

**THE CITY OF NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
ECONOMIC PROSPERITY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 17 DECEMBER
2021 AT 9.00 AM AT GEDLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

MEMBERS PRESENT

(A denotes absent)

(A* denotes absent from the meeting but joined remotely, without voting rights)

Chairman – Councillor Ben Bradley MP – Nottinghamshire County Council

Mayor Andy Abrahams – Mansfield District Council

Councillor John Clarke – Gedling Borough Council - A

Councillor Simon Greaves – Bassetlaw District Council – A*

Councillor David Lloyd – Newark and Sherwood District Council

Councillor David Mellen – Nottingham City Council

Councillor Matthew Relf – Ashfield District Council – A*

Councillor Milan Radulovic – Broxtowe Borough Council

Councillor Simon Robinson – Rushcliffe Borough Council - A

OFFICERS PRESENT

David Armiger – Chief Executive, Bassetlaw District Council

Hannah Barrett – Economic Development Officer, Nottinghamshire County Council

Luke Barrett – Head of Communications and Marketing, Nottinghamshire County Council

Mel Barrett – Chief Executive, Nottingham City Council - A

Hayley Barsby – Chief Executive, Mansfield District Council - A

Gerry Dawson – Interim Manager - Place, Nottinghamshire County Council

Mike Hill – Chief Executive, Gedling Borough Council

Teresa Hodgkinson – Chief Executive, Ashfield District Council

Ruth Hyde – Chief Executive, Broxtowe Borough Council - A

Kath Marriott – Chief Executive, Rushcliffe Borough Council

Anthony May – Chief Executive, Nottinghamshire County Council

John Robinson – Chief Executive, Newark & Sherwood District Council

Keith Ford – Democratic Services Team Manager, Nottinghamshire County Council

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor Jenny Holdsworth for Councillor John Clarke

Mariam Amos – Strategic Director, Mansfield District Council for Hayley Barsby

Sajeeda Rose – Corporate Director for Growth and City Development, Nottingham City Council for Mel Barrett

Zulfiqar Darr – Deputy Chief Executive, Broxtowe Borough Council for Ruth Hyde

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2021, having been previously circulated, were agreed as a true and correct record and were confirmed for signing by the Chair of the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor John Clarke and Councillor Simon Robinson.

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor Simon Greaves and Councillor Matthew Relf, who both joined the meeting remotely, inputting into the debate without voting.

Apologies were also received from Mel Barrett (Nottingham City Council), Hayley Barsby (Mansfield District Council) and Ruth Hyde (Broxtowe Borough Council).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

4. JOINT WORKING AND DEVOLUTION PROGRAMME UPDATE

Councillor Ben Bradley MP introduced the item highlighting the ongoing general progress with the development of the business cases, recent meetings with various partners around the young people theme and his response (shared with Council Leaders) to the concerns raised by Councillor Jason Zadrozny about potential local government reorganisation implications of any devolution deal.

Anthony May introduced the report which outlined progress of the programme and highlighted:

- Government officials continued to be kept up to date with the development of the business cases;
- a recent meeting of the Chief Officers Forum (involving all Chief Officers of public service agencies in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire) had included an update on the work on devolution, prompting further offers of help, including from the further education sector;
- Anthony May and Councillor Ben Bradley MP had met with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Carolyn Henry; the new Interim Chief Executive of the Office of the PCC, Sharon Caddell; the Head of the Violence Reduction Unit, Dave Wakelin; and the Head of Youth Services at Nottinghamshire County Council, Pom Bhogal, on 16 December to discuss the young people theme, including the ongoing funding of youth work training and the potential for accessing jointly other funding strands such as violence against women and safer streets.

- Anthony, Ben, Pom and Ruth Hyde had also met with the National Youth Agency (NYA) this week, with the NYA agreeing to act as the external partner for that strand of work. Pom has also contacted his counterpart at the City to ensure they are also linked into this work;
- Kath Marriott was leading the recruitment process for the dedicated programme team and it was hoped that resources would be in place by early 2022;
- the mapping exercise was now almost complete and would be shared with Members in due course;
- further feedback was awaited from Government, following the initial positive response.

In response to issues raised by Members the following points were addressed:-

- it was recognised that the young people theme needed to be wider than preventative work about drugs and knife crimes, with a comprehensive package of youth work opportunities to be developed, ranging from universal services to a targeted and specialist diversionary offer;
- West Nottinghamshire College was one of the further education partners involved, and had underlined their commitment by agreeing to contribute towards the funding of a post to support this work;
- with regard to the form and function of the subsequent governance framework and decision-making arising from any powers devolved, the Economic Prosperity Committee (EPC) was seen as the vehicle to formulate policy and prioritise funding, whilst actual powers would be devolved to the 'strong leaders' of the two upper tier Councils (Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County). Further views were being sought from Government around the potential for any such powers to be devolved to the EPC itself. Whilst Ruth Hyde continued to lead on the governance work via the Monitoring Officers group, it was acknowledged that an external, objective view and support on this issue could also prove useful. This issue would be considered further in the New Year, following the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper.

RESOLVED 2021/006

- 1) That progress to date on the devolution and joint working programme be noted.
- 2) That the next steps listed under paragraph 15 of the report be approved.

5. NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CASE FOR DEVOLUTION – DEVELOPMENT OF PRIORITY THEMES

Anthony May introduced the report and, with input from the relevant lead Members and officers, outlined progress with each of the priority theme scopes as follows:

- Enabling and supporting young people through their journey to adulthood
 - As previously mentioned, work with partners would seek to optimise resources and harness all available funding within Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and Councillor Ben Bradley MP was due to discuss further with a DCMS Minister in the New Year.

- Economy and Infrastructure
 - discussions were ongoing to ensure clarity of areas of overlap with other priority themes to
 - prevent any duplication (e.g. transport infrastructure);
 - ensure alignment with the activities of the University and the LEP;
 - clarify the added value which this theme could bring alongside the business as usual.

- Education and Skills
 - a meeting had been held earlier this week with Nottingham Trent University and the further education principals. Discussions had included the articulation of a vision for education and skills for over 16s, bringing together schools and further and higher education sectors in a closer way than previously;

 - It was hoped that the power to commission locally from a single funding source could be devolved, thereby amalgamating the various funding streams that higher and further education colleges were currently required to bid for on an annual basis. Discussions with the Department for Education would be needed in order to develop such a proposal and Councillor Bradley planned to progress those discussions in the New Year. Devolved funding in general was seen as one of the potential benefits of any devolution deal;

 - in response to queries from Members the following points were addressed:
 - Early Years literacy would be considered in due course through this theme, although at this stage work had focussed largely on the post-16 offer;

 - with regard to the ongoing work between Nottingham Trent University (NTU) with West Nottinghamshire College in Mansfield it was felt that this partnership and collaboration and the opportunities it offers, which Government were aware of, was enough of a unique selling proposition without the need for the development of a distinctly named university in Mansfield, although the naming could be subject to further discussions between NTU and West Nottinghamshire College. Any discussions needed to recognise the fact that West Nottinghamshire College were also based in Ashfield, including the degree level robotics and automation courses;

