

Overview and Scrutiny **Annual Report** 2018 - 2019

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Foreword

I am very pleased to introduce this Annual Report to Council which outlines the work and impact of the overview and scrutiny committees during 2018-19. Throughout the year scrutiny councillors have been engaged in significant reviews of a wide range of issues with the intention of holding decision makers to account for their decisions and performance; reviewing whether services meet the needs of local people; and exploring opportunities for improvement. The Council and its partners are operating in challenging times and the scrutiny process has much to offer as organisations explore new ways of working.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank scrutiny councillors for their active engagement over the past year. We have worked alongside the Council's Executive and leadership providing constructive and critical challenge and contributing to service improvement, and I would like to acknowledge the willing engagement of Executive councillors and senior officers with the scrutiny process.

Our scrutiny committees also look at issues affecting the lives of our residents beyond the direct responsibility of our own authority and we have worked closely with partners and stakeholders to ensure that the services they provide meet the needs of Nottingham's citizens. We have received valuable contributions from a wide range of individuals and organisations during the course of the year, and I would like to thank them for taking the time to contribute their expertise and experience to inform our work.

In particular I would like to thank my predecessor, Councillor Brian Parbutt, who chaired the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and contributed a wealth of knowledge and insight into our scrutiny reviews for many years.

A.S. Peach

Councillor Anne Peach

Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Nottingham City Council



Introduction

Overview and scrutiny exists to help improve governance and public services for the benefit of local people. It ensures that the Council's Executive is publicly held to account for its decisions and actions and promotes open and transparent decision-making and democratic accountability. It also has a wide remit to explore how the Council and its partner organisations could improve services for the people of Nottingham by:

- reviewing existing policy and contributing to the development of new policy;
- acting as a 'critical friend' to those making decisions;
- holding decision-makers to account for their decisions and actions through the call-in process; and
- challenging performance to ensure that services are meeting the needs of local communities.

During 2018/19 overview and scrutiny work was carried out by:

- an Overview and Scrutiny Committee chaired by Councillor Brian Parbutt which took an overview of key strategic issues relevant to Nottingham, ensuring decision-makers were held to account for their decisions and actions;
- a Health Scrutiny Committee which carried out the statutory roles to review and scrutinise matters relating to health in the Council's area, with powers to make reports and recommendations to health service commissioners and providers. The Committee was chaired by Councillor Anne Peach;
- a Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee chaired by Councillor Sue Johnson which focused on the scrutiny of issues and services relevant to the wellbeing and safeguarding of children and young people in the City; and
- a Call-in Panel which met as and when required to consider requests to 'call in' Executive decisions that had been made but not yet implemented. The Panel did not meet during 2018/19.

The function was supported by two Senior Governance Officers (as part of their wider role), with a temporary staffing change partway through the year and ongoing support from other colleagues in Constitutional Services.

As part of developing its evidence base, the overview and scrutiny committees often invited individuals and organisations to attend meetings and provide information about their work, experience or expertise. Councillors also undertook visits to see services being delivered first-hand and speak to service users and frontline staff. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to the work of overview and scrutiny during 2018/19.

Contributing To Service Improvement

Overview and scrutiny provides an opportunity for councillors to review decisions, policies and services of the Council and other organisations operating in Nottingham to ensure that they meet the needs of local communities. Where evidence shows that there could be a better way of doing things, overview and scrutiny can make recommendations for change. Overview and scrutiny cannot make decisions or overturn the decisions of others. Instead it aims to support service improvement by putting forward robust evidence-based recommendations to influence the decisions and actions of those who can make decisions. Decision makers are asked to provide a response to recommendations and overview and scrutiny councillors then monitor the implementation of accepted recommendations to assess the impact.

During 2018/19 the overview and scrutiny committees were involved in a wide range of interesting work that we hope has made a useful contribution to improving services for local people. This Annual Report provides some examples of that work.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

This year scrutiny work has been carried out in Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings. Examples of this work are outlined below to give a flavour of what scrutiny councillors did in 2018/19.

Homelessness

The Committee heard reports on Homelessness and the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act and its implications, such as a duty to prevent and relieve homelessness, regardless of whether somebody has intentionally made themselves homeless or not. Representatives from Nottingham City Council and Framework Housing attended to brief Councillors and provide information on a multi-agency partnership. Councillors chose to examine the impact of the introduction of Universal Credit later in the year as a result of considering this item.

