

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**REDEFINING YOUR COUNCIL – CONSULTATION OUTCOME****Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Policy Committee of the feedback and outcomes from the *Redefining Your Council* consultation.

Information and Advice

2. Redefining Your Council provides a framework for decision making to address further reductions in Government grant funding, coupled with rising demand for services, driven by an ageing population and the focus on safeguarding children. Other significant factors include changes to national policy such as the Care Bill, that will come into effect in 2015/16 and changes to regulatory frameworks, such as Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. In addition, in a digital era, people have expectations that public services will be provided differently, keeping pace with advances in mobile technology and social media.
3. Redefining Your Council sets out the approach to tackling the scale of challenge we face, recognising that the Council can no longer deliver services in the same way or at the same level as in the past. Redefining Your Council creates a framework that will enable decisions to be made about which services the Council provides, how they will be provided and at what level. These decisions will be underpinned by the principles and values of the Council as set out in the Strategic Plan (2014-2018).
4. On 6 May 2014, Policy Committee approved the draft Redefining Your Council framework for consultation.
5. This report provides an overview of the consultation responses and makes recommendations on revisions to the Redefining Your Council document to take account of these. The revised Redefining Your Council document is provided at **Appendix 1**. The **background papers** detail the consultation process and summary findings of the consultation.

Consultation process

6. Consultation began on 7 May 2014 and ran for 6 weeks. During this time Nottinghamshire residents, business partners, health and police colleagues, voluntary and community sector representatives, Higher Education sector representatives, other public sector providers, Council employees and their

representative organisations have been engaged through a variety of events and activities aimed at seeking their feedback and views.

7. The consultation process was designed to provide an opportunity for open and honest discussion with interested people and groups on the future direction of travel of the Council. People were engaged through a variety of formats, including questionnaires, face to face meetings, focus groups and a number of events for employees. In addition to the main Redefining Your Council document a short easy read executive summary was made available.
8. A summary of the key activity undertaken is given below:
 - public questionnaire - through the internet and paper copies available in all NCC public libraries. This attracted 501 responses
 - publicity - through partner organisations such as NAVO and district based Community and Voluntary Sector infrastructure organisations
 - five Employee Roadshows - for around 600 frontline employees
 - four Leadership Development Programme events - for 360 team managers
 - employee Focus Groups and meetings with Trade Unions through Joint Central Negotiating Panel
 - employee survey through the intranet - paper copies were made available at all employee events and 136 questionnaires were completed
 - face to face stakeholder and partner events - with around 40 stakeholders representing a wide range of locally based businesses and organisations;
 - a challenge session with Local Government Association representatives;
 - email publicity - through the following databases: the Council's emailme service, Citizens Panel, staff groups, and grant funded groups
 - media releases - resulting in 40 local and national news stories
 - information on the County Council's website - including a bespoke webpage with the full draft strategy; summary and consultation questionnaire
 - telephone enquiries through the Customer Service Centre.

Summary of consultation results

9. The consultation resulted in engagement with over 1,600 respondents in total.
10. Overall, responses were positive and in favour of the approach outlined in Redefining Your Council. All audience groups were positive about the approach to engagement and indicated a preference for on-going discussions.
11. There was a strong preference for an evidence based approach to decision making, arising from the reviews of services. This stemmed from a consistent view that there is no "one size fits all" approach which suits the variety of services provided by the Council.
12. Throughout this process a number of overarching themes have been identified, including:

- **mixed economy:** providing clarity around how the Council plans to deliver its services in future, in particular the Council's approach to evaluating options for service delivery
- **detail:** as options for change emerge engaging with employees, partners and local people about what these mean in more detail
- **clarity:** about what outcomes the Council aims to achieve from its services and what services the Council will deliver, particularly in relation to those services which aren't part of the core offer
- **financial strategy:** the further development of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy to ensure that the Council is making the best use of resources and planning for the future
- **forward thinking:** planning for the longer term (beyond the three years covered in Redefining Your Council) through strategic thinking and workforce development
- **partnerships:** working with key partners to develop innovative ideas and share learning.

13. All consultation comments have been analysed and responses drafted to address each issue. This is available on the Nottinghamshire County Council website at: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/redefiningyourcouncil

14. A summary of feedback broken down by each major audience group is provided below.

Public consultation

15. Overall, there were 501 responses to the public consultation.

16. The Public Consultation was promoted through a variety of methods including a bespoke Redefining Your Council webpage, rolling coverage on the Council's website, extensive media coverage, Twitter and Facebook updates as well as email bulletins to 2,500 members of the Citizens Panel and 900 "email me" subscribers.

