

**MINUTES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Monday 10 March 2025

Councillor Catherine Pope (Chair)

Councillor David Brocklebank	Councillor Darren Maltby
Councillor Roy Allan	Councillor Michael Payne
Councillor Jim Creamer	Councillor Kyle Robinson-
Councillor Andrew Dunkin	Payne
Councillor Rachael Ellis	Councillor Sam Smith
Councillor Roxanne Ellis	Councillor Russell Whiting

Apologies for absence: Councillor Lorraine Brown

Officers in Attendance: F Whyley, E McGinlay, L Juby and P Whitworth

Guests in Attendance: K Fox and S Guest

92 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brown and Grahame Pope. Councillor Payne attended as substitute.

93 TO APPROVE, AS A CORRECT RECORD, THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JANUARY.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the above meeting, having been circulated, be approved as a correct record.

94 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

None.

95 PROGRAMME OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER REVIEW.

Members welcomed Councillor Kathryn Fox, portfolio holder for Life Chances and Vulnerability to the meeting to examine her portfolio. Councillor Fox gave an update to members on some key happenings within her portfolio.

No questions were received from Members in advance of the meeting, so Councillor Fox delivered an update on the various areas of responsibility within her portfolio. She gave the following updates:

It was noted that Councillor Fox chairs the cross-party Strategic Equality and Diversion Group meetings. Some of the work of those meetings included the following:

- Conducted a public consultation on the EDI Strategy.
- Created a staff inclusion group called GIGs to submit recommendations to SLT.
- EDI training would be rolled out for staff and councillors.
- Review of harassment Policy & training was ongoing.
- GBC produced a leisure accessibility video.

Regarding Housing Benefits, Members received an update on key performance indicators which showed 1,450 new claims had been received in 2024/25 and 25,387 changes of circumstances were received from April 2024 – Feb 2025. It was also noted that the Housing Benefit caseload had reduced from 2,944 in April 2024 to 2,477 in January 2025 due to migration to Universal Credit.

Members noted that Gedling Borough Council (GBC) adapted 54 residents' homes via Disabled Facilities Grants in 2024/25 up until the end of quarter 3. It was noted that 94% of those service users said that they were happy with the service and that it suited their needs.

GBC had set up a Violence Against Women's and Girls (VAWG) meeting that convened periodically to measure the progress of the group's actions which included both GBC's Public Protection team and Nottinghamshire Police. Through this, it was noted that Councillor Fox had signed GBC up to the VAWG Strategy 2023-2028.

Members heard of a variety of different events which offered youth unemployment and skills support, some of which included:

- Recruitment/jobs fair April 2024 – 26 exhibitors – 184 attendees
- Recruitment/jobs fair September 2024 – 30 exhibitors – 238 attendees
- Apprenticeship fair February 2025 – 30 exhibitors – 200 attendees
- HGV Cat C (Class 2) Training – 30 funded places
- Forklift Truck Driver Training – 38 funded places

The Chair then gave members the opportunity to ask questions.

Members asked what kind of properties were generally in receipt of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs).

Councillor Fox agreed to circulate DFG statistics following the meeting.

Members asked whether the council liaised with local developers ahead of planning applications to ensure some properties had the facilities to support those with disabilities.

Councillor Fox explained that the Food, Health and Housing Manager had discussed the provision of disabled facilities with developers, however this fell under a different portfolio so Councillor Fox could not offer more information.

Members asked for more information on the white goods support and how signposting worked.

Councillor Fox agreed to circulate additional information after the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- 1) To thank Councillor Fox for the information provided; and
- 2) To circulate additional information and answers following the meeting.

96

PARTNERSHIP REVIEW - NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL.

The Chair welcomed Sharon Guest, Interim Director of Housing Services at Nottingham City Council to the committee as part of the Council's partnership review programme.

Sharon delivered a presentation which provided an overview on the key areas of her department's work at Nottingham City Council (NCC), highlights of which were as follows:

It was noted that NCC's Housing Strategy for 2024-2028 was to meet the needs of current and future residents as well as ensuring people lived in safe, warm homes that they could afford, in vibrant neighbourhoods where everyone could thrive.

Members noted NCC's housing priorities which included the following:

- Strategic housing led delivery, regenerating and improving housing standards whilst continuing the progress towards a carbon net zero future;
- Make better use of their available housing stock to support the development and acquisition of more affordable homes;
- Prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping; and
- Work in partnership with health services, social care and other partner agencies to support people to live independently.

Members noted the challenges NCC were facing, such as:

- Financial constraints - Significant financial challenges and limited resources to deliver the strategy's vision and priorities;
- Housing supply and affordability - Significant demand for affordable housing which exceeded their available supply;
- Housing quality and standards – to achieve energy efficiency standards of such a large portfolio whilst maintaining quality and safety;
- Homelessness and rough sleeping - Prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping as well as ending the routine use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families with children; and
- Housing and support needs – tackling the needs of a diverse range of people with varied needs associated with age, health, disability, and levels of vulnerability

The Chair then gave Members the opportunity to ask questions.

Members noted the difficulty for those applying to be on the NCC housing waiting list, particularly where the applicant didn't reside within the city boundary. It was then asked whether any additional consideration could be given to those who reside in the Gedling area when applying for City Council housing held within the Gedling Borough boundary.

It was noted that NCC's housing allocation policies were being reviewed, and the question could be brought up during the review.

Members queried how NCC prioritised their Net Zero ambitions with regards to housing given their current financial constraints.

It was noted that NCC's asset management strategy aimed to achieve Net Zero ambitions. NCC also ensured that they monitored emerging technologies to further those goals.

RESOLVED:

To thank Sharon Guest and Nottingham City Council for attending the meeting and the information provided.

97

WELCOME AND WARM SPACES UPDATE.

The Assistant Director for Communities, Leisure and Wellbeing introduced a report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, updating Members on the welcome and warm spaces initiative and the wider Community and Voluntary Sector (VCS) support for Gedling community organisations.

Members queried whether it would be possible to seek further information on the hardships of those that attended the warm spaces, to ascertain what factors caused their financial difficulties.

Members asked what they could do to support those who were having to attend the warm spaces.

Members heard that although much of the support available was circulated via leaflets and signposting, much more information could be found online. It was noted that improved digital access points would aid inclusion and empower residents.

RESOLVED:

To thank the Assistant Director for Communities, Leisure and Wellbeing for the information provided.

98 GEDLING PLAN QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE 2024/25 REPORT

The Deputy Chief Executive introduced a report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, informing Members in summary of the position against Improvement Actions and Performance Indicators in the 2023-27 Gedling Plan at the end of Quarter 3 of 2024/25.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

99 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME.

The Democratic Services Manager introduced a report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, providing an update on the Scrutiny Work Programme.

Members expressed an interest in extending an invitation to the Citizens Advice Bureau or Department for Work and Pensions to attend the Committee.

RESOLVED to:

Note the report.

100 ANY OTHER ITEM WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT.

None.

The meeting finished at 7.30 pm

Signed by Chair:
Date: