

# Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23



Nottinghamshire  
County Council

## ***Introduction from the Chairman of the Overview Committee.***

Welcome to the scrutiny annual report. The report provides a summary of the work undertaken by Overview Committee and the three select committees during 2022/23. It details how the Council's Scrutiny function has worked to support delivery of the objectives contained in the Nottinghamshire Plan, the Council's 10-year vision for a healthy, prosperous, and greener Nottinghamshire for everyone.

Scrutiny is an important non-political process carried out by Councillors on behalf of the residents of Nottinghamshire. Scrutiny raises standards by challenging the Council's performance and checking whether policies and services meet people's needs.

With the change to the Council's governance arrangements in May 2022 and the introduction of the new scrutiny function, 2022/23 has been a busy year for scrutiny. During the year, 23 scrutiny committee meetings were held, and three detailed scrutiny reviews were completed. This work has played a vital role in holding decision makers to account; reviewing policies and strategies; as well as considering how the Council is delivering on its commitments to the residents of Nottinghamshire. Throughout the year Overview Committee and the three select committees have focused on the critical issues for the Council and provided constructive input to improve outcomes for residents. Important work carried out by members of the Overview Committee has included detailed scrutiny of budget proposals ahead of the budget and council tax being agreed by Council.

Scrutiny at Nottinghamshire is still very new, and as such our approach to scrutiny is still developing. During 2022/23 scrutiny members attended an excellent training session delivered by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny that provided an opportunity for members to further develop their scrutiny skills. Additional training was also made available to scrutiny chairs and vice-chairs to support them in their role.

Now that the new arrangements have been in place a year, a review of the scrutiny element of the Council's new governance arrangements will consider how the Council's approach to scrutiny can be further developed to ensure that this activity is helping to provide the best possible outcomes for Nottinghamshire residents.

I wish to thank all scrutiny members and co-opted members for their hard work and commitment to carrying out meaningful scrutiny in Nottinghamshire during the past year. I'd also like to thank Cabinet members and officers for attending scrutiny committee meetings and supporting the delivery of the in-depth scrutiny reviews that have taken place.

The next year will be a busy one as scrutiny continues to seek to support the delivery of the ambitions of the Council, and I look forward to working with all Scrutiny members, Cabinet members and officers to deliver high quality scrutiny throughout 2023/24.

**Councillor Boyd Elliott Chairman of the Overview Committee**

## ***What is scrutiny?***

Scrutiny aims to ensure that public services and policies best meet the needs of Nottinghamshire's residents. Scrutiny acts as the check and balance to the Council's Executive decision makers, the Cabinet, by contributing to policy review and development, holding the Council's Cabinet and partners to account for decisions and performance and investigating issues that matter to residents.

## ***Who is involved?***

Any Councillor who is not a member of the Cabinet can participate. Committees also have co-opted members and dedicated officer support. Cabinet Members, Strategic Directors, other officers, and representatives of partner organisations are invited to attend meetings to discuss issues.

## ***What kinds of things can scrutiny look at?***

Councillors and Co-opted Members prioritise issues. Because of the time commitment and effort required it is not possible to look at every topic. Each select committee draws up a list of possible items it would like to consider. Overview Committee reviews this, together with its own list of selected topics, and manages the overall Work Programme, considering whether scrutiny can make a real difference by looking at an issue.

## ***Is there anything scrutiny can't examine?***

Individual complaints or regulatory decisions are not appropriate topics for scrutiny.

## ***Is scrutiny political?***

Councillors across all political groups participate, setting aside party politics to look objectively at issues, basing their findings on evidence.

## ***What happens in Scrutiny Committee meetings?***

Formal Scrutiny committee meetings are held in public. They provide a forum whereby councillors can:

- discuss written information they have received from the council and external bodies.
- hear evidence from witnesses, which could include other councillors, council officers, experts, representatives from other organisations and members of the public.
- question witnesses to gain a better understanding of the issues.
- draw conclusions from their discussions and the evidence examined, in the form of an outcome.