Air Quality

The Committee received a presentation on the Nottingham's Hackney Carriage and private Hire Vehicle Strategy 2017-2020, with a focus on the possible impact of its implementation on the city's air quality. They heard about Nottingham City Council's ambitions to become an exemplar for Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV), including the gradual replacement of light vehicles, and details of £1.5m of government funding in order to pilot conversion of a number of its heavy fleet vehicles from diesel to ULEV, such as electric sweepers and electric cage tippers. They were also updated on plans for development of a fully equipped ULEV service maintenance and repair centre at Eastcroft Depot.

Universal Credit

The Committee heard from Nottingham City Council's Customer Services colleagues Summary about plans for managing the introduction of Universal Credit in Nottingham - the largest ever reform of the welfare system since its inception. Lessons had been learned from other areas of the County who had rolled out Universal Credit already, and support structures were in place to ease the transition for Nottingham citizens. Councillors recommended that specific guidance on Universal Credit issues be prepared and distributed to all ward councillors so that they could help citizens with any issues that may arise in casework or surgeries.

County Lines

County Lines – drug trafficking using dedicated phone lines and vulnerable citizens, was scrutinised by the Committee as an issue which gained local and national prominence. The issue was considered over two meetings, with the first focusing on crime reduction (attended by representatives from the Police, Community Protection and the Crime and Drugs Partnership) and the second on prevention, diversionary tactics, social support and education (attended by representatives from Children's Services, Safeguarding Boards, and Early Intervention services). The issue was wide ranging, and provided Councillors with a much greater knowledge of the issues, especially surrounding the potential criminalisation of vulnerable victims. The Committee opted to consider what individual Councillors and colleagues can do to help identify potential victims of criminal exploitation in future.

Credit Unions

The Committee heard from Nottingham Credit Union on how the council interacts with credit unions, the benefits of using them and whether they are an effective way of addressing the increased use of payday lenders. A partnership exists between the council and the credit union, which Councillors were pleased to hear would continue, in order to encourage better money management, break cycles of debt, improve financial health and ultimately increase employees' disposable income. The Committee heard that a range of new benefits that complement the Nottingham Credit Union offering (such as financial wellbeing education) are planned for rollout to council colleagues.

House Building

The Committee heard about the Council's Housing Strategy 2018-21, which was agreed June 2018, and sets out a vision for all Nottingham citizens to have access to good quality accommodation. In Nottingham, 6,020 new homes were delivered from 2011 to 2018, leaving 11,130 to be delivered from 2018 to 2028, which is approximately 1,391 per year. Work had taken place with private and public sector providers, such as Blueprint and Nottingham City Homes to build housing in areas such as Trent Basin, Trent Lane, and the Park Yacht Club. The Committee recommended that consideration should be given to how the Council can support and encourage smaller builders and housing developers.

Portfolio Holders

During the 2018/19 municipal year the Committee welcomed Portfolio Holders to discuss their progress against red and amber Council Plan priorities, their objectives and current challenges within their remit. The Committee agreed that it would extend the invite for the 2019/20 municipal year. The Portfolio Holders with responsibility for children and health were invited to attend the scrutiny committees relevant to their remit, and the invitation will be extended to the 2019/20 municipal year.

Call-in Panel

Call-in is a mechanism for scrutinising Executive decisions. Overview and scrutiny has the power to ask for an Executive decision to be reconsidered if, during the five working days immediately following an Executive decision being made, valid concerns are raised about the way in which the decision has been taken, for example that relevant information was not considered.

This option was open to Councillors during the 2018/18 municipal year, however no decisions were called in, and the panel did not meet.

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee was established in recognition of the importance of having robust scrutiny of services to protect children and young people and ensure their wellbeing. Over the course of the year the Committee has proactively explored a range of issues relating to child safeguarding, wellbeing and education. Examples of this work are set out below.

The Portfolio Holders for Early Intervention and Early Years and Business, Education and Skills and the Corporate Director for Children and Adults were all willing to engage with the

Committee as requested during the course of the year. The Committee spoke to a range of senior managers and front line service providers and also benefited from external input from a representative of the Children and Young People's Network.

