

Nottingham City Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held remotely via Zoom and livestreamed on the Council's YouTube channel on 7 October 2020 from 2.02 pm - 4.26 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Anne Peach (Chair)
Councillor Georgia Power (Vice Chair)
Councillor Maria Joannou
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis
Councillor AJ Matsiko
Councillor Ethan Radford
Councillor Angharad Roberts
Councillor Andrew Rule
Councillor Cate Woodward

Absent

Councillor Carole McCulloch (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Jane Lakey

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Eunice Campbell-Clark - Portfolio Holder for Health, HR and Equalities
Amy Goulden - Senior Manager, Community Cohesion
Richard Henderson - Director for HR and Customer
Councillor Rebecca Langton - Portfolio Holder for Communities, Highways and Strategic Transport
Saema Mohammad - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead
Laura Wilson - Senior Governance Officer

17 Apologies for absence

Councillor Jane Lakey – personal
Councillor Carole McCulloch – personal

18 Declarations of interests

None.

19 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2020 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

20 Scrutiny of the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Highways and Strategic Transport

Councillor Rebecca Langton, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Highways and Strategic Transport, gave a presentation on the current position of her portfolio and

performance in relation to her Council Plan priorities, and highlighted the following points:

- (a) strategic priorities include:
- ensuring communities are clean, cohesive and fair;
 - making sure work to highways is responsive and well managed;
 - maximising investment in strategic transport and the opportunities that come with it;
- (b) there are 27 Council Plan commitments for the portfolio, 1 has an expected outcome of Red (not achieved), 3 have an exempted outcome of Amber (partially achieved) and 23 have an expected outcome of Green (achieved):
- those with an expected outcome of Green are:
 - continue to support the 'Nottingham Together' programme, bringing communities together and creating good neighbourhoods;
 - develop a 'you said, we did' programme for neighbourhood working through Area Committees;
 - host an extensive programme of community events and activities to bring people together in every neighbourhood, reflecting and celebrating diversity;
 - increase the number of people who feel there is a strong sense of community where they live by 10% (action and performance indicator);
 - allow neighbourhoods to invest in and run their own local community hubs and assets through Community Asset Trusts;
 - manage public spaces pavements and gullies to minimise weeds and keep Nottingham tidy;
 - protect from cuts a network of Area Committees, area based grant funding and local decision making on how money is spent in the neighbourhood;
 - protect from cuts support for a diverse range of free and low cost community and cultural events;
 - protect from cuts teams that clean up graffiti and dog fouling within 48 hours of reporting;
 - provide a network of community centres where local people can come together;
 - reduce fly-tipping by 10% as well as investigating and fining more fly-tippers;
 - regularly bring local people and local groups together to improve neighbourhoods;
 - replace every litter bin in the city centre and roll out a programme of replacements in neighbourhoods;
 - train staff and Councillors in domestic abuse awareness so that they can more easily spot the signs and signpost to advice and support;
 - work in partnership to create and support a network for women in Nottingham;
 - work with partners to be a city that welcomes those in need of refuge or shelter;
 - ensure Nottingham is the cleanest big city in England and keep neighbourhoods as clean as the city centre;
 - ensure voluntary and community organisations are central to the way citizens are consulted;

Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 7.10.20

- resurface 100 roads city-wide;
 - fill 50,000 potholes;
 - support new initiatives that celebrate and champion volunteers and community activity;
 - develop a strategy with partners to address hate crime;
 - those with an expected outcome of Amber are:
 - create and independent trust to manage and run community buildings;
 - host an annual open doors event where visitors are invited into public buildings across the city;
 - reduce the percentage of repeat victims of hate crime;
 - the commitment with an expected outcome of Red is replacing 250 pavements;
- (c) performance highlights include:
- staying committed to Council Plan commitments, whilst reacting and responding in the context of Covid-19;
 - running the Mobilising Civil Society work-stream with Councillors Neghat Khan and Angela Kandola;
 - taking on additional responsibility in late summer around Highways and Strategic Transport;
 - leading on Communities at a time when Nottingham's communities have shown their strength and resilience more than ever;
 - working together with partners;
- (d) challenges and opportunities going forward include:
- 'Build Back Fairer' – addressing the inequalities highlighted by the pandemic and rebuilding a fairer city'
 - finances and money;
 - the continuation of Covid-19;
 - the investment in transport in the East Midlands;
 - continuing Nottingham Together.

