



**PLACE SELECT COMMITTEE
Wednesday 22 May 2024 at 10:30am**

COUNCILLORS

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

Matt Barney	Mrs Sue Saddington
Richard Butler – Apologies	Roger Upton
Anne Callaghan BEM	Elizabeth Williamson
Penny Gowland	
Kane Oliver - Apologies	
John Ogle	

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor David Martin for Councillor Kane Oliver
Councillor Boyd Elliott for Councillor Richard Butler

OTHER COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Scott Carlton
Councillor Neil Clarke MBE
Councillor Reg Adair

OFFICERS

Joelle Davies	-	Group Manager, Growth Infrastructure and Development
Martin Elliott	-	Senior Scrutiny Officer
Derek Higon	-	Interim Corporate Director – Place
John Hughes	-	Catering and Facilities Manager
Katherine Harclerode	-	Democratic Services Officer
Laura Simpson	-	Senior Practitioner for Heritage and Tourism
Mark Walker	-	Interim Service Director, Place and Communities

1. TO NOTE THE APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR OF PLACE SELECT COMMITTEE AS AGREED BY COUNCIL ON 16 MAY 2024

Councillor Mike Adams was noted as Chairman of the Committee and Councillor Tom Hollis as Vice-Chairman.

2. TO NOTE THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE 2024-2025 MUNICIPAL YEAR

The members of the committee were noted as follows: Cllrs Barney, Butler, Callaghan, Gowland, Oliver, Ogle, Mrs Saddington, Upton, and Williamson.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2023, having been circulated previously, were confirmed as correct and signed by the Chairman.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kane Oliver (Other Reasons) and from Councillor Richard Butler (Other County Council Business).

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6. VISITOR ECONOMY FRAMEWORK – ONE YEAR ON

Consideration was given to a report introduced by the Deputy Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Asset Management, which outlined the progress that had been achieved in the implementation of the Visitor Economy Framework. The Framework had been adopted in spring 2023 to focus on leisure and tourism throughout the County. The Deputy Cabinet Member was joined by the Group Manager for Growth Infrastructure and Development and the Senior Practitioner for Heritage and Tourism who presented additional information about the impact of implementation progress, specifically in respect of engagement with partners and provision of strategic guidance.

Areas of work and investment comprising the Framework and action plan were described. For example, the Local Visitor Economy Partnership figured prominently in the action plan in relation to work to obtain funding for the objectives described in the plan. This was done in collaboration with the districts and boroughs of Nottinghamshire. Business support and training had also been delivered and insights gained from the training sessions had been implemented in the context of visitor attractions within Nottinghamshire. Spectator sport was another important theme that had been highlighted for further promotion as part of the action plan. Monitoring of visitor economy data had shown a recovery trend from pandemic levels, and a return to pre-pandemic levels was anticipated by 2025.

The Chairman thanked the Deputy Cabinet Member and officers for presenting the summary of the work that had been completed in respect of the Visitor Economy Framework. In the discussion that followed, Members raised the following questions and points:

- Members expressed support for historic and rural assets in the County to be highlighted within the Framework for further promotion. It was understood to be economically important to preserve the environment within the beautiful countryside in the process.
- Members expressed support for expansion within the hospitality sector. Further assurances were requested that jobs within the hospitality sector received due regard within the action plan, as it had been observed that many places within the County could benefit from more B&Bs and hotels.
- Members expressed interest in viewing the detailed version of the action plan.

- Additional information was sought regarding how requests for additional funding would be progressed.
- More details were requested in respect of partnership working to obtain funding to deliver the objectives within the action plan, especially those pertaining to Visit Notts.
- Members emphasised that travel, as a factor in helping people enjoy their stay, should receive consideration as part of this work, for example by exploring how travel passes might work in conjunction with events at the sporting grounds.
- It was felt that there could be benefit in having a resource for reference as part of the Framework that brings all the local assets together.
- Members sought additional information regarding how the location of sporting events affects the local visitor economy within West Bridgford.
- Having the ability to state what was special about local areas was felt to be an important part of maximising and distributing economic benefit across the County.
- Additional details were requested regarding how the beneficial financial impact of the Framework was anticipated to grow.
- Further elaboration on the data evidence of the impact of the work was requested.
- Further information was sought regarding how officers would be participating in conferences in support of the work.
- It was hoped that the framework would strengthen the case for events to continue at the City ground.

