

Nottingham City Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Loxley House on 7 September 2022 from
2.03 pm - 4.34 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Samuel Gardiner (Chair)
Councillor Carole McCulloch (Vice Chair)
Councillor Merlita Bryan
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora
Councillor Jane Lakey
Councillor Sajid Mohammed
Councillor Anne Peach
Councillor Angharad Roberts
Councillor Andrew Rule

Absent

Councillor Georgia Power
Councillor Corall Jenkins
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Neghat Khan - Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods, Safety and Inclusion
Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis - Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Planning
Councillor Sally Longford - Portfolio Holder for Energy, Environment and Waste Services
Andrew Errington - Director of Community Protection
Elaine Fox - Senior Policy and Performance Officer
Frank Jordan - Corporate Director for Residents Services
Mary Lester - Interim Director of Neighbourhood Services
Laura Wilson - Senior Governance Officer
Kate Morris - Governance Officer

22 Apologies for absence

Councillor Coral Jenkins - Work Commitments
Councillor Gul Khan - Leave
Councillor Georgia Power - Personal Reasons

23 Declarations of interests

None

24 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 3 August 2022 were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

25 Council Plan Performance – Resident Services

The Chair invited the Portfolio Holders to update the Committee on the performance against the Council Plan from their Portfolios that fall under the Resident Services Directorate.

Councillor Sally Longford, Portfolio Holder for Energy, Environment and Waste Services presented her performance information highlighting the following points:

- (a) The first objective highlighted in the presentation is improving air by cutting Nitrogen Dioxide and particulate pollution by 20%. This is currently rated amber and has an expected outcome rating of amber. A lot of progress has been made with electrification of the fleet, the introduction of electric taxis, increasing the number of charging points across the city and the electric van scheme. During the pandemic and the national lockdowns the air quality saw a large improvement, due to reduced movement of people, however as the lockdown restrictions were lifted the numbers rebounded somewhat;
- (b) There is a concern that the particulate level will increase significantly over winter as people move to burning solid fuels as a result of the rise in energy bills which will increase the levels of both Nitrogen Dioxide and particulates;
- (c) The second objective highlighted, aiming to be the cleanest big city in England and keep neighbourhoods as clean as the city centre is currently green, but the forecast is amber. The measures currently used are no longer being reported by other big cities so direct comparison is no longer possible. Other measures are being considered to help measure this objective going forward;
- (d) The next objective, reducing fly tipping by investigating and finding more fly tippers is currently rated red and is expected to be amber. Fly tipping has always been a challenge, however the over 7,000 clean champions across the city and a real sense of community engagement have made a big impact in neighbourhoods.
- (e) The Portfolio Holder thanked the Clean Champions for their hard work and dedication to the voluntary work they do throughout the year. The Committee echoed her thanks and appreciation for the work the Clean Champions do.
- (f) There is a dedicated graffiti task force that meets regularly to share intelligence around tagging issues. Street scene workers now carry graffiti removing wipes so that as they empty street bins small tags can be removed quickly. CPO's also carry the wipes and can directly report larger issues ensuring offensive graffiti is dealt with quickly and efficiently;
- (g) From the objective rated green currently and expected to stay green hackney carriages are now LEVC vehicles along with 10 Nissan Dynamos, a lower cost option no longer in production. Taxi drivers who appealed the decision not to renew their licences for non compliant vehicles were recently in court where the decision was upheld, 2 drivers have lodged additional appeals. Nottingham continues to strive to be a bee friendly city with a new biodiversity SPD in place requiring thought to biodiversity in planning applications. There are

projects across the city to encourage wild flowers and tree planting with many volunteers offering their time;

- (h) The objectives under the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport and Parks are all currently rated green and expected to remain green;

Committee members asked a number of questions and commented on the presentation. The following details were discussed:

- (i) The introduction of bulky waste charges have not caused a related rise in instances of fly-tipping. There will always be hotspots and some wards do experience higher levels of fly tipping than others. Data has also been looked at to see if there is a correlation between the level of waste taken off the streets and recorded fly tipping and there does not appear to be a correlation between historically high use of the bulky waste collection before the charge was introduced. Bulky waste collections are not as high as they previously were, but people appear to be waiting until they have the maximum number of items to dispose of to take full advantage of the booking;
- (j) Monitoring of air quality takes place across the city and one monitoring station is on the Queens Drive. This is has always been one of the most polluted areas of the city, due to a combination of the diesel trains and busy roads. There is ongoing lobbying taking place for the electrification of the midlands mainline which would help to improve the air quality, and measures are in place across the city to improve nitrogen dioxide emissions, however particulates and nitrogen dioxide levels at that particular monitoring station have not really seen a decrease.
- (k) The introduction of ULEV lanes has not increased congestion across the rest of the network. Where they have been introduced they were already bus lanes so traffic still flows along them as previously;
- (l) In terms of improving the outcome of the air quality objective there are a number of things that could be done. Electrification of the midland main line is due to happen but not imminently, before the pandemic there were plans to introduce an extended city centre clear zone limiting the number and type of vehicles entering the city centre at different times of the day. However with the city centre economy still recovering post pandemic it is not thought to be the right time to restrict access to the city centre. This option is still viable and can be considered when the time is right. It is also not the right time to clamp down on people burning solid fuel when the cost of living crisis is forcing them to choose the less environmentally friendly options;
- (m) The league table used to compare cleanliness to other cities is no longer produced and so it is no longer possible to compare Nottingham City to other cities on cleanliness performance as the data is no longer available. Other measures are being considered including maintenance of the green and purple flag status for parks and recreation spaces, citizen participation in schemes like the Clean Champions etc;

- (n) Since the pandemic staffing levels for waste collection have been problematic. During the pandemic when sickness due to Covid 19 was high staff were pulled from other services, such as street scene to crew the waste collection routes, it was a difficult situation and to a degree it is still ongoing. There are still people going off sick, and after years of cuts the service is cut to the bone so teams are struggling to cope. This situation is unlikely to improve without additional resources and performance can't be increased. Residents also need to change their behaviours, and ensure that waste disposal is done correctly. It is time that people move away from the thinking that the Council will clear up the mess straight away;
- (o) Work is being undertaken with the workforce to improve sickness rates, exact numbers are not readily available but officers can work with HR and can circulate to committee members outside of the committee;
- (p) Councillors have chosen to invest money in new monitoring cameras as a deterrent for fly tipping. The local area teams are deciding where they should be deployed for most effective use. They will be positioned in conjunction with the launch of the Enough is Enough campaign in October and an anonymous reporting system. The new cameras produce high quality footage in daylight and at night time. There are some areas where it is not permissible to install cameras, so other solutions are being considered.
- (q) Officers have liaised with other local authorities around the technology used for monitoring fly tipping. The idea of cordoning off fly tips and retreating them like a crime scene rather than immediately clearing them has also been used to good effect in other local authorities, helping citizen to understand that fly tipping is not the easiest, quickest option to get rid of waste;
- (r) Committee members acknowledged the difference between side waste and fly tipping, but confirmed that residents don't always see the difference. Side waste is another area of waste disposal that needs to be addressed and upcoming discussions and consultation on the new Waste Strategy will specifically look at that issue, it will also look at how waste is collected and the issue of contaminated recycling waste. This item is coming to the Committee in November;
- (s) In cases where commercial fly-tippers can be identified the Council liaises with partners organisations and prosecution is pursued;
- (t) Moving the fly tipping monitoring cameras can be costly. In response to this cost fines can be raised and the money generated can be ring-fenced to cover the moving costs or go towards purchasing more cameras;
- (u) Committee members suggested a ward by ward competition to encourage community work on cleanliness in lieu of a city by city league table. A Pride of Wards type completion might help push up community engagement and help neighbourhoods feel like they are actively tackling fly tipping. Concerns were raised that this may be divisive and cause tensions across wards;

- (v) Committee members commented that the way the performance information is currently presented is not as detailed as it could be. All agreed that more work needs to take place on how the detail is presented to committees.