During the discussion which followed the following points were raised:

- (e) the Council is committed to providing community events, although these will be different due to the pandemic;
- (f) a weed spraying programme had been developed, but was delayed due to the pandemic as refuse collection was prioritised. Work is now being done to reinstate the programme and catch up on areas that have been missed;
- (g) reducing fly-tipping is a major challenge, but the free bulky waste collection helps to reduce instances;
- (h) it is common for there to be an overlap in Portfolio Holder responsibility and, where there is an overlap, Portfolio Holders have regular briefings together;
- (i) equalities is split across portfolio's to ensure that it is embedded in very portfolio and department of the Council;

- (j) the success of the 'you said, we did' programme varies across Area Committees, and there is more work to be done to ensure that consultation improves and is embedded in decision making;
- (k) the target for potholes will be achieved by the end of the Council Plan in 2023. In year 1 the target was surpassed, but the number is currently slightly below target due to the pandemic;
- (l) the Council is extremely proud of teams working throughout the pandemic to maintain neighbourhoods, but resources were obviously stretched. Neighbourhood Operations Managers have been asked to devise ward recovery plans to bring areas back up the standards expected. The plans will include the frequency of activity, but will not specify which roads will be cleaned when to allow flexibility to respond to issues;
- (m) before the pandemic there would be three operatives in the cab of a bin lorry but, to enable social distancing, this has been reduced to two, with the third operative following in an additional vehicle. This has had an impact on Street Scene because it is their vehicle and drivers following the bin lorries. To reduce the impact, 10 additional electric vehicles were brought in at the beginning of September, so the teams are now working closer to their original capacity;
- (n) the role of Clean Champion has been successful and should be further promoted to improve communities. Clean Champions should also be invited to participate in Ward Walks with Councillors and Neighbourhood Development Officers.

The Committee thanked all Council staff for their hard work during the ongoing pandemic.

21 Scrutiny of the Portfolio Holder for Health, HR and Equalities

Councillor Eunice Campbell-Clark, Portfolio Holder for Health, HR and Equalities, gave a presentation on the current position of her portfolio and performance in relation to her Council Plan priorities in respect of the HR and Equalities elements of her portfolio only, and highlighted the following points:

- (a) there are 6 HR and Equalities Council Plan commitments, none have an expected outcome of Red (not achieved), 2 have an exempted outcome of Amber (partially achieved) and 4 have an expected outcome of Green (achieved):
 - those with an expected outcome of Green are:
 - ensure that Council decisions, services and developments take account of disability and that public spaces and buildings are easy to access;
 - shortlist a proportionate amount of BAME candidates for every City Council vacancy, relative to the number of applications received;
 - take positive action to ensure that the make up of the Council's workforce at all levels better reflects Nottingham's diverse communities;
 - continue to be a Stonewall Top 100 Employer. This is currently red as the Council is no longer a Stonewall Top 100 Employer, but with ongoing work it is anticipated that this will become Green again;

- those with an expected outcome of Amber are:
 - ensure Nottingham City Council jobs pay at least the living wage and, wherever possible, commission services from organisations that do the same. One point within the pay grades is currently 5p per hour below the Living Wage;
 - take steps to eradicate the gender and BAME pay gap and work with Council owned companies to close theirs;

- (b) performance highlights include:
 - engagement continues with the Nottingham Disability Involvement Group, as well as the Council's internal disabled staff network on Council decisions, services and developments;
 - the Council has exceeded its target for the proportion of BAME candidates shortlisted for interviews;
 - the Council has taken positive action to ensure that the make up of the Council's workforce at all levels better reflects Nottingham's diverse communities;

- (c) challenges and opportunities going forward include:
 - returning to the Stonewall Top 100 Employer list. The development of the LGBT Inclusive Action Plan will assist with this aim;
 - ensure Nottingham continues to pay at least the Living Wage wherever possible – reflecting annual revisions;
 - continue to work with Council owned companies to help them identify and address pay gap issues – this work was paused due to Covid-19.

During the discussion which followed the following points were raised:

- (d) the Council supporting the Stonewall statement on transgender rights is welcome;

- (e) there is a balance to be struck between work on individual equality strands and defining best practice to strengthen all equalities work across the Council;

- (f) the Council has been removed from the Stonewall Top 100 Employer list as when a review was undertaken by Stonewall, in some areas, there was a lack of evidence of the work being done around LGBT issues.

22 Tackling Inequality

The Committee was presented with information on some of the work the Council is undertaking to tackle inequality. This was focussed on work to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the development of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020-23.

In relation to the response to Covid-19, Councillor Rebecca Langton, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Highways and Strategic Transport, introduced the work of the Civic Mobilisation Group which was formed to support those in need.