The Deputy Cabinet Member thanked members and officers for their energy and enthusiasm. In response to the points raised, the Deputy Cabinet Member and the Group Manager Growth Infrastructure and Development and the Senior Practitioner for Heritage and Tourism provided the following information:

- Assurances were provided that these assets were picked up within the action plan and were part of what makes the area appealing as a place to spend the day or a weekend, although they were not a focus within this report.
- Changes had been observed in the use of hotels and bed and breakfasts with increased use of accommodation rental within private homes. Data around these changes in the sector had been captured. Officers noted that a survey by the Local Enterprise Partnership had directly led to a new Mansfield hotel. Related work with Cabinet Members was ongoing, and a request would be made to the MCA for funding to add additional accommodation. It was understood that having the right quality of accommodation was fundamental to getting people to stay longer.
- Clarification was provided that the pilot training offer had successfully gauged whether there was appetite. It had been recognised that the Council can

facilitate training rather than deliver it. The Cabinet Members were reviewing this.

- The action plan would be shared after the meeting. It was very detailed, and for the purposes of the scrutiny meeting, a summary of the progress had been provided as requested.
- The Visit Notts contract was a public decision document that would be shared to provide the requested additional details.
- Further elaboration was provided around how the theme within the Framework of sport as a spectacle aimed to encourage visitors to stay longer. Sometimes this work could have unintended consequences; therefore, one of the key aims was to strengthen links with the public transport networks so that visiting a public attraction would not require travel by private car.
- The Local Visitor Economy Partnership work had received accreditation by Visit England, which enabled application for further funding. This was a key milestone that would be relevant to the work with the destination management plan in collaboration with Nottingham City.
- Discussions had taken place regarding investment opportunities within the wider area which had involved articulation of strengths and opportunities.
- Whilst the current strategy predated discussions around use of the city ground, in the event that there were any changes in the location of sporting events or clubs, the team would assess any associated positive and negative impacts.
- Officers noted that the costs of the initiatives were included as part of the budgets. To create a step change, the team sought additional funding to enable delivery of the full objectives contained within the action plan.
- Further information was provided regarding the data for Nottinghamshire compared to other areas showed promise that the area was bouncing back after the pandemic and cost of living pressures. This included an uptick in business data that showed that business tourism was an area of growth.

The Chairman thanked the Deputy Cabinet member and officers for the report and for the additional information provided.

RESOLVED 2024/06

- 1) That the work carried out by Nottinghamshire County Council and its partners in the first year of the Visitor Economy be noted.
- 2) That the comments made by members of the committee around the future priorities for the delivery of the Visitor Economy Framework be noted.
- 3) That the following issues raised by the Committee in its consideration of the report on the delivery of the Visitor Economy Framework be progressed:

- a) That the action plan that supports the delivery of the objectives of the Visitor Economy Framework be circulated to the members of the Place Select Committee.
- b) That information on the service agreement with Visit Nottinghamshire be circulated to the members of the Place Select Committee.
- c) That a summary of the STEAM data that has been used to inform the delivery of the activities that support the delivery of the Visitor Economy Framework be circulated to the members of the Place Select Committee.
- d) That a further report of the delivery of the Visitor Economy Framework be received at future meeting of the Place Select Committee, at a date to be agreed by the Chairman.

7. PLACE SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THE CATERING AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT SERVICE

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Chairman on behalf of the members of a task group who undertook a recent scrutiny review of the Council's Catering and Facilities Management Service. The report presented the findings and recommendations of the review following the consideration of evidence relating to key areas of service delivery, including production, distribution and interface with schools and other customers.

After meeting with service leads to review thorough information regarding service delivery, members of the task group had visited the production facility where meals were made as well as a primary school. The work group had a chance to sample the foods, which the Service prepares and serves to residents and in schools across Nottinghamshire. Members of the task group were able to develop thorough understanding of the Service operationally and strategically. Members reviewing the Service had found that the Service was of high quality and value to Nottinghamshire. Members noted the social value it brought to Nottinghamshire residents.

