- (b) the Board noted that, ultimately, the overall repair requirements for schools in the city are greater than the funding available currently, so it is very positive that this important work can be carried out to address the priority maintenance needs.

Resolved:

- (1) to accept the Capital Maintenance Grant of £2,679,416 for 2022/23 from the Department for Education, and to approve the five schemes already prioritised using the draft strategy document as set out in the report to the meeting of the Executive Board on 21 December 2021;**
 - (2) to approve a Health and Safety Contingency of £270,000, and to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of People to approve and authorise how the contingency is allocated in accordance with the criteria as set out in the report to the meeting of the Executive Board on 21 December 2021;**
 - (3) to authorise the procurement of any necessary contracts to carry out the programme of schemes for 2022/23, and to delegate authority to the Corporate Director for People to award any such procured contracts;**
 - (4) to approve a payment of up to £150,000 from the Building Schools for the Future Lifecycle Reserve Fund (BSF Fund) to Rosehill Special School, to undertake condition and maintenance works to the school building;**
 - (5) to approve a payment of up to £500,000 from the BSF Fund to Ellis Guildford School, to undertake condition and maintenance works to the school building;**
 - (6) to delegate authority to the Corporate Director for People to enter into the necessary documentation and make any necessary payments in relation to changing the current contractual arrangement for the BSF Fund in relation to the Ellis Guildford Academy.**
- **Reasons for the decision**

The Council receives an annual capital grant from the DfE to address the priority condition and maintenance issues at city schools. The grant for 2022/23 has been received for the value of £2,679,416, and five projects have been prioritised. In addition to these schemes, a contingency allocation of £270,000 has been identified

to address any urgent Health and Safety schemes that may arise and need addressing in 2022/23.

The Building Schools for the Future Lifecycle Reserve Fund (BSF Fund), which is ring-fenced for named schools, was established to ensure that schools that are not funded via a Public Finance Initiative have sufficient funding to be maintained over a 25-year period. Where schools converted into academies prior to the BSF Fund period ending, the maintenance funding and responsibility moved to the academy. In the case of Ellis Guildford School, however, this did not occur, and the BSF Fund remained with the Council. Currently, consultations are ongoing with the Academy Trust to discuss whether the Council should still hold the reserve on the school's behalf, or transfer it to the Trust.

- **Other options considered**

To combine the 2022/23 Schools Capital Maintenance Grant with the Basic Need funding, to address the shortfall of places across the city: this option is rejected as it could leave schools at risk of temporary closure due to health and safety or condition issues. It could also mean that school buildings continue to deteriorate and may be subject to forced closure whilst emergency repairs are carried out.

To do nothing with the BSF Fund in regard to the Rosehill and Ellis Guildford Schools: this option is rejected as, whilst this would retain the funding within the BSF Fund, it would not support the maintenance of the schools as a positive environment for education and learning.

17 Receipt of Funding for the Construction of High-Quality Cycling and Walking Infrastructure

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport and Parks presented a report on the allocation of external grant funding for the delivery of high-quality infrastructure to enable and encourage more walking and cycling journeys in the city. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the Council has successfully secured over £3.3 million of external grant funding directly from the Department for Transport (DfT) through a competitive bidding process, and via the sustainable transport charity, Sustrans. The three schemes to be delivered with this funding represent direct investment in communities, for all ages. They will support existing programmes and form part of meeting the wider strategic priorities in relation to promoting walking and cycling, as part of the Council's ambition to take the lead in sustainable transport and making the city a good place to live;
- (b) the Board considered that the close work with Sustrans to achieve a greener environment within the city is very positive. The reduction of the number of cars in communities will make them safer and healthier, combining well with the Council's new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. It is important that connectivity across Nottingham is being further enhanced through the provision of more safe cycle routes that people are confident to use for both commuting and leisure purposes. The active travel network is particularly valuable to young people, who are less likely to own a private car;

- (c) the Board offered its specific recognition and thanks to all officers involved for their work in this area, as they have been extremely successful in securing the funding required for these projects through competitive bidding processes.