Representatives from Academies

The Chief Executive Officer of Nottingham Schools Trust gave a comprehensive presentation on the Nottingham Schools Trust, running through its history and development and future aims. The Director of Education at the Creative Education Trust and the Principal of Bulwell Academy updated the Committee on the progress and improvement journeys of Bulwell Academy and Ellis Guilford.

Special Educational Needs

The Committee heard about work done in the last year on facilitating the delivery of high quality Special Educational Needs Provision in Nottingham schools. 14% of young people in Nottingham City have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND). This is slightly above the national average, and most of these young people are in mainstream schools. The Committee also heard that there are a number of specialist provisions in Nottingham City for children and young people with SEND, three of which are ranked outstanding, two of which require improvement. The five areas of priority focus ahead were: improvement of inclusion provision, development of specialist provision, transition to secondary education, co-production with young people and families, and multiple agency support to schools.

School Exclusions

The Committee heard about ongoing work to reduce permanent exclusions of pupils in Nottingham schools, including working closely with Academies and Academy Trusts, and encouraging them to adopt the council's Low Exclusion Model policy on reducing exclusions. The Committee resolved to ask the Regional Schools Commissioner about their role in relation to school exclusions and accountability for school exclusions by academies, and to speak to academies about their engagement with the Low Exclusion Model and other initiatives aimed at reducing permanent exclusions.

Holiday Hunger

The Committee heard about an All-Party Parliament Group report on 'Holiday Hunger', the issue of children going hungry during school holidays as a result of the loss of free school meals provided to them during term time. Of approximately 3 million children affected by holiday hunger in the UK, around 2 million are in families where one or both parents work. The loss of free school meals adds up to £30-£40 a week to parents' financial outgoings. The Committee heard of several volunteer led pilot schemes which ran in the summer of 2018 to tackle the issue, the lessons learned for future projects, and various central government funding options available for future projects.

Small Steps Big Changes

The Committee heard about services delivered by Small Steps Big Changes (SSBC), a project funded by a lottery grant of £45 million over a 10 year period to work with parents in four key wards. It is a large amount of money and a chance to work intensely and make a difference, and do things in a different way. Work takes place with local parent champions within communities, to help children throughout their childhood, education, career and lives, supporting families and their children to thrive and reducing the need and cost for care interventions later down the line. In the wards in which SSBG has been running longest, SSBG have reached over 70% of families. The Committee resolved to invite SSBC back to the

Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee when information is available from qualitative evaluations concerning outcomes at school age.

Educational Attainment

The Committee received an annual report on the educational attainment of Nottingham city schools for the academic year 2017/18. Whilst the Committee noted that educational attainment had improved, there was still room for further improvement, and the Committee suggested that everyone should encourage promotion of the continued improvement of Nottingham City Schools and the value of quality education.

Regional Schools Commissioner

The Regional Schools Commissioner for the East Midlands and the Humber introduced a report on his role in contributing towards achieving the City's ambitions for having all schools rated as good or excellent. The Committee asked wide ranging questions regarding the Commissioner's role in building and assisting with relationships between local authorities and academies, and how local authorities can achieve aims when many schools are no longer within their control.

Health Scrutiny

The Council has a statutory role to review and scrutinise the planning and delivery of local health services with the aim of helping to improve the health and wellbeing of local people.

The role includes:

- strengthening the voice of local people in decision making, through democratically elected councillors, to ensure that their needs and experiences are considered as part of the commissioning and delivery of health services;
- taking a strategic overview of the integration of health, including public health, and social care;
- proactively seeking information about the performance of local health services and challenging and testing information provided to it by health service commissioners and providers; and
- being part of the accountability of the whole health system and engaging with the commissioners and providers of health services and other relevant partners such as the Care Quality Commission and Healthwatch.

In addition to the broad powers held by all overview and scrutiny committees, the Health Scrutiny Committee holds additional powers and rights to require information and attendance at meetings from organisations that commission and provide NHS and public health funded services; and to make reports and recommendations to those organisations and expect a response. Health scrutiny committees also have a statutory role to consider proposals to substantially develop or vary health services to ensure that the views of patients and the public have been taken into account when making significant changes, as well as ensuring that such changes are in the best interests of local health services.

