

**PLACE SELECT COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday 20 December 2023 at 10:30am**

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**COUNCILLORS**

Mike Adams (Chairman)  
Tom Hollis (Vice-Chairman)

Richard Butler  
Anne Callaghan BEM  
Penny Gowland  
Kane Oliver - **Apologies**  
John Ogle

Sue Saddington  
Roger Upton - **Apologies**  
Jonathan Wheeler - **Apologies**  
Elizabeth Williamson - **Apologies**

**SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Councillor Eric Kerry for Councillor Roger Upton  
Councillor Johnno Lee for Councillor Jonathan Wheeler  
Councillor John Wilmott for Councillor Kane Oliver

**OTHER COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE**

Councillor Scott Carlton  
Councillor Neil Clarke MBE  
Councillor John Cottey  
Councillor Gordon Wheeler

**OFFICERS**

Mick Allen	-	Group Manager, Environment and Resources
Rhys Atwell	-	Democratic Services Officer
Wayne Bexton	-	Service Director - Green Growth, Investment and Assets
Martin Elliott	-	Senior Scrutiny Officer
Peter Gaw	-	Chief Executive Officer, Inspire
Derek Highton	-	Interim Corporate Director – Place
Sue Jaques	-	Flood Risk Manager
James Lavender	-	Democratic Services Officer
Dan Maher	-	Managing Director - Via
Mark Walker	-	Interim Service Director, Place and Communities
Gary Wood	-	Group Manager, Highways and Transport

**1. TO NOTE THE APPOINTMENT AT FULL COUNCIL ON 7 DECEMBER 2023 OF COUNCILLOR MIKE ADAMS AS CHAIRMAN OF THE PLACE SELECT COMMITTEE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE 2023-24 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Chairman a noted his thanks to Councillor Nigel Moxon for his work as the previous Chairman of the Place Select Committee.

## **RESOLVED 2023/019**

That the appointment of Councillor Mike Adams as Chairman of the Place Select Committee for the remainder of the 2023-24 municipal year, be noted.

### **2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2023, having been circulated previously, were confirmed as correct and signed by the Chairman.

### **3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Councillor Kane Oliver (Other Reasons)
- Councillor Roger Upton (Sickness/Medical)
- Councillor Jonathan Wheeler (Other Reasons)
- Councillor Elizabeth Williamson (Other Reasons)

### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

In the interests of transparency relating to Item 8, Councillor John Lee stated that his children used the school meal service.

### **5. HIGHWAYS JOINT INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Councillor Neil Clarke MBE, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport and Gary Wood - Group Manager, Highways and Transport attended the meeting to present a report that outlined the progress made against the actions identified as part of the cross-party Highways Review and the development of the Highways Joint Innovation and Continuous Improvement Plan. The report also provided a summary of highway activities that had undertaken since the beginning of the year.

The Cabinet Member stated that it was the ambition of the Council and Via to continually improve and develop and that the changes and improvements to service delivery that had been identified by the review were now well embedded into how highways services were delivered across Nottinghamshire. The Cabinet Member noted the improvements to service delivery in respect of Winter maintenance, the processes for residents to report highway maintenance requests and the implementation of the "right repair, first time" approach.

The report detailed how throughout 2023/24 Via had undertaken significant volumes work across the wide variety Highway Services that it delivered on behalf of the Council, these included:

- 151 Emergencies attended.
- 998 Street lights repaired.
- 22,629 Potholes filled.
- 25,082 Gullies emptied.
- 23,026 Highway enquiries received.
- 48 Bridges inspected.
- 83,143m<sup>2</sup> of programmed patching and preventative maintenance,

- 26,450 Highway inspections carried out.
- 147 Highway schemes delivered.

It was proposed that moving forward, six-monthly updates would be provided to the Committee on the highway activities that have been delivered within the previous period in a dashboard format. The views of the committee were sought on the format of the dashboard and on the information that it should contain.

