

# Nottingham City Council

## Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 27 November 2024 from 9.33 am - 11.18 am

### Membership

#### Present

Councillor Samuel Gardiner (Chair)  
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora  
Councillor Angela Kandola (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Georgia Power

#### Absent

Councillor Imran Jalil  
Councillor Sarita-Marie Rehman-Wall  
Councillor Andrew Rule  
Councillor Naim Salim

### Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Neghat Khan - Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Strategic Regeneration, Transport and Communications  
Councillor Linda Woodings - Executive Member for Finance and Resources  
Lucy Hubber - Director of Public Health  
Margaret Lee - Commissioner for Finance  
Kate Morris - Scrutiny and Audit Support Officer  
Jon Rea - Engagement and Participation Lead Officer  
Damon Stanton - Scrutiny and Audit Support Officer  
Lee Whitehead - Senior Performance Analyst

### 23 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Imran Jalil – Work Commitments  
Councillor Sarita-Marie Rehman-Wall – Personal  
Councillor Andrew Rule – Unwell  
Councillor Naim Salim – Unwell

### 24 Declarations of Interest

None.

### 25 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2024 were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

### 26 Performance Management Framework

Councillor Neghat Khan, Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Strategic Regeneration, Transport and Communications presented a report which provided a progress update on the development of the new Strategic Performance Management and Reporting Framework and how it aligns with the Council's commitment to

improve accountability and services. Lee Whitehead, Head of Analysis and Insight, and Lucy Hubber, Director of Public Health, were in attendance to provide additional detail. They highlighted the following points from a presentation:

- a) The Strategic Performance Management and Reporting Framework (the Framework) has been designed to support and enhance work around the Improvement Plan and focuses on addressing optimising systems, enhancing culture around performance management and establishing more meaningful metrics.
- b) Through the development of the Framework examples of best practice were taken from Authorities across the country, including Birmingham City, Croydon and Barnsley and in collaboration with senior leaders across the Council. The Framework has recently been adopted by the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) allowing an oversight of organisational health, service delivery and performance against key metrics.
- c) This is the first iteration of the Framework, and of the dashboard that presents the information. As the system is used it is likely that there will be a number of changes to make it more efficient and accurate. The current reporting available to CLT shows current performance against targets, benchmarked data from peers and clear direction of travel. The system is updated by colleagues across the Council on a regular basis ensuring that data is current.
- d) Work is underway to incorporate data from the Risk Register and Internal Audit reviews to monitor compliance with their recommendations. This will further help CLT to focus collaborative efforts on areas in need of additional support.
- e) The benefits of the Framework will include better and well-informed decision making, identification of developing issues at an early stage and pro-active problem solving, greater organisational accountability and, improved service delivery with sustained improvements.
- f) The next steps for this project include further refinement of the reporting data, and alignment to the Strategic Council Plan (SCP). An Annual Report is under development that will allow for monitoring, and further work is underway to consider how best to roll the Framework reporting out to a wider audience. The Framework will be expanded to include more contextual information rather than just raw data.

During discussion the following questions were raised by Committee Members:

- g) Committee Members asked how quantitative the data was and what other details were available alongside the raw data. In many cases prior to the development of the Framework quantitative data and other information was kept separately, this approach offers a coherent and holistic approach with detail around the data to help give a more comprehensive picture. It allows for a Council wide view and to identify where performance may not be at the

desired level. This allows CLT and the Directorates to focus resources. Where applicable targets and performance indicators are set with Nottingham demographics and population in mind.

