

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held in the Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 3 July 2019 from 2:05pm to 3:55pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Anne Peach (Chair)
Councillor Carole McCulloch (Vice Chair, items 9-14)
Councillor Georgia Power (Vice Chair)
Councillor Azad Choudhry
Councillor Maria Joannou
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan (items 9-13)
Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis
Councillor Jane Lakey
Councillor Ethan Radford
Councillor Andrew Rule
Councillor Cate Woodward

Absent

Councillor Sue Johnson

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Shelley Harrod	- Research, Engagement and Consultation Manager
Lucy Lee	- Head of Customer Services
Councillor Sally Longford	- Portfolio Holder for Energy, Environment and Democratic Services
Adrian Mann	- Governance Officer
Gareth Sayers	- Development and Change Manager
Zena West	- Senior Governance Officer

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Sue Johnson - Council business

10 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

11 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2019 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

12 CITIZEN SATISFACTION SURVEY / CUSTOMER SERVICES

Councillor Sally Longford (Portfolio Holder for Energy, Environment and Democratic Services), Shelley Harrod (Research, Engagement and Consultation Manager) and

Lucy Lee (Head of Customer Services) presented a report on the results of the Nottingham Citizen Survey 2018. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the annual Citizen Satisfaction Survey is no longer a statutory requirement upon Local Authorities, but it is a commitment of the Labour Group's manifesto to conduct it annually. It is procured alongside the 'Respect' survey, at a cost of around £23,000. The appointed consultant helps to frame the questions and aims to carry out 2,000 face-to-face interviews with people in all wards, who are representative of the age, gender and ethnicity of the population of the City as a whole, and then input and quality check the data. The results are considered to be an accurate reflection of the views of the total City population, but they do not reflect opinion at a ward level as accurately. The results are shared with the relevant departments and Portfolio Holders;
- (b) the survey reflects that citizens are generally satisfied with how anti-social behaviour is tackled, how they are treated by the Council and how the Council communicates information. However, the overall level of satisfaction has decreased. There is a perception that the general cleanliness of public spaces has reduced and the amount of street begging has increased. There is also a feeling that the value for money from the Council has reduced, and that people now have less influence over decisions affecting their local area;
- (c) 12% of the people surveyed were dissatisfied in the services provided by the Council. Of these, the primary demographic was white males aged 45 to 64 in employment, in the Aspley and Leen Valley and the St Ann's, Mapperley and Dales areas. Nevertheless, the survey results showed strong performance relative to other Local Authorities that publish their results (which have experienced similar trends in their feedback recently), and in relation to the quarterly surveys undertaken independently by the Local Government Association;
- (d) levels of smoking have remained relatively static since 2015 and are above the national average, the number of people with a poor mental wellbeing score have risen slightly, 12% of respondents (down from 13% in 2017) are at an increasing or higher risk of developing alcohol-related health problems, 23% of respondents (down from 25% in 2017) use public transport to get to work (but there has been a slight increase in those who walk or cycle, at 22%), and 44% of respondents (down from 45% in 2017) visit a park or open space at least once a week;
- (e) individual citizens are able to give feedback on the specific Council services that they use, so there is a large level of satisfaction data available in various areas. Consideration is being given to how all of this data can be brought together to act as a tool for informing improvements to Council services, and steps are also being taken to capture data that is reflective of specific groups of people;
- (f) the Council's Customer Charter sets out how the Council should treat its citizens, and how citizens should act in return. The Council website has been refreshed to a high standard and the 'Unlocking Loxley' project is also moving forward. Services are designed around the users' needs and are developed following community consultation. Online access to fully digital services is now increasingly available (allowing citizens to return immediate satisfaction feedback) with automation introduced wherever appropriate, so the requirement for back-office

paperwork has decreased significantly. However, the services can still be reached through a number of other means, and no measures have been put in place to discourage these means of access. Currently, only 25% of citizens use the phone to use a service if online access to it is available;