The Chairman sought assurance that robust procedures were in place for highway maintenance requests submitted through members to be appropriately escalated if required. The Cabinet Member noted the challenges of ensuring that maintenance requests were dealt with promptly due to the schedule and urgency of repairs constantly changing. The Cabinet Member assured the Chairman and the committee that processes were in place to escalate requests through district managers and the Group Manager, Highways and Transport as required.

In the discussion that followed, members raised the following points and questions:

- Members agreed that further communication activity should be carried out with residents to highlight the areas of responsibility around highway management and maintenance of Nottinghamshire County Council, and on those that were the responsibility of National Highways and other delivery partners.
- That the needs of wheelchair users should be fully considered when constructing and maintaining pavements to ensure that their accessibility and needs were always taken into account.
- Members sought further information on the current amount of Viafix being used for pothole repairs.
- Members sought further information on the current budgetary position in respect of highways maintenance.
- Members requested further information on the processes around how residents made compensation claims for damage to their vehicles caused by from poor highway surfaces and on the costs incurred by the Council because of these claims. Members asked whether the claim form could be made accessible on the Council's website.
- Whether information was recorded on areas of roads where repeated repairs had been carried out.
- Whether enough work was being carried to clear roadside gullies and reduce flooding.
- Members requested further details about the membership and role of the Highways Innovation and Continuous Improvement Board.
- Members requested further information on how the implementation of the "right repair, first time" approach to highway maintenance was delivering improved highway maintenance.

- That the proposed six-monthly update for Place Select Committee members on highways matters should, in addition to the information detailed at paragraph 21 of the report should include information on:
  - the amount of Vialix used.
  - the number of repairs and amount of maintenance carried out in comparison to previous years.
  - the response times for the completion of work.
  - areas of the highway network where repeat requests for repairs have been requested.
- Members requested that in future when information on the delivery highway maintenance were reported to the Committee, that the costs of each activity should, if possible, be included.

In response to the points raised, the Cabinet Member and officers provided the following responses:

- Whilst there had been significant improvements in communication with residents on highways matters, there was always more that could be done to ensure that residents were well informed on highway maintenance issues and whether it was the Council/Via who was responsible or whether it was National Highways. Information was also available online that showed which roads were unadopted. There was also a Highways Communications Board that worked to develop and maximise communication processes with residents.
- National guidance was used in addition to the Highway Inspection Manual to ensure that pavements met the needs of wheelchair users. The needs of all road users were always considered when implementing highway maintenance and improvement, but further work would be carried out to identify any areas for service development.
- The Council's website contained an interactive map that detailed where highway maintenance work was taking place and where it had been recently completed. The website also provided a facility that enabled feedback from residents on highways work that had been carried out to be gathered.
- The amount of Vialix used had reduced substantially over recent years. If defects in the highway were categorised as being immediate, a Vialix repair was completed. If, after assessment more work was found to be needed then a patching repair would be carried out.
- The Council had received £2.4million of additional funding from Government for highways maintenance that had supported additional maintenance work to be carried out. This had been particularly helpful in dealing with winter maintenance and the damage caused by Storm Babet. The capital budget was slightly overspent, but the revenue budget was on track. It was noted that further budget pressures could arise if there were other severe weather events over the winter period. Whilst it would never be possible to ensure that highways were totally pothole and damage free, the Council and Via were committed to maintaining highways to a good standard with the resources that were available.