The work group had then considered a range of options for the future of the Service with a view to addressing the financial challenges associated with delivery of the Service in a way that could maintain high quality and value for the residents who rely on this Service and stability for staff who work within the Service. The Chairman summarised the key findings and recommendations of the review and thanked the Members who contributed to the review.

The Members who undertook the review were:

- Councillor Mike Adams (Chairman)
- Councillor Richard Butler
- Councillor Anne Callaghan BEM
- Councillor Mrs Sue Saddington
- Councillor Callum Bailey
- Councillor Tom Hollis

The Chairman noted the cross party working that had been done during the review process and the development of the recommendations contained in the report. The Chairman noted his thanks to the staff who deliver the Service and to the Vice-Chair regarding the contribution of an alternative financial view which had been included in

the report on the scrutiny review outcomes. The detailed report would be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

Summarised below are the points and concerns raised by Members during the discussion that followed:

- Members noted the thoroughness of the information presented for consideration by the review group, although the conclusions drawn had been different for some members in the end, as captured in the report as dissenting views.
- Additional assurances were sought that the County Council will continue to support schools in fulfilling their responsibility to provide school meals for students. It was hoped that the future of the Service would not present risks to service quality or staff wages and would prioritise wellbeing of children and vulnerable community members. It was felt that the costs did not seem insurmountable in the view of the social value benefits.
- The Chairman provided clarification that schools that were maintained by the Council have school meals provided by the County Council, whilst academy trusts may opt to contract with another provider of school meals.
- It was felt to be clear from the report that a change was required in order to make the Service financially sustainable. More information was requested around how the addition of a partner would help to achieve this. Support was expressed for consideration to be given to having a charitable trust as the potential partner.
- Additional clarification was sought regarding arrangements for the facilities services and catering to continue to work as two business areas within the partnership. Members noted the breadth of operations within the Service and expressed hopes that the partnership could deliver this.
- Members requested to receive a further update regarding the implementation of the proposed changes.
- Additional assurances were requested that Service conducted meaningful engagement with all relevant trade unions and that the results would be submitted for scrutiny as part of a future update.
- Members affirmed the health and wellbeing impact of delivering the service well.

In response to the points raised in discussion, Members who participated in the review provided the following additional information:

- The review process report was felt to have been thorough and had given all members of the working group the opportunity to contribute views that have been reflected in the report.
- The Chairman provided clarification that it was not within the remit of the Committee to make changes to the Service; rather, the Committee had the ability to make recommendations which would be submitted to Cabinet for consideration and response.

- It was felt that the social value of the Service was very significant.
- Support was expressed for partnership approach as had been done successfully in the library service, and a future update for scrutiny regarding engagement and implementation was welcome.
- The Chairman provided assurances that further updates to scrutiny would be requested as part of the development of the work programme for 2024-25.

In response to the points raised, officers and the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health made the following points:

- The Interim Service Director, Place and Communities provided assurances that thorough engagement activity had taken place with trade unions and staff prior to the review. The Interim Service Director and Head of Human Resources had met with trade unions as part of the ongoing consultations with the Trade Unions. Trade Unions had also been invited to attend the review meetings.
- The Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health welcomed the review findings as part of the ongoing conversation around the challenges facing the Service and thanked the work group for the thorough report. Further progress updates to scrutiny were offered.

RESOLVED 2024/07

- 1) That the report detailing the work of the scrutiny review of the Catering and Facilities Management Service be received.
- 2) That the dissenting views, as detailed at paragraphs 112 - 123 of the report, be noted.
- 3) That the recommendations from the scrutiny review of the Catering and Facilities Management Service, as detailed in the report, be endorsed and referred to Cabinet for consideration.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to an outline programme of scrutiny work, including upcoming work programme development process. Updates regarding upcoming agenda items which would be considered at the next meeting were also provided.

In response to points raised by members, clarification was provided that a piece of scrutiny work in respect of blue badges was being considered as part of the work programme of the Overview Committee.

It was also confirmed that the review of flooding alleviation and resilience including gully cleaning was in the process of being scheduled.

RESOLVED 2023/08

- 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 1:29 pm.

CHAIRMAN