## ***What is the role of each Committee?***

The Council's Constitution details the role of each committee in detail. The main responsibilities of each committee are:

### **Overview Committee**

- Scrutinise and review any matter under the responsibility of the Chief Executive's Department.

- Coordinate the work of three select committees (including approving each committee's work programme) to ensure the time of select committees is used effectively and efficiently.
- Scrutinise the implementation of the Nottinghamshire Plan.
- Support Cabinet in the creation of the Council's Budget.
- Consider Call-in requests.

### **Adult Social Care and Public Health Select Committee**

- Scrutinise and review any matter under the responsibility of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Department.

### **Children and Families Select Committee**

- Scrutinise and review any matter under the responsibility of the Children and Families Department.

### **Place Select Committee**

- Scrutinise and review any matter under the responsibility of the Place Department.
- Carry out the Council's statutory responsibility for flood risk management scrutiny.
- Carry out the Council's statutory responsibility for crime and disorder scrutiny.

### ***What are Task and finish groups?***

Task and finish groups are informal, usually small and time-limited bodies comprised of councillors and, often, co-optees brought in from outside the council for their specific skills and experiences. They are established by a parent committee to undertake a discrete piece of scrutiny work, and report back to that committee with their findings and recommendations.

### ***What is Call-in?***

Call-in provides a mechanism for councillors to use when they feel that a decision being made by the executive needs to be revisited (or possibly changed) because they can show that the principles of good decision-making have not been followed. It provides a key check and balance in the leader/cabinet system of governance.

### ***What about Health Scrutiny?***

In Nottinghamshire, the Council's Statutory Healthy Scrutiny Committee that examines the delivery of externally delivered health services across the County, such as NHS dental services and access to GP's, operates independently from the Overview Committee and the three select committees. Coordination of work programmes between the committees does take place to ensure that the work of the Health Scrutiny Committee and of the other committees are aligned and not duplicated.

Further information on the work of the Health Scrutiny Committee can be accessed [here](#).

## ***The Nottinghamshire Plan***

The Nottinghamshire Plan is the Council's 10-year vision for a healthy, prosperous, and greener Nottinghamshire for everyone.

This vision is supported by nine ambitions and commitments to 2025 which act as a framework for all County Council activity. These are:

- Helping our people live healthier, more independent lives.
- Supporting communities and families
- Keeping children, vulnerable adults, and communities safe.
- Building skills that help people to get good local jobs.
- Strengthening businesses and creating more good-quality jobs.
- Making Nottinghamshire somewhere people love to live, work and visit. • Attracting investment in infrastructure, the economy, and green growth.
- Improving transport and digital connections.
- Protecting the environment and reducing our carbon footprint.

A tenth ambition "A forward-looking and resilient Council" describes the Council's ambitions and commitments in terms of internal corporate improvement.

During 2022/23 the Overview Committee reviewed the delivery of the Annual Delivery Plan and accompanying Assurance Report that detailed how the activities to deliver on the ambitions of the Nottinghamshire Plan were progressing. With all actions contained within the Annual Delivery Plan and Assurance Report being currently 'On Track' or 'Completed', the focus of Scrutiny has been on specific areas that were not achieving the expected levels or where feedback from residents to Members had prompted specific queries.

Throughout 2023/24 the Overview Committee will continue to review how activity across the Council is delivering on the ambitions of the Nottinghamshire Plan.

The following sections provide a summary of the work undertaken by the Overview Committee and the three select committees during 2022/23 and details how the Council's Scrutiny function has worked to support delivery of the objectives contained in the Nottinghamshire Plan.

### ***Helping our people live healthier, more independent lives.***

#### **Adult Social Care Market Pressures**

Members of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Select Committee examined the activities that were being taken by the Council to create stability in the Adult Social Care market and support increased future demand for social care services. Members of the committee sought assurances around how the success of the activities being implemented would be measured, particularly regarding recruitment and retention of the social care work force and on the impact of recent recruitment campaigns. Members of the committee also sought assurance on how the changes to how payments were made to Homes Based Care and Supported Living Providers would work to stabilise the Adult Social Care Market and how they would enable the provision of sustainable social care services for Nottinghamshire residents.