- The processing of compensation claims, as an insurance matter, was dealt with by Finance, further information would be provided in writing to members of the committee on this process outside of the meeting.
- Information and data on areas of road where the same, or nearby potholes were repaired repeatedly was not routinely gathered. Further work would take place to investigate how repeated repairs could be monitored to support effective maintenance work.
- Gulley cleaning schedules were managed by district managers. It was noted that when gullies overflowed in flooding incidents it was not always the case that they were blocked with debris. In severe flooding incidents such as had been recently experienced, many gullies, whilst clear had been unable to cope with the amount of rain that had fallen. It was noted that rivers, streams, and many other factors also impacted flood risk in an area. Residents and members were encouraged to report any blocked gullies that they were aware of.
- The Innovation and Continuous Improvement Board was made up of senior managers from the County Council and Via. Meetings were held every eight weeks to enable the work of the Board to move forwards at pace.
- When highway repairs were undertaken, professional patching was the preferred approach. The “right repair, first time” approach was progressing well, with a greater focus on delivering larger scale permanent repairs, rather than just pothole filling. In professional patching, the patch is sealed on its edges to help to protect the road surface from water damage.
- Councillors were able to request a visit by the Highway Services Team to a particular highway area that was prone to flooding or potholes to enable them to examine how the issues could be resolved.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment and the Group Manager, Highways and Transport for attending the meeting and answering member questions.

## **RESOLVED 2023/019**

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the following issues raised by the Committee in its consideration of the report on the Highways Joint Innovation and Continuous Improvement Plan be progressed:
  - a) That the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, in consultation with officers examines how communication with residents can be enhanced on the responsibilities around highway management that are the responsibility of Nottinghamshire County Council, and on which are the responsibility of National Highways and other delivery partners.
  - b) That the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, in consultation with officers considers what further activity can be carried out to ensure that the

accessibility and needs of wheelchair users are taken into account when constructing and maintaining pavements.

- c) That the proposed six-monthly update for Place Select Committee members on highways matters should, in addition to the information detailed at paragraph 21 of the report, include information on:
- i. the amount of Viafix used.
  - ii. the number of repairs/maintenance carried out in comparison to previous years.
  - iii. the response times for the completion of work.
  - iv. areas of the highway network where repeat requests for repairs have been requested.

and that the information that is included should be provided in a tabulated form.

- d) That further information on the processes for dealing with compensation claims submitted by drivers arising from damage to vehicles caused by highway defects be provided to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to inform the consideration of any further scrutiny activity.
- e) That work should be carried out to enable the claim form for dealing with compensation claims submitted by drivers arising from damage to vehicles caused by highway defects to be made available on the Council's website.

**6. ON-STREET LOW EMISSION VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE (LEVI) PROGRAMME AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CABLE CHANNEL (EVCC) PILOT PROJECT UPDATE**

Councillor Neil Clarke MBE, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Gary Wood - Group Manager, Highways and Transport and Sue Jaques – Flood Risk Manager, attended the meeting to provide an update on the on-street Low Emission Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) programme and the Electric Vehicle Cable Channel (EVCC) pilot project.

It was noted that on 31 March 2023, the Department for Transport had announced £343million of capital funding for the installation of on-street charging infrastructure for Electric Vehicles. £33.744m of capital funding had been pre-allocated for the East Midlands with £5.522million being indicatively allocated for Nottinghamshire. The funding focused on the installation of highway charge points in areas where residents did not have access to off-street parking. The Council had subsequently submitted an expression of interest bid for £5.522m of funding from the LEVI Capital Fund with an ambition to install highway EV charge points across Nottinghamshire. This expression of interest had been approved by Department for Transport on 8 September 2023 with the next step being the submission of a full business case. If the bid was successful, capital funding would be allocated during 2023/24. The report provided details of the work being carried in the preparation of the bid and the activity that being planned to deliver the roll-out of the highway charge points.

The report also provided an update on the delivery of the EV Cable Channel pilot scheme (funded wholly by households) to help eligible households without off-street parking provision to charge their Electric Vehicle on-street.

In the discussion that followed, members raised the following points and questions:

- Whether the implementation of the Low Emission Vehicle Infrastructure (Levi) Programme would be impacted by current work being carried out around on-street parking provision in West Bridgford.
- In West Bridgford, despite 99 properties registering an interest in having Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points installed as part of the EV cable channel pilot scheme, only seven properties had had the EV charging points installed.
- Members asked whether on-street parking schemes were required to make sure that residents who had an electric vehicle were able to charge their vehicles outside, or close to their properties.
- Members requested further information about the procurement process for the provision of the EV charging infrastructure.
- Members noted that the current on-street parking measures were insufficient for EV charging and that national legislation would be required to change on-street parking arrangements.