- h) Committee Members asked how the Framework and the reporting from it considered outcomes for citizens. The reporting from the framework will help with more informed and holistic decision making. It will also help to develop the future Strategic Council Plans, deliver models and service development. Outcomes are considered in decision making, and in service delivery models. Throughout development it has been clear that the numerical data cannot be the only information used within the Framework and further detail is included within directorate business plans.
- i) Committee Members asked about the delay in the development of the Framework as it was initially proposed that it would be fully operational by the end of 2024. It was explained that there have been some delays in the development and initial roll out of the Framework and reporting, but that it is now in a position to offer better oversight for the SCP and improvement work. Additional work is being undertaken to look at what is being measured and why it is being measured the way it is to ensure the correct data is being collected. It was now expected that the Framework would be fully operational by May 2025.
- j) Committee Members asked who had been consulted in the development of the Framework, and asked why Councillors had not been included. The initial phase of developing the Framework has been mainly operational and the CLT and Departmental leads have been involved in consultation as the initial users. As the strategic side of the Framework is developed further additional consultation will take place with regular users including Councillors where appropriate.
- k) Councillors requested further detail on the information produced by the reporting Framework and what access Councillors would have. It was explained that reports would encompass a version of the dashboard and could be suited to the particular forum they would be considered at. For example, reports to CLT and individual Directorates would be operationally focussed, whereas reports to Councillors would be framed around politically guided priorities and give a strategic focus. A version would also be available to the public. The next stages of the rollout is underway which will collate relevant and accessible reports linked to the SCP. It is important that narratives are fully developed to sit alongside the data so that it is contextualised and fully understood by those accessing it.
- l) Committee Members asked what the challenges had been in the development of the Framework and what might be challenging within the next steps. As the programme is required to move at pace finding time with key resources such as IT can be challenging, however the product and the skill set of those developing the reporting tool are in line with best practice. Consistency and accuracy of information manually fed into the system could be challenging,

although as this develops and beds in, and the advantages of the system filter through this should improve.

- m) Committee Members queried how the programme for the Framework had been developed. The development of the base product has been in-house. This is allowing the Council to custom make a system that works for the unique SCP and Improvement Plan that Nottingham has. It is also allowing the Council to upskill workers and ensure that future maintenance and upgrade costs of the products are much reduced.
- n) Committee Members questioned who was accountable for the delivery of the Framework. It was explained that the senior accountable officer is the Chief Executive, the programme lead is the Director of Public Health and the Leader of the Council is the political lead.
- o) Committee Members asked whether cuts detailed in the Medium Term Financial Plan would impact the work around the development and maintenance of the Framework. None of the budget proposals currently under consideration for 2025/26 impact the development and further rollout of the Framework and reporting behind it. There should be minimal maintenance in future years and the Framework should save the Council money in the long run.

The Chair thanked the Leader of the Council, the Head of Analysis and Insight and the Director of Public Health for attending the meeting and for answering the questions put to them by the Committee.

**Resolved:**

- 1) To note the assurance given by the Leader of the Council that the Performance Management Framework will be fully operation by May 2025.**
- 2) To recommend that the Council frames the narrative and context around the Framework so that it is in-line with Nottingham's demographics, with due consideration on the outcomes rather than just the data.**
- 3) To recommend that the Council considers training staff who will be using the dashboard to aid their interpretation of the data.**

**27 2025/26 Budget and 2025-2029 MTFP Consultation Plans**

Councillor Linda Woodings, Executive Member for Finance and Resources introduced the report on the 2025-26 Budget and 2025-29 MTFP Budget Consultation Plans to the Committee. The report outlined the consultation methodology ahead of the public consultation on the Council's proposed 2025/26 budget, and is in response to the request from the Committee in February 2024. John Rea, Research, Engagement and Consultation Manager, and Lucy Hubber, Director of Public Health, were also in attendance to provide additional detail. They highlighted the following points:

- a) The previously presented timescales for producing the budget seen by the Committee in June are still on track and many of the dates previously marked as to be confirmed (TBC) are now firm and being worked towards.
- b) The budget proposals for 2025/26 will go to Executive Board on 17 December, opening public consultation on a number of proposals. The Executive Board will then consider the final budget proposals in February, for them to be taken to Council in March for final consideration and approval.
- c) The proposals for public consultation are similar to those from last year, where the Council saw over 5,000 responses, a level not previously seen. The consultation this year is set within the context of the Medium Term Financial Plan 2025-2029 and runs through until 13 January 2025 and will include online and paper formats of the consultation and in person public consultation events. Following this, work will take place to collate the responses and be reported to the Corporate Leadership Team and to Leadership.
- d) Final budget proposals will be refined taking into account the consultation responses where appropriate and the report to the Executive Board will reflect changes made through the consultation process.
- e) A full communication strategy has been developed to ensure engagement is as full and thorough as it can be. This includes consultation paperwork in a number of different languages most commonly used across the City, and an easy read version in line with the Government's average reading age recommendations.