Members of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Select Committee will be receiving a further report in October 2023 to scrutinise the impact of the activities that have been

implemented over the past year to address the challenges in the Adult Social Care Market.

### **Day Opportunities Strategy 2022-27**

In April 2022, the Council introduced a new five-year Day Opportunities Strategy that set out a future vision for an inclusive society where mainstream leisure and employment support can be accessible to people who access care and support. At the March 2023 meeting of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Select Committee members received a report that detailed the progress being made in implementing the strategy. Members of the committee welcomed the implementation of the Strategy and its objectives, but agreed that further detailed scrutiny was needed to examine:

- how the Strategy would be implemented to ensure equity of access of all residents who accessed the service across Nottinghamshire.
- how the performance of the newly implemented strategy would be measured and reported.
- how the Day Opportunities service model would support the lives and improve outcomes for those people with lived experience.
- how the ongoing service delivery of the Day Opportunities Strategy would take into account the outcomes of the consultation that would be carried out with people who had lived experience.

A member led task and finish review will start in Autumn 2023 to scrutinise these issues in detail. The findings of the review will be reported at the March 2024 meeting of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee in advance of them being submitted to Cabinet for their consideration.

### **Improving the public health outcomes of Nottinghamshire residents**

At the December 2022 meeting of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Select Committee members received a report that provided information on the public health outcomes experienced by Nottinghamshire residents. At the meeting members sought to gain further information and clarification on the activities that were being carried out to improve the public health outcomes of all Nottinghamshire residents, particularly for those residents who lived in areas of higher deprivation.

After discussing the report in detail, members were assured that the work that was required to improve the health of all residents, and in particular, of residents in the more deprived areas of Nottinghamshire had been identified as areas of priority in both the Nottinghamshire Plan as well as in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

As a result of the debate at the meeting, members also agreed that further detailed scrutiny should be carried out on specific public health issues, these included access to, and the take up of the NHS Health Check service and on tobacco control and the potential public health impacts of vaping.

### **The role of e-cigarettes (vapes) in tobacco control and Public Health**

At the March 2023 meeting of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Select Committee, members considered the role of e-cigarettes or “vapes” in tobacco control and public health in Nottinghamshire. Members of the committee were keen to examine the benefits and risks of vapes, how they were used as a tobacco quitting

aid, and how issues around youth vaping and the use of vapes in Nottinghamshire schools were being addressed.

As part of their detailed discussions committee members:

- raised concerns about the long-term impacts of vaping and the lack of information around potential future health implications. Members acknowledged data that showed that the risk of vaping was 95% less than that of using traditional tobacco products but noted that there were still some risks.
- were pleased to see joint work with Trading Standards to tackle sales to underage children.
- raised concerns about the recyclability and disposal of single use e-cigarette products.
- felt that the advertising of brightly coloured and highly flavoured e-cigarette products was inappropriate. Members felt strongly that the legislation and regulation of these products was not sufficient.
- welcomed the work that was being carried out with schools to support them discourage smoking and vaping amongst children and young people.

As a result of the discussion that was held at the meeting:

- the Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Select Committee wrote to Nottinghamshire MPs:
  - to advise them of the committee's concerns around the advertising, availability, and subsequent use of vapes by children and young people, and to request that they raise these concerns with relevant Government ministers, and,
  - to advise of the committee's support for the recommendations arising from "The Khan review: making smoking obsolete" that were published in June 2022.
- the Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Select Committee wrote to the Secretary of State for the Environment regarding the committee's concerns about the environmental impact of disposable vapes.
- members of the committee received further information on the support that was provided to schools to assist them to address issues around vaping and how they as elected members could support and promote this work.

## ***Supporting our communities and families***

### **Financial Support for the Provision of School Uniform**

In advance of the decision being taken by the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, members of the Children and Families Select Committee considered a report on the continuation of the Council's scheme for providing financial support towards the cost of replacing school clothing and footwear for families in exceptional circumstances. Included in this category are families who have lost clothes in a fire, a flood, theft, have been made homeless or who are fleeing domestic violence. During 2022/23 £673.75 was paid in allowances to families experiencing exceptional circumstances against a budget of £500.

On considering the information provided, members agreed that the scheme should continue in its current form, and recommended to the Cabinet Member that the overall budget should be increased to £1,000 to ensure that it could adequately meet projected future demand. On taking the decision, the Cabinet Member accepted the recommendations of the Children's and Families Select Committee.

### **Review of Education Health and Care Plans**

As part of the development of the Children and Families Select Committee's work programme, the Education Health, and Care Plan (EHC) process was identified as an important area for a detailed scrutiny task and finish review.

The key objectives set out for the review were:

- to gain an understanding of the issues and challenges surrounding the implementation of EHC Plans and the carrying out of the preceding Assessments.
- to establish what processes, organisational structures, and capacity the Council had in place so that it could fulfil its statutory duties relating to EHC Plans sustainably and efficiently.
- to examine the processes being carried out at neighbouring Local Authorities in relation to EHC Plans and to consider if this could highlight any areas of best practice.
- to make appropriate recommendations on how the processes surrounding EHC Plans could operate more effectively at the Council to ensure that the best outcomes are achieved for children, young people, and families.

The findings of the review will be considered at the October 2023 meeting of the Children and Families Select Committee in advance of them being submitted to Cabinet for their consideration.

### **Child Poverty – Free School Meals**

At the June 2023 meeting of the Children and Families Select Committee, members examined how the Council used Free School Meals (FSM) provision to plan and inform the delivery of other support for children and families.

The committee agreed that it was vital that all possible steps were taken to ensure that every child who was eligible for FSM was enrolled for that support. The committee asked that further work be carried out to examine how the County Council could work with the District and Borough Councils to enable the effective sharing of data in relation



to auto-enrolment for FSM to help ensure that no child who was eligible was missing out in receiving FSM.

The committee also requested that through the Council's existing work with partner organisations and the voluntary sector, that further work should take place to develop an increased understanding of the number of families in Nottinghamshire who were just above the income level to be eligible for FSM, but who were still struggling financially. Members of the committee agreed that this work would enable the targeting of available support to families who were struggling financially.

During 2023/24 the Children and Families Select Committee will be looking at the Council's Holiday Activity Fund Programme to examine how it is delivering to the children and families of Nottinghamshire.

### **Cost of Living Review**

Members of the Overview Committee are currently carrying out a review to understand how the current challenges around cost-of-living are impacting on Nottinghamshire residents and to examine how the Council's response is supporting residents and staff in these challenging and difficult times.

In July 2023 as part of the review activity, members of the review group met with representatives from the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB). At this meeting members examined in detail the impact of the cost-of-living situation on residents across Nottinghamshire in relation to cost of living pressures. The review group learnt how the CAB was working to support residents and how the cost-of-living situation had changed the type of enquiries that residents were presenting with in comparison to those seen in previous years. A further information gathering meeting with representatives of other partner and voluntary organisations will take place in the Autumn.

The work of the review group will conclude in examining the Council's role and activities regarding supporting residents and staff who are facing cost-of-living pressures. This will enable the review group to assess and to gain assurance that the support that the Council is able to provide is meeting the pressures being experienced by residents and staff.

A final report that details the findings of the review will be presented at future meeting of the Overview Committee.

### ***Keeping children, vulnerable adults, and communities safe***

#### **Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report**

The Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) provides the safeguarding arrangements under which safeguarding partners and relevant agencies work together to coordinate safeguarding services across Nottinghamshire.

In December 2022 members of the Children and Families Select Committee received the NSCP's annual report for 2021/22. The committee took this opportunity to engage with the NSCP's independent scrutineer to examine how the NSCP was fulfilling its duties and how the NSCP was coordinating the multi-agency arrangements that were in place to deliver effective safeguarding activity that would protect children and young people across Nottinghamshire. After an in-depth and detailed discussion, members were assured that the NSCP was fulfilling its duties but agreed that future reports from

the NSCP should contain more information about how current activity by the NSCP was supporting the delivery of its strategic priorities.