Resolved:

- (1) to accept the Active Travel Fund allocation of £2,200,000 from the Department of Transport (DfT), to deliver a segregated cycling corridor and associated pedestrian improvements along St Ann’s Well Road;**
- (2) to accept the DfT grant funding from Sustrans of £1,103,199, to deliver walking and cycling improvements on Lincoln Street, Basford and the Beechdale Road / Ring Road junction;**
- (3) to approve the commencement of a consultation process with residents, ward councillors and the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport and Parks to inform the detailed design of the schemes;**
- (4) to note the requirement to work with Active Travel England on scheme design and delivery, which is a condition of the grant funding.**

• **Reasons for the decision**

Delivering high-quality, sustainable, green transport will enable Nottingham to become a resilient city that is able to cope with and tackle climate change. By improving the liveability of local neighbourhoods and creating healthier streets that are co-designed with communities, residents will benefit from a smarter, cleaner, better-connected and forward-looking transport system, all designed to make Nottingham a better place to live, work, play and invest. To support this, the Council has secured over £3.3 million of external grant funding from the DfT and via the sustainable transport charity, Sustrans. This capital funding to be spent on the delivery of high-quality infrastructure conforming to the latest design standards along the St Ann’s Well Road corridor; Lincoln Street, Basford; and the Beechdale Road / Ring Road junction, which will enable and encourage more walking and cycling journeys.

• **Other options considered**

To not accept the DfT funding: the Council was offered an opportunity to bid for funding and has worked with the DfT to agree a scheme. The scheme put forward has support from an initial public consultation and it forms part of the strategic cycle network identified for improvement. The Council has a strong reputation for transport scheme delivery and by entering into this agreement it will open up further opportunities for funding, as indicated in the grant letter. Not accepting the grant would put future funding to deliver cycling and walking schemes at risk, so this option is rejected.

To not accept the Sustrans funding: the Council has two schemes that form part of the strategic cycle network, where one is ready to construct with the funding that has been offered and the other is in the process of being designed. Not accepting the

funding would mean that investment would need to be sought from an alternative source to implement the scheme, or the scheme does not go ahead. This would damage the Council's reputation for delivery with Sustrans and risk losing potential funding opportunities from it in the future, so this option is rejected.

18 Enhanced Partnership Scheme for Buses and Receipt of Funding from the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas Fund

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport and Parks presented a report on the funding received from the Department for Transport's (DfT) Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) Fund for the delivery of electric buses, and the implementation of the Greater Nottingham Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme and Bus Service Improvement Plan. The following points were discussed:

- (a) Nottingham's bus network is a popular service that works well together with the tram system. The ZEBRA funding from the DfT will be used to deliver the modernisation and electrification of Nottingham City Transport's Trent Bridge garage, and support the roll-out of 78 new electric buses, beginning the transition of the commercial bus network to zero emissions. This will contribute to the Council's wider commitment of delivering a sustainable and effective active travel network for everyone, reducing car usage in the city. It will also help to achieve air quality objectives and reduce carbon dioxide emissions (in line with the Council's Carbon Neutral by 2028 ambitions), while decreasing the noise and vibrations made by buses to ensure greener and healthier communities;
- (b) a Bus Service Improvement Plan is in the process of being developed. Alongside this, a Greater Nottingham Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme has been produced as a legal agreement between the Council and bus operators to set out and monitor standards of service, vehicle emissions and ticketing acceptance requirements, and to support the collective achievement of targets around improving the travel experience for passengers. The Scheme includes a Passenger Charter that outlines what all passengers can expect from bus services within the partnership area.

Resolved:

- (1) to accept £15.2 million from the Department for Transport's (DfT) Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) Fund;**
- (2) to award Nottingham City Transport (NCT) the £15.2 million grant to deliver the project submitted to and approved by the DfT in the full business case, and to enter into a grant agreement with NCT to transfer the funding;**
- (3) to approve the use of the Council's Procurement resource to undertake or support NCT's purchase of ZEBRA-funded electric buses and associated infrastructure, as deemed appropriate;**
- (4) to delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Growth and City Development to implement the Greater Nottingham Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme for buses.**

- **Reasons for the decision**

Delivering high-quality, sustainable, green transport will enable Nottingham to become a resilient city that is able to cope with and tackle climate change. By improving the liveability of local neighbourhoods and creating healthier streets that are co-designed with communities, residents will benefit from a smarter, cleaner, better-connected and forward-looking transport system, all designed to make Nottingham a better place to live, work, play and invest. To support this, the delivery of ZEBRA, the Bus Service Improvement Plan and the Greater Nottingham Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme are critical strands in achieving the Council's Carbon Neutral 2028 ambitions, 'Keeping Nottingham Moving' and supporting the recovery of the bus network following the Coronavirus pandemic.

- **Other options considered**

To not accept the ZEBRA grant award and not implementing the Greater Nottingham Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme: this option is rejected as the funding awards are critical to improving and decarbonising bus infrastructure locally whilst supporting the recovery of the bus network following the Coronavirus pandemic. Failure to implement the Scheme would mean that the Council would no longer be eligible for discretionary bus funding, going forward.