In response to the points raised, the Cabinet Member and officers provided the following responses and information:

- As the EV cable channel project was a pilot scheme, feedback would be gathered about the advantages and disadvantages of the scheme to inform future delivery.
- The EV cable channels would go under the highway and would not impair pedestrians or wheelchair users when using pavements.
- The off-street parking arrangements in West Bridgford were a separate issue to the on-street electric vehicle charging provision.
- The EV charging point operator would be procured by the Council. They would maintain the charging points and set the rates of use. If the Council decided that a charging point was no longer needed, the operator would uninstall it.
- There were a range of options for tying off-street parking spaces to specific EV charging points. Some Local Authorities had allocated specific parking spaces for residents; others had left it to residents to decide how parking spaces are allocated.
- 4,500 sites from across the county had been considered as part of the scheme. In consultation with parishes, districts and members, the number of suitable sites had been narrowed down to 2,200. Once the funding results are announced, more work would be undertaken about the kind of work needed for those sites. Further consultation needed. The procurement exercise is being

undertaken on behalf of all 12 LAs in the consortium. Specific technology would be considered for specific sites.

- It would take four to five years for the LEVI programme to be fully implemented.
- Members would be provided with further information on the marketing plan for the EVCC pilot.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, the Group Manager, Highways and Transport and the Flood Risk Manager for attending the meeting and answering member questions.

#### **RESOLVED 2023/020**

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the following issues raised by the Committee in its consideration of the report on On-Street Low Emission Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Programme and Electric Vehicle Cable Channel (EVCC) Pilot Project be progressed:
  - a) That further information on the marketing activity planned to promote the Electric Vehicle Cable Channel (EVCC) Pilot Project be circulated to members of the Place Select Committee.
  - b) That individual feedback from initial charge point site selection consultation exercise that was carried out with all elected members be shared with each elected member who took part in the consultation.
  - c) That a further report on the delivery of the On-Street Low Emission Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Programme be brought to a future meeting of the Place Select Committee at a date to be agreed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

#### **7. CULTURE, LEARNING AND LIBRARIES - INSPIRE: DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024/2025**

Councillor Scott Carlton, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health, and Peter Gaw - Chief Executive Officer, Inspire, attended the meeting to present a report on the development of Inspire in the delivery of cultural, learning and library services across Nottinghamshire and on its plans for 2024/25.

It was noted that Inspire had a contractual arrangement with the Council that outlined the scope and range of services to be delivered on the Council's behalf. A detailed services specification and performance mechanism was in place and was reviewed and reported on to the Council on a quarterly basis.

Peter Gaw delivered a presentation on Inspire's Annual Review of 2022/23. A **summary** of the presentation is detailed below:

- 28,883 music, drama and poetry events have been hosted by Inspire across Nottinghamshire.



- 38,000 pre-school children and 35,868 school-aged children have attended events hosted by Inspire.
- 8,600 people have used the archives held in Nottinghamshire libraries and there have been 2,089,365 views of the County Council's parish registers.
- 900 people attended Hands on Heritage events to learn about the history of their local area.
- 27,000 people have attended youth arts performances hosted by Inspire.
- 6,304 adults have undertaken learning courses provided by Inspire such as Occupational Therapy, with 851 becoming accredited learners.
- 5012 family learners have used the service.
- 327 people used Inspire's new learning space in the Newark Buttermarket.
- 231 college learners used Inspire's education service.
- 3504 people participate in youth arts events.
- 17,640 pupils participated in singing events hosted by Inspire.
- 1,628,857 people have visited libraries in Nottinghamshire, with 26,857 being new users. 13,925 have used Inspire's eResources.
- 19,454 children have used the library facilities for school visits.
- 9406 people participated in the Summer Reading Challenge.
- 7347 'Bookstart Babies' used the service, which gives parents the chance to teach their children to read from an early age.
- The mobile Education Library Service has engaged with 309 schools across Nottinghamshire.
- 147 people were involved in knitting groups.
- 49 visual artists and 8 young filmmakers have used Inspire facilities.
- Inspire has 703 staff and 793 volunteers working in libraries and other venues. 250 award nominees at the Inspire Awards.