During the discussion Committee Members asked the following questions and received additional information:

- f) Committee Members asked what the Council was doing to ensure it engaged with those people who struggled with literacy issues and with the wide range of communities with differing dialects. It is challenge to ensure that the consultation is accessible to people of all literacy levels. The vast majority of people will be able to complete the survey online, as it is simple, and uses clear and concise language. For those who do not have access to the digital survey there are paper copies in the libraries across the City, and library staff have been trained and briefed to help citizens to complete the survey, either on paper or online using library resources. There is also a translation facility that allows citizens to translate the survey into a language of their choice and respond in that language. The responses are then automatically translated into English for collation.
- g) Committee Members questioned whether there had been any joint working with volunteer groups and the third sector to help engage harder to reach groups. The Council has not had the opportunity to work directly with volunteer groups for this consultation, however a number of voluntary services do engage with groups and feed into the consultation. Although there is no

coordinated, direct consultation with the third sector many groups do engage with the consultation independently.

- h) Committee Members wanted to know how the Council would demonstrate where the consultation had had an impact on the original proposals. The Improvement Board will be reviewing the results of the consultation, and considering how the final proposals should be shaped. No final decision on proposals have yet been taken. Input of the public's views and opinions will be evidenced as having had an impact on the decision-making process, and this evidence should be visible in the final decisions made.
- i) Committee Members highlighted that they had previously recommended that the consultation process be brought forward to allow more time for consultation with the public and the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Members expressed disappointment that it had not happened. It was explained that there had been a number of changes to key officers involved in the budget process, including the Section 151 Officer, and this has caused setbacks to the process. The process, however, is still on track and work is being constantly progressed. A 'lessons learnt' exercise will commence after the budget process for 2025/26 has concluded with the intention that Scrutiny will be involved at a much earlier stage.
- j) Committee Members asked if there was sufficient time between the end of the consultation period on 13 January, and the Executive Board meeting on 11 February, to allow the required work to be done and due consideration given to the consultation feedback for them to have a meaningful impact. It was explained that Executive Members and Officers are committed to ensuring the process continues to run to schedule. This piece of work is a priority and work will be taking place up to the deadline for the submission of papers to Executive Board. Feedback is being fed through to Business Managers and budget owners across the Council which will help to shape the proposals following consultation.
- k) Committee Members asked whether the Executive Member was assured that the budget consultation would be compliant with the Gunning Principles. The Executive Member confirmed that she had received confirmation and assurance from the Council's Legal department that the consultation would be compliant with the Gunning Principles. Although the consultation has been short in comparison to some other Councils across the country, it is not the shortest consultation taking place within the Core Cities group. If the consultation was not compliant the Council would risk judicial review, which is why Legal were consulted. Last year's consultation garnered the most responses ever received and the Council has mostly replicated the consultation process, with a few amendments to increase accessibility for harder to reach groups.

The Chair of the Committee thanked the Executive Member for Finance and Resources, the Research, Engagement and Consultation Manager, and the Director of Customer Services for attending and for answering the questions put to them by the committee.

**Resolved:**

- 1) To note the assurance given by the Leader of the Council that the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be involved in the budget setting process at an earlier stage, going forward.**
- 2) To note the assurance given by the Executive Member for Finance and Resources, following advice provided by legal colleagues, that the budget consultation meets the Gunning Principles.**
- 3) To recommend that the Council considers an alternative format of consultation for residents who have lower literacy skills than the UK average.**
- 4) To recommend that the Council considers further ways in which it can engage with residents who are isolated and vulnerable and not part of social or support groups.**

**28 Work Programme**

The Chair introduced the Work Programme to the Committee. There was discussion around the timing of a follow up report on the Performance Management Framework, and review of the budget process. Work will take place with Officers and Executive Members to timetable those reports.

The Committee noted the work programme.