The Committee thanked the Portfolio Holder for Energy, Environment and Waste for her presentation and for the good work taking place, especially bee friendly Nottingham, and work around Taxes and commercial waste.

Recommendations for the Portfolio Holder for Energy Environment and Waste:

- (1) Circulate statistics on the number of fly tips per ward before the introduction of bulky waste charges and after;**
- (2) Circulate data on air quality from the Queens Drive monitoring site from before the pandemic and after;**
- (3) Circulate a comparison of sickness rates from the refuse collection team from before and after the pandemic;**
- (4) Consider the development of a city wide ward based competition around cleanliness;**
- (5) To work to strengthen the relationship between Clean Champions and Op teams.**

Recommendations for the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport and Parks

- (6) Circulate statistics around potholes that have been filled on more than one occasion.**

The Chair invited Councillor Neghat Khan, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods, Safety and Inclusion to present the information around performance relating to the Resident Services directorate. She advised the committee that of the 22 commitments listed 20 were currently rated as green and highlighted the following points:

- (w) The first objective, Cutting Crime and Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour is currently rated amber, as is the expected outcome rating. Victim based crime has been reduced across the city, but Anti-Social behaviour (ASB) has increased. Statistics from previous years are skewed by Covid and do not give an accurate representation of incidents due to lockdowns and so direct comparison is difficult. The Respect survey is being launched later this month and this will give a better view on how citizens perceive the issues of crime and antisocial behaviour. Due to Covid the survey was not run in 2020 or 2021;
- (x) Many complaints of Anti-Social Behaviour relate to noise complaints, tackling that can be difficult, but installations of monitoring and recording equipment is helping to tackle it;

- (y) The commitment to bring together communities and create good neighbourhoods is currently rated green and expected to remain green. Despite the pandemic neighbourhood teams have delivered a large number of community events, days of action, community cleans and Christmas events at a ward level, and the Big Spring Clean city wide. Neighbourhood teams and the Resident Development Officers continue to offer support to community event organisers to ensure they are run effectively and safely;
- (z) Consultation continues to take place with communities around existing community assets. Councillors and Officers met with management committees and held community meetings and listened to citizens concerns. The Council continues to work with community groups to look at solutions and in some cases pull together business cases for a consortium of groups to bid for external funding not available to Councils and to submit expressions of interest with sustainable funding;
- (aa) Community Protection Officers are now trained to install noise nuisance recording equipment and process noise nuisance complaints to a certain point. This then frees up the Enforcement officers to deal with the more technical advanced elements of the cases.
- (bb) The Council fully endorsed the Police and Crime Commissioners strategy at the Crime and Drugs Partnership to work with partners to tackle violence against women and girls, this coincided with the launch of the national strategy;
- (cc) In response to the You Said, We Did programme citizens expressed a desire for key services to be within walking distance in their neighbourhoods. As a result local community hubs are being set up, and the Joint Service Centre in Hyson Green is in operation. Partner organisations are able to locate workers within these centres so that key services such as Housing are easily accessible.
- (dd) The objective, Responding to complaints of noisy neighbours within 48 hours does not currently have a rating, but is expected to have an outcome rating on green. Teams are in place to respond and with CPO's now trained to deal with the initial stages of noisy neighbour complaints it is expected that this will remain green rated;
- (ee) Partnership work continues with all key Nottingham Transport providers, with monthly Transport Hub meetings taking place to share issues and ensure safety of the transport network. Joint operations and initiative are developed and intelligence shared to create a safer network for all users;
- (ff) Hate Crime is down and is 14.8% lower than the target. However this cannot lead to complacency and work needs to take place to ensure it is being reported and recorded correctly;
- (gg) The final objective, to reduce fly tipping by investigating and fining more fly tippers is currently rated red, with the expected outcome to be rated amber. Strategies to tackle fly tipping are regularly discussed at Neighbourhood action

team meetings and the Enough is Enough campaign is due to be launched later this year to further highlight the issue and tackle offenders;

The committee thanked Councillor Khan for her thorough presentation. During discussion the following points were highlighted:

- (hh) PSPO's are mainly enforced by the Police with only some powers delegated to the City Council. Figures around enforcement can be circulated to committee members. Due to a reduction in the workforce there has been a shift of CPO's back into the neighbourhoods with a difference delivery model now in place;
- (ii) Committee members commented that the introduction of the REACT team in pilot areas had been well received. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that there were plans to introduce further REACT teams in additional areas in the near future;
- (jj) All Resident Development Officers are now in post and the team is running at full capacity;
- (kk) The first objective, reducing crime and antisocial behaviour is Police led. The CPO role is to support Police action but how resources are used is decided by the Police. Committee members questioned if there was little impact that the Council could have on this objective why it was included within the performance data;
- (ll) In terms of fly tipping prosecutions there has been a prosecution on the day of this meeting where a landlord was fined £500 through the courts. A breakdown of data highlighting HMO and landlord fly tipping is not possible, however data based on wards and areas can be processed and circulated to committee members outside of the meeting;
- (mm) Hate Crime awareness is taking place in October and is a national event to highlight hate crime and its impact on victims and communities. Work continues within Nottingham City to encourage victims to report hate crime. The results of the Respect survey will give an indication whether reporting has dropped or whether incidents have reduced;
- (nn) The Community Centre open days were well received by community groups and management committees, a list of groups expressing an interest in finding space is being collated and officers will work with them to formulate business cases highlighting value to the community;
- (oo) With the increased cost of living it is likely that the instances of shop thefts will go up as people start to struggle to afford basic items. Signposting to financial support and advice is essential and encouraging food donations within communities. Work is taking place around penalties for shop thefts looking at a more restorative justice basis where appropriate. Financial penalty may be one of the legally applicable options but not always the most appropriate. Restorative activities such as joining clean champions within the community may be more appropriate in some cases and options for people with disabilities are also being considered;

- (pp) There is a recognised overlap between poor housing and Anti-Social Behaviour and instances of ASB are disproportionately reported from some Nottingham City Homes housing. Other Housing groups also experience increased ASB in supported accommodation where people with complex needs are housed. Citizens and Councillors have raised concerns that Housing Patch Managers can be difficult to get hold of and that there needs to be further work to ensure people are placed in suitable accommodation, supported and that concerns can be raised with the right people. Housing providers have to act within the constraints of the law. A whole system review is due to take place as Nottingham City Homes is brought back in-house;

Recommendations for Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods, Safety and Inclusion:

- (7) Circulate fly tipping data relating to HMOs**
- (8) Circulate the figures on fines and commercial prosecutions for fly tipping**
- (9) To ensure that the joined up working of the REACT team continues and is developed**
- (10) To work with schools and community group to educate around hate crime and encourage reporting of incidents**
- (11) Consider removing the first objective as it is police led, or define where action can be taken by the Council to improve the outcome;**
- (12) Monitor the involvement of NCH in resolving ASB issues.**

The Chair invited Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Planning to present the performance data relating to the Resident Services directorate. He advised the Committee that the data relate to Q4 from 2021/22 as the Q1 data for 22/23 has not yet been released. He went on to highlight the following points:

- (qq) The first objective, to complete the development and reopening of Nottingham Castel as a major national heritage attraction is currently rated amber but the expected outcome is green. Brewhouse Yard is included within the development where work is underway but is not expected to be completed until late autumn;
- (rr) The second objective, hosting annual open door events inviting visitors into public buildings across the city is currently rated amber with an expected outcome of green. The current amber rating is due to implementation of Covid restrictions. These have now been lifted and so a programme of events can take place. A series of open days are planned from 9 – 22 September including Newstead abbey, Wollaton Hall, and Greensfield Industrial museum;