In the discussion that followed, members raised the following points and questions:

- Members agreed that Inspire delivered an excellent library service across Nottinghamshire and were impressed with Inspire's library facilities and the activities that were delivered at libraries that went over and above the level of service that Inspire was required to provide.

- Members expressed their concern about the potential impact on the services provided to residents if Inspire was required to make further financial savings.
- Members requested further details on the challenges of providing up-to-date IT equipment for Inspire facilities.
- Members asked for further information whether Nottingham City Council's financial situation had the potential to impact on the delivery of Inspire services to Nottinghamshire residents.

In response to the points raised, the Cabinet Member and Peter Gaw provided the following responses:

- The Council was committed to delivering a high quality library service, and unlike many other local authorities, had not closed libraries.
- The Council's ICT service had supported the delivery of an upgrading of library computer provision. A new staff role was also being introduced to grow new business opportunities for Inspire. Where opportunities came to further enhance the library service, those opportunities would be taken.
- County Council Libraries shared a computer system with the City Council and discussions with City colleagues also took place regarding the exchange or purchasing of stock. The archive and the Education Library Service was also shared between the County and City Library Service. Peter Gaw advised that each authority determined how it would deliver its own services to meet statutory duties towards the delivery of a library service. Members were advised that the situation with City would be closely monitored regarding any reduction or closures within the City's library service.
- Schemes involving getting pensioners and vulnerable people to use Inspire's facilities were being developed county-wide. Young people were being encouraged to use library facilities through the arts, college, and music programmes provided by Inspire to stop them from moving into bad patterns of behaviour.
- Communication activity would be delivered in cooperation with the Council to enable the wide range of services that were delivered by Inspire and that were really valued by residents to be shared and promoted.

The Chairman thanked Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health and the Chief Executive Officer of Inspire for attending the meeting and answering member questions.

## **RESOLVED 2023/021**

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That a further report on the development of Inspire in the delivery of cultural, learning and library services across Nottinghamshire be brought to the December 2024 meeting of the Place Select Committee.

## **8. CATERING, CLEANING AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT SERVICE - FUTURE SERVICE MODELS**

Councillor Scott Carlton, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health, presented a report that provided an overview of the Catering, Cleaning and Facilities Management Service and its current operating context. The recommendations of the report proposed the formation of a Task and Finish Group to enable members to fully consider the context and challenges being faced by the Council in the delivery of the service.

Members of the committee noted the challenges being faced by the Council in the delivery of the Catering and Facilities Management Service and agreed that carrying out a task and finish review would enable members to consider the issues involved in detail.

### **RESOLVED 2023/022**

- 1) That further scrutiny work be undertaken through the establishment of a task and finish group to consider the issues being faced by the Catering and Facilities Management Service and to offer subsequent recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities.
- 2) That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, in consultation with officers create a scope that will determine the work of the task and finish working group.

## **9. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered its Work Programme. Members requested that the countywide mobile phone and super-fast broadband coverage as well as the impact of flooding from Storm Babet and the rise in the costs of Free School Meals be considered for inclusion in the Work Programme.

### **RESOLVED 2023/023**

- 1) That the Work Programme be noted.
- 2) That Committee Members make any further suggestions for consideration by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for inclusion on the work programme, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member(s) and senior officers, and subject to the required approval by the Chairman of Overview Committee.

The meeting closed at 1:17pm.

**CHAIRMAN**