- (g) generally, it is most cost-effective to seek to answer a citizen's question at the first point of contact, and work has shown that better handling of calls in the first instance reduces the total amount of calls received overall. Following the merger of some service contact centres, 97% of calls are picked up within 90 seconds. Customer Services works with teams to develop solutions for customer issues and monitors following feedback, to assess the impact of any new measures put into place. Work is also being done between the Council, councillors and Nottingham City Homes, to further develop customer services for citizens in Council-owned properties;
- (h) the missed collections of bins is a significant issue for citizens – particularly if bins are not collected on a repeated basis. There is also low satisfaction relating to the delivery of new or replacement bins. Work is being carried out to ensure that citizens are being given reasonable expectations in relation to this service;
- (i) 'My Property' is a website designed to tell citizens about services and facilities in their local area and is maintained by the Council's Geographic Information System team, and close attention should be given to ensuring that the information up-to-date;
- (j) the 'Have Your Say' complaints procedure follows a two-step process. If Customer Services receives a complaint, the relevant service is asked to respond in the first instance, with support and input from Customer Services. If the citizen appeals the first response, Customer Services will address the complaint directly. If the complaint is taken further, it is be made to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) – but the Council has the lowest rate of complaints upheld by the LGO of all core cities in the country;
- (k) concerns were raised relating to the overall cost of the Citizen Satisfaction Survey, in terms of consultant fees and colleague time (given that it is no longer a statutory requirement), and the real robustness of its data in informing meaningful decision-making, due to the general nature of the data collected. Councillors felt that it would be of a much greater benefit to seek and understand citizen feedback at the level of individual wards and services. Councillors also asked whether it would be more cost-effective for the Council to carry out the survey, rather than using an external consultant;
- (l) provision should be made to reflect the opinions gathered in terms of gender and ethnicity. People who do not speak English as a first language may need additional support and encouragement to take part in these surveys effectively, and steps should be taken to ensure that all citizens can participate in the process equally. Attention should also be paid to the gender and ethnicity of the people carrying out the survey on the doorstep, and whether this is reflective of the population being surveyed.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) request further information on the analysis of the open-ended comments from the Citizen Survey (circulated with the published minutes);**
- (2) request further information on the ethnicity of respondents (circulated with the published minutes);**
- (3) request further information on the ethnicity of individuals conducting the survey, if available (to follow);**
- (4) note the report on the results of the Nottingham Citizen Survey 2018;**
- (5) recommend that, after the next Nottingham Citizen Survey (which will be carried out in the context of the revised ward boundaries), following surveys are carried out every other year, in conjunction with any other surveys that can be procured as part of the same package, as a cost-saving measure, and that any further cost-saving measures should be explored in relation to the Citizen Survey.**

13 COLLEAGUE SATISFACTION SURVEY

Gareth Sayers, Development and Change Manager, presented a report on the results of the latest Nottingham City Council Colleague Satisfaction Survey, which was open for six weeks from 1 October 2018. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the aim is to carry out a survey of colleague satisfaction every one to two years, instigated by the corporate leadership team. The survey is designed to be holistic and as accessible as possible, and it could be completed online, on paper, or on smartphones and tablets. Many of the scores were stable or improving in relation to the 2017 results. The key issues coming through related to parking, progression, pay, workload and morale, communication and collaboration, equalities, vision and purpose, and IT;
- (b) the response rate to the survey has been declining since 2015, but is still strong in relation to other Local Authorities that carry out and publish the results of similar surveys. Around 2,500 responses were returned, but the response was greatest from colleagues based at Loxley House. As such, additional measures need to be put in place to engage colleagues who are not office-based;
- (c) a number of job satisfaction figures have increased, with greater satisfaction relating to workload and positivity regarding workplace equality and diversity. However, satisfaction in the key activities undertaken by line managers has declined in all areas. The reasons for this will be explored carefully. Only 38% of respondents felt that there was good communication and collaboration between teams in different areas;
- (d) the response rate from BAME colleagues was relatively lower than that from other groups, but respondents usually felt supported and championed. A focus group is being established to discuss and promote wider engagement by BAME groups in this survey. A breakdown of the data in terms of response by gender will also be

provided – with a particular focus on service areas where the majority of colleagues are of the same gender;

- (e) the data has been supplied to the departmental leadership teams, which will review the information and develop solutions to the primary issues. Corporate leadership will take an organisational view and focus on 3 to 4 major priorities. Line managers are crucial in ensuring that staff are briefed on and engaged with the resulting changes.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the results of the 2018 Nottingham City Council Colleague Satisfaction Survey;**
- (2) request a breakdown of the survey responses in terms of gender (to follow);**
- (3) request an analysis of why the return rate from BAME colleagues was lower than expected, and why satisfaction in line management had decreased (to follow).**

14 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY STATUTORY GUIDANCE

Zena West, Senior Governance Officer, presented a report on the Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the Government guidance on Overview and Scrutiny is not prescriptive, but instead provides options and examples designed to promote a positive culture and develop and maintain a strong relationship between Scrutiny and the Executive. The report suggests that Scrutiny should be given a sufficient level of resourcing to operate effectively. Scrutiny bodies should always ensure that any recommendations that they make are fully evidence-based;
- (b) the 2018/19 Overview and Scrutiny Report will be presented to the full Council meeting on 8 July.

RESOLVED to note the recommendations from the Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities.

15 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Zena West, Senior Governance Officer, presented the proposed work programme for the 2019/20 municipal year. Councillors felt that it would be helpful to meet with the new Leader of the Council earlier than was currently planned.