Set out below are some examples of the work of the Health Scrutiny Committee over the last year.

Reducing Unplanned Teenage Pregnancies

The Committee heard that research has shown that the majority of teenage mothers experience higher levels of deprivation and that they and their children will often experience

poorer health and have lower aspirations than their peers. In 2016 there was a 14% reduction in teenage pregnancies from the 2015 figures, although at 26.9 conceptions per 1,000 population of that age group, Nottingham still had higher rates than both the national and core city averages. The Committee noted that there were areas of the city with particularly high teenage conception rates, and requested further information on these areas in order to scrutinise the issue further at a later date.

Changes to Prescriptions

The Committee received information on proposals for two changes to prescriptions. Firstly, a proposal to discontinue prescription of gluten free foods, and secondly a proposal to limit prescription of over-the-counter medications for certain conditions. The Committee supported the implementation of both proposals, but felt that as consultation on changes to gluten free food prescription identified particular risk to the health of certain cohorts (especially children and pregnant women), that this particular change was deemed to be a substantial variation. The Committee recommended that the changes be introduced, with specific monitoring of the impact on at risk groups, and an update to the Committee on these impacts after a 12 month implementation period.

Carer support services

Councillors heard about support services and gaps in provision for unpaid carers, and as a result, convened a carer support services review panel. This panel gathered evidence and information directly from carers, and invited representatives from voluntary sector carer support organisations to attend and provide information on services currently available. As a result, the Committee made recommendations about the ways in which carers are made aware of the support available to them and how to access it. Recommendations made by the panel and adopted by the Committee included:

- further engagement with GPs to make them aware of support services for carers,
- falls and handling training for care support workers to be extended to carers,
- Carers Trust to trial holding support groups in the evening as well as during the day,
- the Carers Federation to speak to the Nottingham Schools Trust about ways of engaging its primary schools on young carer issues,
- promotion of carer support services in ward newsletters and The Arrow,
- ensuring that awareness of carer support services is included in training for homecare workers,
- trial of information sharing between the Carers Trust and social care teams to reduce bureaucratic strain on carers,
- Health Scrutiny Committee to raise the impact on carers when scrutinising access to mental health services.

NHS Long Term Plan

The NHS Long Term Plan was published in January 2019, and the Committee had several briefings on the implications and responsibilities for local authorities and Public Health. The release of the formal guidance to the NHS Long Term Plan is expected during the 2019/20 municipal year, and will be important to review, particularly in the context of working arrangements with the Clinical Commissioning Group and Integrated Care Systems. Areas for possible further scrutiny arising from the Plan include: rollout and promotion of HPV (human papilloma virus) vaccinations to boys, strokes, diabetes and respiratory conditions, and supporting people with long-term conditions.

GP Provision in Nottingham

Representatives from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) attended to update the Committee on the work taking place to ensure that all citizens have access to good quality General Practice (GP) services now and in the future. There are 53 GP practices in the City of Nottingham of a mix of sizes, and the number of practices with only one GP has reduced to nine following a scheme of mergers. One practice had closed during the previous year due to a merger with another practice. Two boundary reductions had been implemented to improve access and one practice list was closed with permission from the CCG, for a 6-month period. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspected all 53 GP practices, with four rated 'outstanding', 42 'good', six 'requires improvement' and one 'inadequate'. The six practices requiring improvement were re-inspected and the majority were progressing to 'good', with the CQC offering support in the delivery of action plans for improvement. The GP Alliance took over management of the 'inadequate' Bilborough practice from 1 April 2019. The GP Forward View seeks to align with the NHS Long Term Plan, improving access and quality for patients and resilience in the workforce. The Plan aims to reorient the NHS to respond better to cost pressures and changing demographics and expectations. There will be a move away from competition and towards Primary Care Networks, which will focus on individual populations and their health needs. The new 5-year GP contracts will encourage practices to collaborate at the Network level and engage with other partners to react to community needs and address other health-related issues, such as loneliness, more effectively. Nationally, GP numbers were lower than in 2019, despite aims to increase GP numbers.