17. Key themes arising from the public consultation were:

- **the majority (58%) of respondents strongly agree or agree with the overall approach** that the Council is taking to Redefining Your Council;
- **the majority (59%) of respondents also strongly agree or agree that the Redefining Your Council draft document represented well the Council's three core values:** Treating People Fairly, Value for Money and Working Together;
- **overall (an average of 66%) of respondents strongly agree or agree with the four key drivers for change, and;**
- **the majority (62%) of respondents strongly agree or agree that the Council will need to source services from a range of different suppliers in the future** (e.g. from the private and public sector, along with in-house provision and consideration of mutual companies and charitable status). 28% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this proposal.

18. All respondents were given an opportunity to provide comments to be considered when developing the Redefining Your Council framework. This question attracted 200 responses, with some respondents making more than one comment. All the comments were analysed and categorised under the following key themes/issues.

19. These are listed below:

Comments	No. of Comments
• Comments relating to outsourcing and the implications for the cost and quality of services	58
• Look for efficiency savings by reducing administration and management overheads.	34
• Comments relating to the <i>Redefining Your Council</i> content or consultation terminology to avoid jargon/buzzwords	32
• General comments	32
• Protect frontline services and staff particularly those supporting the most vulnerable	26
• Consider shared services and or mergers with other Local Authorities	18
• Review staffing structures and salaries: consider Staff welfare, empower staff, etc. Stronger managerial leadership and Improve internal communications.	15
• Protect rural communities and non-statutory services such as country parks, youth services.	13
• Look at income generation	12
• Empower local communities to do more for themselves and work with the voluntary sector to deliver some services	11
• Introduce new ICT and ensure staff are trained to use it	10
• Review democratic structures to make elected Members and decision making more accountable	7
• Seek greater support/challenge central government.	8

20. All this feedback has been given due consideration in revising and producing the final Redefining Your Council document.

Employee consultation

21. A wide range of employee consultation events were arranged to inform and consult across the organisation. This has included face to face meetings with over 1,000 employees through focus groups, the Leadership Development programme, departmental workshops and council-wide events.

22. Overall, employees indicated support for the approach outlined in Redefining Your Council. A consistent message from feedback was a desire for on-going engagement and communication in order to contribute ideas and to be kept informed as more detail emerges.

23. Initially 3 employee roadshows were planned to take place throughout the consultation period. This was extended to a total of 5 to meet with significant levels of demand. These events were organised and presented by the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive with an opportunity for attendees to participate in a question and answer session.

24. Around 600 employees have participated in the roadshows with every event being fully booked. This included Trade Union representatives. In addition employees have also had the opportunity to submit questions before each event which have been addressed as part of the question and answer session.

25. Key themes that emerged from the roadshows include:

- clarity about what the Council's **core service offer** will comprise
- exploration of options to deliver **services differently** and more effectively
- considering how we might **use our reserves** to support transformation
- a preference for operating in a **mixed-economy** of service provision
- consideration of **sharing services** with other local authorities and the **future shape of local government**
- **supporting managers** through change
- exploring opportunities for **income generation**
- consideration of the impact of **existing budget savings**
- **continuing to engage** and make more detail available on the specific implications for services
- **the need for a strong commitment to the process** from both elected Members and senior officers.

26. A separate questionnaire was available on the intranet to all employees. This received 136 responses which indicate:

- **98.4% of respondents feel more informed** about Redefining Your Council
- **97.6% understand why we need to change** the way we work
- **75.2% feel committed** to supporting Redefining Your Council in their work
- **80.7% believe that Redefining Your Council reflects the Council's 3 core values**; to treat people fairly, ensure value for money and working together
- **80.2% feel that they can contribute their ideas** about Redefining Your Council
- **84% plan to discuss Redefining Your Council** with their colleagues
- **75.6% feel that senior managers have been open and honest** in their communications around Redefining Your Council.

27. These responses have directly informed the revised Redefining Your Council document.

28. In addition, feedback, comments and observations have also been received from individuals, collective teams or groups of staff. These have been logged and considered as part of feedback and are included in the summary of key themes in paragraph 12 above.

Trade Union consultation

29. Redefining Your Council has been discussed with the recognised Trade Unions at the Central Joint Consultative and Negotiating Panel meetings on 26 March, 24 April and 22 May.

30. It has been agreed that this item will be a standing item on both Central Panel and Departmental Joint Consultative and Negotiating Panels to provide the opportunity to discuss any issues arising with Trade Union colleagues at both a corporate and service specific level as the work on the targeted service reviews and transformation portfolios is developed.

31. Further consideration is being given to how trades union colleagues can be involved in more detailed, specific cross-cutting strands of activity such as the development of a Workforce Strategy for the Council.