- (ss) The next commitment – to provide a network of inclusive, sustainable and quality public libraries to compliment the new Central Library and which meet the needs of Nottingham Citizens is currently rated green and as an expected outcome of green. This assessment takes into consideration the development of the Sherwood Library, due for completion in winter 2022 and the new Central Library, due for completion in summer 2023. Work is ongoing looking at mitigations against closures suggested at this committee in August and work with partners is ongoing to look at alternative operating options. The final decision around potential library closures is expected later this month;
- (tt) Work continues with partners, such as the Tennis Centre, to host international events in the city;
- (uu) Moving to the performance for the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Regeneration and Communication the objective here, to build a new central library with a particular focus on children and young people, the current rating is amber and the expected rating is amber. As a large capital project it is difficult to have complete confidence that the project will be finished by the Summer 2023 deadline. Contracts have been issued for the internal fit out of the building;
- (vv) The Council continues to use its landlord licensing schemes and other powers to improve the overall standards of private rented accommodation in Nottingham and to tackle rogue landlords with regular inspection routines and a focus on internal safety hazards. Work continues to ensure that landlords have the right licences for their properties and work with enforcement teams;

Committee members asked a number of question and commented on the content of the presentation. During discussion, the following points were made:

- (ww) Committee members did not feel it was appropriate to include the unfinished libraries when considering the overall network and questioned the green rating from that perspective, particularly when the objective around delivering the Central library remains amber rated; Legislation requires the network of libraries and museums to be efficient, it does not define efficient, and work continues to protect libraries where possible;
- (xx) Issues with landlords are reviewed and discussed within area teams and enforcement teams. The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Human Resources has a focus on driving up standards of private rented accommodation through a combination of the scheme of licensing, legislation and a programme of inspections;
- (yy) Committee members asked whether Nottingham Castle was meeting its budgetary requirement. Officers confirmed that the Castel is not a City Council operation and not run by the Council and not the responsibility of the Council to manage the budgetary achievements;
- (zz) Committee members commented that the rich Industrial Heritage of Nottingham city should be celebrated more. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that applications to the Arts Council have been started and plans are in progress to develop this offering;

- (aaa) There are plans to open libraries, and other public spaces, as warm banks as the year progresses and the cost of living crisis forces to rely on public spaces for warmth. Plans are in progress, with papers currently progressing through departmental and corporate leadership teams. Work is underway to link with partner organisations including energy teams and Health to ensure there are accessible warm banks within walking distance for citizens. Funding is coming from a range of different sources and this will be managed across the portfolio;
- (bbb) Committee members asked that open building tours are inclusive and diverse giving an example of an LGBTQT tour they had taken highlighting and celebrating the rich and diverse history of the city.

Recommendations for the Portfolio Holder for Leisure Culture and Planning

- (13) To review and reconsider the RAG rating of the objective to provide a network of inclusive sustainable and quality public libraries;**
- (14) To revisit how outcomes are measured and define how they are measured ensuring outcomes are measurable against money invested;**

Recommendations for the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Human Resources

- (15) To circulate data on prosecution levels of private landlords and the impact of the Licensing scheme;**

General recommendations:

- (16) That future presentations include measures, values and targets, especially for Amber rated targets;**
- (17) That presentations remain focussed on highlighting the most critical priorities, rather than all indicators;**
- (18) Ensure measures and commitments are SMART in the future, and that performance is only measured for things that are within the Council's control.**

26 Recommendation Tracker

The Committee noted the new Recommendation Tracker.

27 Work Programme

Councillor Sam Gardiner, Chair of the Committee, introduced the work programme. During discussions the following items were discussed for inclusion in the work programme going forward:

- (a) Nottingham City Homes – a review of how well it can be accessed by citizens. The Committee wanted this suggestion refined so that a focused discussion

could take place following the move of Nottingham City Homes back into the Council;

- (b) Update on the Together for Nottingham work programme, including devolution and the increased powers granted to the Improvement and Assurance Board;
- (c) Commercial waste strategy, with details of contaminated recycling waste. The Committee asked that this be considered in tandem with the district heating system;
- (d) Consider whether it is possible for an item on the Consultation around the closure of Victoria Market can be brought to this Committee;

The Committee noted the work programme with the consideration of the items above.