- with regard to community education and routes through to higher education there were a number of other initiatives and pilots which could be linked into this partnership work. The different demographics of students in the area compared to those attending NTU main campuses currently was recognised. Other colleges in the County, such as Newark College, were also starting to show an interest in similar collaborations.
- Environment
 - work was continuing to help develop and prioritise the list of 'big ideas' and what was needed in terms of extra powers, funding and support from Government to inform the devolution proposals. Nottingham City Council would link into this theme to share their learning and best practice;
 - in response to queries from Members the following points were addressed:
 - discussions around this theme recognised the benefits, and the difficulties in achieving, the alignment of local plans and standards to help improve the environment. This also linked into the Housing priority theme. Any common approach would need to be developed in partnership with the construction industry and with appropriate intervention from Government required. The importance of the East Midlands Freeport and East Midlands Development Corporation in achieving policy alignment was underlined. The negative impacts of changes in the planning processes and the delay in the Environment Bill were also highlighted;
 - the benefits of a joint procurement approach across the County were also recognised as another means of ensuring consistent and improved standards from property developers;
 - with regard to the County Council's ongoing waste management contract with Veolia, there was a commitment and a willingness to work in partnership to help address some of the new expectations and standards due to be introduced by the Government and to meet the Council's ambitions overall. Ongoing improvements in technology could also see progress around issues such as recycling of secondary plastics;
 - the value and potential transferability of any lessons from the current pilot flood alleviation initiative in Mansfield, and the relationship with highways maintenance, were also recognised.

- Housing
 - a recent meeting to help scope out the business case, to focus on areas where agreement could more likely be reached across the Councils, had proven helpful. Environmental standards would be part of the broader conversations around this theme.

- Transport
 - the list of aims of this theme, although relatively modest, could achieve a significant improvement, for example a five year programme for maintenance and capital allocations. It was recognised that there was unlikely to be significant Government investment in new roads and the importance of pulling together City and County proposals into a complementary package was highlighted;

 - in response to queries from Members the following points were clarified:
 - the Robin Hood Line and Maid Marian Line were not specifically referenced at this stage, pending clarification of the delivery mechanism for the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP). Following that clarification, the various impacts of the IRP would be referenced within any relevant priority themes and also within the revised East Midlands Development Corporation Business Case;

 - in terms of developing a vision for strategic transport in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and agreeing a list of improvements should funding become available, such ambitions would also be captured within the revised East Midlands Development Corporation Business Case;

 - with regards to where the need to increase traffic capacity on the A57 was being addressed, it was agreed that clarification would be sought from officers and a briefing on this shared with Members subsequent to the meeting.

RESOLVED 2021/007

That the progress in developing the priority theme scopes and the proposed process for developing detailed business cases be noted.

6. SPENDING REVIEW AND OTHER SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT FUNDING ALLOCATIONS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT (INCLUDING INTEGRATED RAIL PLAN)

Anthony May introduced the report which provided an overview of the recent Government Spending Review and Government Grant allocations to local Councils.

In response to queries from Members the following points were addressed:

- it was unclear at this stage to what extent a devolution deal would offer additional capital investment beyond the investment outlined in the report. In previous Mayoral / Combined Authority deals, the amount of gain share capital (capital allocations set aside to be spent or borrowed against for the purpose of local investment) averaged at £30m per year per deal but it was not yet clear that similar amounts would be available for new devolution deals, including any using a strong leader / EPC model. The extent of the bargaining power which individual devolution deals would bring in securing a share of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was also yet to be known. The overall funding picture should be clearer upon publication of the White Paper and the framework for devolution;
- Related financial benefits of devolution included drawing together some of the pots of funding to enable more locally prioritised expenditure and reduced time spent on bidding for funds. The importance of having a robust process to identify need in spending any such money was also acknowledged with the LEP's allocation of Local Growth Fund monies referenced as an example of a similar Treasury compliant funding process;
- it was clarified that the High Streets Fund award to Ashfield District Council detailed in paragraph 15 of the report covered 4 projects, including the named refurbishment of Sutton Academy Theatre;
- options of levy-raising powers and functions, as seen with the South Yorkshire Combined Authority and elsewhere with initiatives such as 'tourist taxes' may also possibly be included within the devolution framework, and the business cases for any such powers would require due consideration.

RESOLVED 2021/008

That the contents of the report, in the context of the Councils' collaborative working and a prospective devolution deal, be noted.

The meeting closed at 10.27 am

CHAIRMAN