Stakeholder consultation

32. Stakeholders were engaged in a variety of ways including letters, face to face meetings and consultation events. Around 40 stakeholder organisations have participated in these events including representatives from health, police, local business, education, the voluntary and community sector and other public sector partners.

33. Feedback from this group has been strongly supportive of the Redefining Your Council approach. A common theme emerging from the group has been the need to create further opportunities for engagement with the Council on an on-going basis to help shape the direction of travel and bring new ideas to the table.

34. The key themes arising from the stakeholder consultation were:

- focus on **creativity and innovation** when looking at different ways to provide Council services
- **collaboration** with other public sector partners, voluntary and community sector and local business to co-produce and learn from other bodies
- **a changed relationship** between the Council and local people, particularly in relation to expectation/demand management and encouraging people to think differently
- improve how the Council **commissions and procures** its services
- a need to **invest in transformation** and to **utilise reserves**
- ensuring the approach to transformation focuses **a longer term strategic approach**

How this will be addressed in the future development of Redefining Your Council

35. Following the extensive consultation process, feedback and views from the public, employees and stakeholders have been considered and a number of revisions are proposed to the Redefining Your Council document. The revised document is attached at **Appendix 1**.

36. Significant revisions to the document as a direct result of the consultation include:

Proposed amendment:	Where this can be found:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaboration, public sector alignment and how we will work with others: has been added as an important area of focus for the Council. The proposed revision to Redefining Your Council outlines how the Council will look to create stronger partnerships and increased collaboration with other public sector bodies, the voluntary and community sector and local businesses. This is intended to lead to more shared services and co-production with other local organisations and bodies; 	Page 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a focus on outcomes: has been included to ensure that the Council clearly identifies the outcomes for the users of services; 	Page 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council’s approach to its finances: has been clarified with the Council re-evaluating the underlying principles and assumptions that support its Medium Term Financial Strategy. This work will align the implementation of Redefining Your Council with a fundamental review of the Council’s financial planning and the forecasts of its revenue streams, cost and inflationary pressures and the use and allocation of its balances and reserves; 	This will be considered by County Council at its meeting on 26 June 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making the best use of the Council’s buildings and fixed resources: both internally and externally by sharing with partners where appropriate; 	Page 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a commitment to targeted early intervention and prevention: where evidence demonstrates that it improves outcomes and prevents long term high cost, and; 	Page 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • empowering local people: through exploring effective methods of community engagement, working with local communities in the spirit of co-producing some Council services. 	Page 5

Way Forward

37. The reviews set out in Redefining Your Council (Section Four) are underway. These will be complete by early October 2014. Where appropriate, decisions arising from these reviews will be progressed through the relevant Committee.
38. All other outcomes arising from the reviews will form part of the Council's budget consultation, which will begin in the autumn of 2014.
39. There will be an on-going engagement with employees, stakeholders and local people to engage with and inform them of progress to implement Redefining Your Council. This will be supported by a Communications Plan.
40. Further updates on Redefining Your Council will be provided to Policy Committee on a regular basis, incorporated into the current updates on the Council's transformation programme.

41. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Policy Committee:

1. notes the outcomes of the Redefining Your Council consultation process;
2. agrees the proposed revisions to the document and approves the final Redefining Your Council document attached at **Appendix 1**;
3. endorses the commitment to ongoing engagement with the public, employees and stakeholders;
4. notes that outcomes from the review process will be progressed through the relevant committee or incorporated into the Council's budget consultation, which will begin in the autumn of 2014; and
5. notes that future updates on Redefining Your Council will be included in the regular reports to Policy Committee on the Council's transformation programme (already included in the work programme).

Councillor Alan Rhodes
Leader of the Council

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Constitutional Comments (SG 24/06/2014)

15. The proposals in this report fall within the remit of the Committee.

Financial Comments (PDS 24/06/2014)

16. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, as set out, Redefining Your Council provides a framework on which future decisions will be made as to how the County Council will close the forecast budget deficit of £77m

over the next 3 years. This framework will be used to inform the County Council's annual budget setting process.

Human Resources Comments (MT 24/06/2014)

17. Employees and recognised Trade Unions have been fully engaged in the consultation process to date. Further events and dialogue is planned to support the continued engagement of employees and their representatives in the Council's transformation. The recognised Trade Unions and employees will be formally consulted through the agreed mechanisms and processes as proposals are developed.

Background Papers

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Nottinghamshire County Council Strategic Plan 2014 – 2018
Nottinghamshire County Council Strategic Management Framework
Consultation responses
Nottinghamshire Unison Response

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All