

Nottingham City Council

Companies Governance Executive Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 21 November 2023 from 3.05 pm - 4.50 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
Councillor Audra Wynter (Vice Chair)
Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis
Councillor Linda Woodings

Absent

Councillor Angela Kandola

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Kevin Barr	- Interim Companies Finance Manager
Ross Brown	- Corporate Director for Finance & Resources
James Lavender	- Governance Officer
Neil McArthur	- Interim Director of Commercial and Procurement
Colin Parr	- Shareholder Representative, Nottingham Ice Centre Ltd
Jiayue Wang	- Companies Governance Compliance Officer
Jennie Willock	- Chief Executive, Futures

Call-in

Unless stated otherwise, all decisions are subject to call-in.

58 Apologies

Councillor Angela Kandola – Other council business

59 Declarations of interests

None.

60 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

61 Work Programme

Neil McArthur, Interim Director of Commercial and Procurement, noted that the Council-owned companies – Financial Update item will move from monthly to quarterly reporting. The next report will be presented to the Committee in February 2024.

The Committee noted the Work Programme.

62 Futures Presentation

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

Jennie Willock, the Chief Executive of Futures, delivered the presentation on the performance of the company for the first half of the year until the end of September. The following information was highlighted:

- (a) Futures takes a balanced score card approach to measuring performance against their four main business objectives, which include delivery and impact, people and culture, delivering excellence, and financial sustainability;
- (b) the delivery and impact objective focuses on the performance of services, measuring them against key performance indicators (KPIs), and providing outcomes to the Commissioner (Department of Education);
- (c) the aim of the people and culture objective is to create a strong learning environment and a positive work environment for staff;
- (d) delivering excellence involves monitoring and improving the quality of services based on user feedback;
- (e) financial sustainability means demonstrating value for money and maintaining a long-term financial plan. Futures finances are assessed by the Commissioner on an ongoing basis;
- (f) Futures provides careers advice, employment support, training, and targeted support to help people with career choices and long-term career planning;
- (g) from April to September, a total of 24,623 people sought careers advice in the East Midlands and the East of England, which means that Futures has achieved 100% of its KPIs in this area;
- (h) the introduction of a tracking team will enable Futures to identify individuals who have found a job through support from the service;
- (i) in terms of employment support, most people seen by Futures are referred from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The aim of these referrals is for Futures to support a person achieve a job which is full time and above the national minimum wage within 26 weeks of the date of the referral;
- (j) customer services have a target of 15 days for a having a face-to-face meeting with a person being referred from the DWP. Futures' customer services team have achieved a 100% compliance on five out of six customer service standards for the last six months;
- (k) there has been a 50% cut in the value of the Restart Scheme Contract launched by the Government during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is due to the level of unemployment following the ending of the furlough scheme not being as large as initially projected;

- (l) targeted support involves working with school leavers and people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) to move to a positive destination. There has been a rise in the number of NEETs since the end of last year. Numbers are difficult to track, but Futures has recorded 106 NEET individuals within the city but cannot find 41 of them. The Nottingham Works For You contract helps Futures in its targeted support work, but this comes to its end in November with the last of the European Social Funding (ESF);
- (m) in terms of training provided by Futures, the company is not getting the learner volumes as predicted. There is a struggle to recruit tutors for Maths and English. Conversion rates from Find my Direction and Multiply are not as high as expected due to participants being below Level 1. Futures is working with the NHS Nottingham University's Hospital (NUH) Trust to provide recruitment for people with sectoral based qualifications in social care and business administration. Futures have found that NUH staff who have gone through their service are more willing to stay as they know what the job entails through the training they provide. There are significant challenges in getting employers within the city to engage with Multiply. Futures have had far more success engaging employers within the county.
- (n) practitioners of careers guidance observe Futures advisors and assess them against the criteria of the customer journey and the Ofsted Inspection Framework. The company uses customer satisfaction measures.
- (o) Futures are aiming to improve the diversity of the workforce. The sector is facing the challenge of an aging workforce. Futures is working with Nottingham Trent University to attract young people into the careers advice sector;
- (p) there has been great progress in terms of Futures' governance arrangements. Four committees (Audit, Nominations, Quality and Performance, and Remuneration) have been created to provide greater scrutiny of the company's performance and organisation. Futures are currently awaiting appointment of the Council's Non-Executive Directors. The members agreement and reserved matters need updating. An internal effectiveness review is in progress and will be shared with the Committee once completed. An external effectiveness review is due in 2024. Futures' Audit Committee are seeking two independent members to replace those standing down at end of term of service. The company is awaiting the replacement of the Council's Shareholder Representative;

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

- (q) the Multiply scheme is a good idea to engage with maths. The challenge is to get employers to commit to give their employees time-off to study. Alternatives include evening or online sessions;
- (r) there is a broader and smaller employer strand within the county for Futures to engage with whilst city employers have more specific demands;

- (s) the County Council have a larger budget for education and employment opportunities, however, there are different cohorts in the city and in the county and each have their own different needs;
- (t) the divide between those who are identified as borderline of being NEET and those at risk of being NEET has increased, with the most economically disadvantaged people at risk of becoming NEET. This may be due to those people being carers for a parent, sibling or child, and having to be the primary source of income for their household;
- (u) there is a predicted deficit of learning opportunities for those young people who were in Year 7 and 8 during the COVID-19 lockdowns but will soon reach Year 10 and 11. There will also be a substantial mental health impact for this cohort, who may struggle with social engagement and be lacking in confidence;
- (v) three councillors each from the city and the county have places on the board. The Executive Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group are made up of two Associate Directors and a Board Member. The aim of this group is to improve the recruitment advertising to ensure more diverse candidates and staff.

The Committee thanked the Chief Executive of Futures for her presentation and noted its contents.

63 Exclusion of the public

The Committee decided to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining agenda items in accordance with Section 100A(4) 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 paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

64 Futures Presentation

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

Jennie Willock, the Chief Executive of Futures, presented the exempt part of the presentation on the performance of the company for the first half of the year until the end of September.

The Committee noted the exempt presentation and its contents.

65 Exempt minutes

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

66 Nottingham Ice Centre Ltd - Performance Update Report

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

Colin Parr, the Shareholder Representative for Nottingham Ice Centre (NIC) Ltd, delivered the report outlining the recent performance of the company. The details of the report and the subsequent discussion are set out in the exempt minute.

67 Council-owned companies - financial update

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

Kevin Barr, Interim Companies Finance Manager, delivered the report which updated the Committee on the latest position in respect of each council-owned company. The details of the report and the subsequent discussion are set out in the exempt minute.