

# Nottingham City Council

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Loxley House, Nottingham on 5 February 2020  
from 2.01 pm - 4.05 pm

### Membership

#### Present

Councillor Anne Peach (Chair)  
Councillor Maria Joannou  
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan  
Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis  
Councillor Jane Lakey  
Councillor Ethan Radford  
Councillor Angharad Roberts  
Councillor Andrew Rule

#### Absent

Councillor Azad Choudhry  
Councillor Carole McCulloch  
Councillor Georgia Power  
Councillor Cate Woodward

### Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Delroy Beverley	)	Nottingham City Homes
Steve Edlin	)	
Wayne Smalley	)	
Darrell Smith	)	
Leon McLean	-	Strategic Housing Projects Officer
Councillor Dave Trimble	-	Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and IT
Laura Wilson	-	Senior Governance Officer
Councillor Linda Woodings	-	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Heritage
Phil Wye	-	Governance Officer

### 43 Membership change

The Committee noted that Councillor Angharad Roberts has replaced Councillor Sue Johnson as a member of the Committee.

### 44 Apologies for absence

Councillor Cate Woodward - unwell

### 45 Declarations of interests

In relation to agenda item 5, Nottingham City Homes Repairs (minute 48), in the interests of transparency, Councillor Ethan Radford informed the Committee that he is a member of the Nottingham City Homes Board.

### 46 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2020 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

#### **47 Discussion with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and IT**

Councillor Dave Trimble, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and IT, gave a presentation on the current position in relation to Council services and budget, his key priorities and activities for the current year, and a look ahead to the future, highlighting the following:

- (a) the redevelopment of Nottingham Castle as a major national heritage destination is progressing on time and on budget. To date the project has spent £14.7m of its £31.3m budget, with the visitor centre complete and a tender out for the adventure playground. The Castle will be run by a Trust and a CEO has been appointed. Planned completion is for 2021 and celebratory events are currently being planned;
- (b) Storyparks was a successful event run recently by the Libraries Service, with 151 facilitated reading sessions for children and adults. The Library Service has also successfully met the criteria of the cabinet office's Customer Service Excellence Standard;
- (c) images of the new Central Library have recently been released and generated a lot of interest on social media. The Council plans for this to be the best children's library in the country, and it is planned to open in early 2022;
- (d) high profile events in the city this year have included the cricket world cup, international tennis, the Accenture World Triathlon Mixed Relay, Splendour festival, Riverside festival and Light Night. This year an extended Light Night will take place over two nights rather than one;
- (e) 8 leisure centres are still managed and run by the City Council, despite heavy cuts to this area. Savings have been made through energy efficiency and Leisure Services has attracted additional funding from Get Out Get Active and This Girl Can;
- (f) the Council has pledged to attract 100 new start-ups to Nottingham's markets over four years, and is on target for this with 24 start-ups so far this year;
- (g) £5,500,000 has been invested in woodland and wet meadow habitats at Colwick Park, Valley Road Park, Highfields Park and woodlands in Clifton. This funding has come from the European Regional Development Fund, with more planned to take place;
- (h) five play areas will have been improved by the end of 2019-20, 2,778 trees have been planted and the Council has the most Green Flag parks of any council area in the country;
- (i) the Nottinghamshire WW1 Roll of Honour Memorial was completed and opened in June 2019. The money for the memorial was contributed by the City and County Councils, Borough and District Councils, Parish Councils, local

businesses and individual contributions. A £1.6m bid has now been submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to restore the entire Victoria Embankment Memorial Gardens;

- (j) the Council continues to provide free public wireless internet access in Council buildings and across much of the city centre.

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (k) supermarkets are a huge challenge for market traders, and subsidising the traders is becoming increasingly difficult. Fewer young people shop at markets so they may need to diversify in order to stay open, with perhaps more digital offers;
- (l) the largest risks to the Portfolio are a lack of funding, withdrawal of European funding, and the potential closure of leisure centres;
- (m) the Castle will be climate controlled and has the potential to attract higher profile events and exhibitions than previously.