The Children and Families Select Committee will continue the important work of scrutinising safeguarding activity for children and young people when it receives the 2022/23 NSCP annual report at its October 2023 meeting.

### **Nottinghamshire Adults Safeguarding Board Annual Report and Plan**

The Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Board (NSAB) is made up of representatives from organisations including, Nottinghamshire Police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the NHS, local councils, and voluntary organisations. Its main responsibility is to get these organisations working together to help adults who may have been abused and to help prevent adults being abused. In December 2022 the Adult Social Care and Public Health Select Committee received the NSAB annual report for 2021/22 and took the opportunity to discuss with the Independent Chair how the NSAB was working to deliver on its strategic priorities. After an in-depth and varied discussion members were confident that the NSAB was effectively delivering adult safeguarding but sought further assurance on its activity around the adult safeguarding needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Nottinghamshire.

At the committee's request, NSAB undertook assurance work regarding how the adult safeguarding needs of refugees and asylum seekers were met in Nottinghamshire. This resulted in contact being made with Serco, the accommodation provider for Nottinghamshire, and agreement being reached that two six-monthly updates would be provided by Serco to the Board, complete with supporting data. It was also agreed that Serco would undertake to complete the annual 'Performance Assurance Tool', alongside other partner agencies, reporting upon their safeguarding activity and how they contributed towards the strategic priorities of the Board. Additionally, a site visit was also undertaken by the Independent Chair and Board Manager, with initial quality assurance and analysis undertaken. This found that staff induction, pathway guidance and training were areas the Board would continue to engage with Serco to develop. The Adult Social Care and Public Health Select Committee will continue the important work of scrutinising safeguarding activity for adults when it receives the 2022/23 NSAB annual report at its October 2023 meeting.

### **Road Safety**

In January 2023 the Place Select Committee examined the activity that was being carried out by the Council, Via, and other delivery partners to deliver further improvements to road safety across Nottinghamshire.

### **Crime and Disorder - Safer Nottinghamshire Board**

Legislation requires that Councils appoint a Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee that must meet at least once a year to look at crime and disorder issues. In Nottinghamshire the Place Select Committee carries out this role.

In July 2023 the Place Select Committee examined the Safer Nottinghamshire Board's crime and disorder strategy, the Nottinghamshire Community Safety Agreement 2023-2025. The committee recommended that the Communications Strategy that was being developed to support the delivery of the Community Safety Agreement should focus on activity that would make it clearer and easier for residents to report crime and anti-

social behaviour incidents to both local authorities and to the Police. The committee also sought and gained assurance that the five priority areas (Domestic Abuse, Serious violence, Prevention High Harm Offences and Fraud and Cyber-crime) identified by the Safer Nottinghamshire Board did not have an order of priority for action, and all priorities were tackled equally to improve lives of residents.

The Place Select Committee will continue to scrutinise the delivery of the Nottinghamshire Community Safety Agreement during 2023/24.

## ***Building skills that help people get good jobs.***

### **Secondary school place planning**

At the March 2022 meeting, members of the Children and Families Select Committee looked at how the Council is working to deliver sufficient secondary school places across Nottinghamshire.

Members agreed that the Council's overall plan for delivering secondary school places was positive, with new schools being built and current schools being extended.

Members agreed that for the Council to provide the required number of school places across Nottinghamshire it was essential that the processes for identifying the need for school places were fully integrated with the processes for both building new schools and expanding existing ones. In Autumn 2023 members of the Children and Families Select Committee will be carrying out a task and finish review to examine how the Children and Families and Place departments can best work together on projects being implemented across Nottinghamshire to deliver additional school places.