Winter pressures in health and social care

Every year health and social care services have to plan for and respond to what is known as 'winter pressures' (increased demand on services and challenges in service delivery). Winter 2018/19 was a challenging period locally and nationally. The Committee received information from Nottingham University Hospitals Trust and the Greater Nottingham Clinical Commissioning Partnership about the reasons and context of the pressures experienced; how pressures were dealt with; and lessons to be learned for the future to minimise the impact on patients and patient outcomes. The Committee heard that in winter 2018 an additional 116 acute beds were planned which equates to an extra ward, additional community based (care home) beds and 48 community run beds were also prepared. Queen's Medical Centre (QMC) was creating a new emergency care pathway and refurbished A&E area. Further physical space and capacity is still required at QMC for the demand on services. A national grant of £4.5m is enabling Floor A of the hospital to be modernised and expanded, including 30 additional cubicles, from 2020. In autumn, the Committee will be reviewing plans for winter 2019/20.

Emergency Pathways Transformation

Committee members attended a site visit at Queen's Medical Centre, to explore how the newly designed A&E service would work, and how it would alleviate pressures, reduce staff and patient stress, and reduce waiting times.

Adult Mental Health Services

Representatives from Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust presented a report providing information on the current work to review and develop Adult Mental Health Services across Nottinghamshire. The four key areas identified for transformation were as follows: local inpatient beds provision, crisis and home treatment transformation, admission, stay and discharge (patient flow), and local mental health teams development (community pathways). The Committee heard that ensuring that citizens can access appropriate support at an early stage was core to the aims of the Trust in its review, with patients receiving the right service in

the right way and at the right time, including urgent care. The review was at a very early stage but the Trust was keen to engage early on with the Committee and was eager to bring further proposals to the Committee at a later stage to gain views prior to progressing.

Inpatient Detoxification Services

Representatives from Framework updated the Committee on how the interim arrangements for the provision of Inpatient Detoxification Services were progressing at Edwin House, and following an open procurement process, announced the winning provider for services going forward. Following the closure of the Woodlands Inpatient Detoxification Unit, Framework had agreed to become the interim service provider at Edwin House until a full procurement process could be undertaken. Once the specifications were confirmed, there was a competitive tender and Framework was successful in securing the new contract. Framework provided a detailed implementation plan. They had received overwhelmingly positive feedback from patients during the 7 months operating as the interim service provider.

Procurement of services at Nottingham Treatment Centre

Circle Health currently provides a range of day case services at Nottingham Treatment Centre and that contract was initially due to come to an end in July 2018. This contract was extended for a year due to legal challenges to the procurement process. Given the range of services provided at the Treatment Centre and the number of people who access those services, the Committee continued to engage with commissioners on the procurement process to ensure service continuity. Following the contract extension, the procurement process was re-run, which resulted in further legal challenge to the new procurement process, which continued to the end of the 2018/19 municipal year. Commissioners were asked to keep the Committee updated on the future procurement plans including engagement with service users, and the Committee continued to take an overview of the situation.

Quality Accounts

Meetings were held to gain information from, and provide Quality Account comments to the following organisations: CityCare Partnership, Circle Healthcare, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, Nottinghamshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, East Midlands Ambulance Service.

Looking Ahead

For 2019/20, the scrutiny function will continue to be carried out in the same way, through the operation of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee (chaired by Councillor Anne Peach), a Call-in Panel, a Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee (chaired by Councillor Carole McCulloch), and a Health Scrutiny Committee (chaired by Councillor Georgia Power). Committees will continue to build on the important work that they have undertaken over the past year. Examples of ongoing work that will continue have been outlined above, including seeking assurance on planning to deal with winter pressures in the health and social care sector; and continued action on crime reduction and support for vulnerable victims of criminal exploitation. The committees have also identified new areas of work that they believe will provide opportunity to add value. The local authority and its partners are experiencing challenging times with demand pressures and financial constraints, and overview and scrutiny provides a space to review how things are working and whether there is scope to do things differently, supporting organisations to work smarter and more efficiently. Councillors will be supported in doing this through the provision of training sessions early in the municipal year, outlining both general scrutiny principles, and more focused sessions on children and young

people's services, and the specific powers relevant to health scrutiny. These sessions helped Councillors to prepare for getting the most from scrutiny and making it as effective as possible, including exploring ways of preparing for meetings; opportunities for evidence gathering; questioning skills and strategies; listening skills; and making evidence-based recommendations.

Contact Information

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