#### **48 Nottingham City Homes Repairs**

Councillor Linda Woodings, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Heritage, introduced the item on the Nottingham City Homes (NCH) repairs process, targets and performance. NCH manages and builds the majority of social housing in Nottingham. It is governed by a Board made up of Councillors, tenants and leaseholders, and independent and co-opted members.

Delroy Beverley, Director of Construction, Repairs and Maintenance, delivered a presentation with assistance from Steve Edlin, Head of Asset Management, Wayne Smalley, Head of Responsive Repairs, and Darrell Smith, Assistant Director of Repairs and Maintenance. Delroy highlighted the following:

- (a) NCH services 27,300 homes and employs 1000 staff members. It carries out almost 360 repairs a day. Investment is planned in order to bring all homes up to Decent Homes Standard and ensure all homes are safe. Cyclical planned maintenance takes place to reduce the need for responsive repairs;
- (b) 97.9% of appointments are made and kept, with on average 10.4 days from reporting to completion of the repair. 96.5% of emergency repairs are attended within four hours, and almost 98% of non-emergency repairs are completed within 30 days;
- (c) £424m has been spent over the last 10 years, with a further £86m planned over the next 5 on new kitchens and bathrooms, heating upgrades, new doors, new windows, painting, fencing, guttering and internal improvements. Energiesprong will be rolled out to a further 300 properties, and 1000 more homes will be insulated;

- (d) communal open spaces are also maintained by NCH through the Decent Neighbourhoods Programme providing safety, attractiveness and design in consultation with local Councillors and residents;
- (e) safety is always the main priority for NCH. They are 100% compliant at providing a statutory annual gas safety check, and also regularly check electrics, water hygiene, asbestos, lifts and fire safety. Sprinklers, tannoys and intercoms are being installed in all high rise blocks;
- (f) void properties are always brought up to New Home Standard before being re-let. The overall satisfaction rate from tenants moving into their new home is 94%;
- (g) in 2018-19 1.3% of residents complained about repairs, which compares favourably to other similar housing providers. However, repairs-related complaints make up 74% of total complaints received by NCH, mostly around time delays and failure to advise of progress. The complaints process is robust including a Complaints Panel and the Housing Ombudsman;
- (h) if Councillors receive complaints from NCH tenants these can take longer to resolve than if they are reported direct to NCH;
- (i) NCH is working with residents to improve the repairs experience using customer feedback. Examples of improvements include core skills training across different trades, increased technology, insourcing, and creation of a 24 hour emergency response team.

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (j) external contractors are used increasingly less and only for specialist work. They are regularly monitored at meetings and must meet the same standards as NCH workers;
- (k) a lot of complaints are down to poor communication. Efforts are being made to improve this with improved technology like the use of text messages to inform tenants of progress;
- (l) the Customer Contact Centre is the best place to report faults for repair rather than complaining to Housing Patch Managers or Councillors;
- (m) a Garage Strategy is being developed as many garages are in poor repair and attract fly-tipping, with selective demolition and repairs. Garages will be consolidated into smaller areas for those that wish to keep them;
- (n) if a tenant has purchased their property through right-to-buy and it is in a shared block, they will be charged for repairs in communal areas annually. If the cost is over £250 then the leaseholders must be consulted;

- (o) the 30 day target for non-emergency repairs is a maximum and NCH aim to complete repairs in 10 days where possible. Tenants have agreed service standards detailing priorities, waiting times and void standards etc.

#### **49 Work Programme**

Laura Wilson, Senior Governance Officer, presented the proposed work programme for the remainder of the municipal year, noting that the Fire Service is now unable to attend in March, as agreed previously, and will attend a future meeting instead.

Committee members requested that Section 106 and Student Development be added to the Work Programme to be discussed at future meetings.