### **Provision of Support to Looked After Children Transitioning Out of the Care System**

At the June 2023 meeting of the Children and Families Select Committee, members examined how the Council supported Looked After Children to transition out of the care system and to lead successful and fulfilling lives. As part of a wide-ranging and in-depth discussion members examined how young people leaving the care system were supported to access education and employment. The committee were advised:

- all children in care had Personal Education Plans at school to support them in achieving their goals, interests, and aspirations.
- young people in care had access to individual personal advisers in their school. A mentoring scheme was also in place with Nottingham Trent University.
- the number of care-experienced young people attending further and higher education had increased, and many young people had attended employability briefings with local businesses.

The committee welcomed this activity and asked that the Cabinet Member for Children and Families looked further at how more young people could be encouraged to remain with their foster family after turning 18, as this would provide more young people with a continuation of a supportive and stable home from which they could then embark on their next steps into further education, training, or employment.

***Strengthening businesses and creating more good-quality jobs.***

***Making Nottinghamshire somewhere people love to live, work and visit.***

***Attracting investment in infrastructure, the economy and green growth.***

### **Visitor Economy Framework**

At the December 2022 meeting of the Overview Committee members received a report on the actions being implemented that were supporting the delivery of the ambitions of the Nottinghamshire Plan. At the meeting members were advised that the Council's Visitor Economy Framework was due to be refreshed in response to changes arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and other changes to the visitor economy. As such a refreshed strategy would be considered by the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Asset Management in early 2023. As a result of the discussion that took place it was agreed that members of the Place Select Committee would look in detail at the refreshed Visitor Economy Framework in advance of the strategy being considered for approval by the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Asset Management.

As a result of the discussions that took place, members of the Place Select Committee agreed that the Visitor Economy Framework clearly set out the steps that the County Council would take to enable the Visitor Economy in Nottinghamshire thrive and recover from the impact of the pandemic. Members of the committee also highlighted several areas that should be focused on in the creation of the action plan that would be used to drive forward the objectives of the Visitor Economy Framework. These included:

- increasing the delivery of good quality accommodation to enable more visitors to make longer visits to Nottinghamshire.
- maximising the opportunities provided by visitors who were coming to Nottinghamshire to access elite sports events, other visitor attractions and recreational sports facilities to develop other elements of the local visitor economy.
- Developing the use of social media to engage with potential visitors, especially younger visitors to Nottinghamshire.
- developing the role of the County Council in bringing stakeholders together to share and utilise best practice around activities that would further develop the visitor economy in Nottinghamshire.

The Place Select Committee will be receiving a report in March 2024 to examine the progress being made in implementing the Visitor Economy Framework and how it is supporting the growth of Nottinghamshire's Visitor Economy.

## ***Improving transport and digital connections***

### **Highways**

In May 2021 a cross party Highways review panel was established to review all aspects of highways management in Nottinghamshire. In January 2023 the Place Select Committee examined how the recommendations that had arisen from the review were being delivered and how they were leading to continued improvements to Nottinghamshire's roads.

The Place Select Committee will receive a further report at its December 2023 meeting to scrutinise and monitor the impact of the recommendations in improving Nottinghamshire's roads.

### **Public Transport and Concessionary Travel**

In October 2022 the Place Select Committee received a report that provided an overview of public transport and local bus arrangements. The report enabled members to examine and scrutinise current activity around concessionary travel, the Bus Network Review and on the work being undertaken to improve the public transport infrastructure.

During 2023/24 the Place Select committee will be examining the outcomes of the Bus Network review and how the subsidies and support provided by the Council for bus services in Nottinghamshire are supporting the delivery of public transport infrastructure in Nottinghamshire.

### **Review of Concessionary Travel.**

In early 2023 members of the Place Select Committee carried out a "task and finish" review of concessionary travel in Nottinghamshire. The review enabled members to gain an understanding of the Council's concessionary fare scheme and to examine what the scheme could look like in the future. In carrying out the review members noted that there were a series of statutory obligations and discretionary elements to the concessionary fare scheme, and that whilst the Council could liaise with commercial bus operators on concessions, the Council did not have the power to enforce any changes to their policies.