Amy Goulden, Senior Manager, Community Cohesion, gave a presentation on the recent work and highlighted the following points:

- (a) support was introduced to help communities follow Government instructions. This included:
 - the establishment of the Golden Number to support people shielding and isolating with food, prescriptions, and isolation help;;
 - Neighbourhood Development Officers using their local knowledge to connect citizens to services;
 - supporting foodbanks to develop a delivery services by matching volunteers and projects to need, with over 200 projects linked in;
- (b) health and support messages were communicated through social media, the radio, the Arrow to all households, and through community leaders and networks;
- (c) translated materials were developed and shared with leaders, and video clips were used widely;
- (d) follow up work was done where evidence was clear that the message was not getting through;
- (e) faith leaders were engaged, including Sikh, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, and Black majority led churches, to ensure that they closed venues and understood the approach around funerals. Work is now being done together to return to services;
- (f) Covid Outbreak Control and Prevention Plans have been developed in consultation with and supported by groups on the frontline of supporting Nottingham's diverse communities. The next steps involve Health Equality Impact Assessments;
- (g) Nottinghamshire Police continue to investigate incidents of prejudice and hate;
- (h) the Nottingham Hate Incident Panel now meets virtually to ensure that any repeat cases are reviewed, and Council, Nottingham City Homes and Police powers are used to bring perpetrators to justice;
- (i) digital publicity has been delivered on Hate Crime;
- (j) there is strategy consultation and a programme of community conversation and training on recognising and challenging hate through Nottingham Together and No Place for Hate;
- (k) the Council recognise the huge positive impact the faith and community sectors have in keeping Nottingham safe, so the Nottingham Together Board and BAME Sub Group have been developed to give the leaders of these a voice and opportunity to challenge the Council's approach;
- (l) the Area Based Grant and Community of Identity Grant leads were given flexibility in their grant early on to meet the needs of their communities in responding to Covid, and many have brought in additional funding and galvanised volunteers in response;

- (m) the Cohesion Service have worked with community groups and youth empowerment charities in the Ending Youth Violence Network to bring in additional £464,000 since April;
- (n) the next steps include:
 - the development of the Health Inequalities Framework;
 - tailored support and communications on Covid for hard to reach groups;
 - the continuation of tension monitoring;
 - signposting to isolation support through the contact centre;
 - work to address the long term economic impact city wide, but also on personal finances and community group finances.

During the discussion which followed the following points were raised:

- (o) the current increase in figures means that tighter restrictions are expected for the city, but it is important not to use students as a scapegoat for the increase as the majority are acting within the guidelines. Meetings have taken place with the universities and work is being undertaken to address the tensions between residents and students;
- (p) the issues caused by all venues closing at 10pm has been raised with Government because of the impact on public transport, etc, but people have to take personal responsibility;
- (q) there is a dedicated webpage for people to report venues for non-compliance with Covid guidelines;
- (r) support will be offered if further restrictions are imposed, but with more services open there will be less staff than previously to carry out the additional support roles.

In relation to the development of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2020-23, Councillor Eunice Campbell-Clark, Portfolio Holder for Health, HR and Equalities, introduced the Strategy.

Richard Henderson, Director for HR and Customer, gave a presentation on the development of the Strategy and highlighted the following points:

- (s) the vision is for an inclusive Council, enabling the Council to attract and retain the most diverse staff and provide the best and most accessible services to citizens. The vision is built on the Council Plan and Strategic Equality Objectives, forming the cornerstones of the EDI Strategy:
 - make sure the workforce reflects the citizens the Council serves;
 - create sustainable economic growth for the benefit of all communities;
 - provide inclusive and accessible services for citizens;
 - lead the city in tackling discrimination and promoting equality;
- (t) the governance structure surrounding the EDI means that the development and progress is robustly monitored, and enables equality, diversity and inclusion to be embedded into the Council's activities and business practices;

- (u) the Operational Equality Action Plans set out the details of what the Council is doing to meet its equality, diversity and inclusion ambitions;
- (v) the EDI Strategy was formed after extensive consultation with colleagues across the organisation and partners;
- (w) the Strategy gives the Council confidence that equality, diversity and inclusion will be integral to all of its work, and that it is making real progress in becoming an inclusive organisation.

During the discussion which followed the following points were raised:

- (x) it is hoped that the Strategy will be published in November. The Council has always had equality, diversity and inclusion policies, but the Strategy brings all of the work from across the Council together;
- (y) the activities carried out under the work strands are broad ranging and wider than the titles.

23 Work Programme

Councillor Anne Peach, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented a report on the work programme detailing issues for scrutiny by the Committee for the remainder of the 2021/21 municipal year.

It was queried when the Action Plan in response to the Report in the Public Interest on Nottingham City Council's governance arrangements for Robin Hood Energy would be reviewed, and the Chair informed the Committee that this will hopefully be at the December meeting.