The recommendations from the review included:

- That consultation and engagement activity be carried out with both older persons and disabled persons permit holders to gather further information on how they currently use their travel pass and how potentially they would like to be able to use their pass in the future to meet their travel needs.
- That consultation and engagement activity be carried out with concessionary permit holders at suitable intervals in the future to ensure that the concessionary travel scheme in Nottinghamshire continues to meet the needs of its users.
- That the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment gives consideration to a feasibility study being carried out to fully examine the issues and costs

around extending the time window in which the older persons and disabled permit could be used from 09:30 to 09:00.

The recommendations were approved at the March 2023 meeting of the Place Select Committee. A full response to the recommendations was received from the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment at the July 2023 meeting of the Place Select Committee where members were advised that all the recommendations from the review had been accepted. As part of the response it was noted due to the Concessionary Fare review that was currently being undertaken by the DfT, any public consultation activity would be carried out once the outcomes of this review were known.

## ***Protecting the environment and reducing our carbon footprint***

### **Climate Change**

In May 2021 Nottinghamshire County Council declared a Climate Emergency.

At the March 2023 meeting of the Place Select Committee members examined the activity that had been carried out by the Council in responding to the challenges of climate change since the declaration had been made and that would support the Council's ambition to become carbon neutral in all its activities by 2030. As part of their considerations, members also examined the Council's Carbon Reduction Plan that sets out the framework for action for the activities on how the Council's greenhouse gas emissions are measured and reported in pursuit of the 2030 net zero ambition. Over the last three years, total carbon emissions from the Council have been reduced by around 5,000 tonnes, this equates to almost a third of direct emissions being cut.

As a result of the wide ranging and in-depth discussion on the Council's activity to address the challenges of Climate Change the committee recommended:

- That to support the activity being carried out to meet the ambition of the Council to be carbon neutral by 2030, further work should be carried out to enable a greater understanding on the impact of hybrid working on the Carbon emissions related to the delivery of Council services.
- That further work should be carried out to gain a greater understanding of the amount of Carbon emissions related to the delivery of Council services provided through alternative delivery models, with consideration given to how this information could be included in the Council's Greenhouse Gases Report.
- That further work should be carried out to investigate the potential opportunities around how the Council's estate could be used for renewable energy production.

The Place Select Committee will continue to scrutinise the Council's activity and the progress being made towards reaching its ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030 during 2023/24.

### **Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure**

The development and delivery of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across Nottinghamshire involves several County Council functions, as well as those carried out at a national, regional, and district level by both partner organisations and the

private sector. As such when the Place Select Committee discussed EV charging at its March 2023 meeting, members were focussed on the role of the Council and Via in supporting the delivery of EV charging infrastructure in Nottinghamshire. The committee welcomed the work that was being carried out on a pilot programme that would enable residents without off-street parking to apply to have an EV cable channel cut into the footway so that they could charge their EV vehicle outside their home. The committee recommended that further work should be carried out to examine how applications by residents to the Electric vehicle cable channel pilot programme could be encouraged and increased to enable more residents without off street parking to be able to charge their vehicles at home.

The Place Select Committee will be receiving a further report on during 2023/24 to examine how the Council is continuing to support the development of EV charging infrastructure across Nottinghamshire.

## **Recycling in Nottinghamshire**

In October 2022 members of the Place Select Committee visited the Materials Recovery Facility in Mansfield where the kerbside recycling collected across Nottinghamshire is sorted before going on to be recycled and reused.

In January 2022, the Transport and Environment Committee gave approval for a Strategic Review of the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) network to be carried out to ensure that individual HWRC sites, as well as the wider network were fit for the future. At the July 2023 meeting of the Place Select Committee members considered a report that detailed the work that had been carried out so far by the review.

As the recommendations that had so far been identified by the review still required additional analysis and evaluation to fully understand their impact to the HWRC network, members of the Place Select Committee will be carrying out a detailed piece of scrutiny work in Autumn 2023 to support the delivery of the review. The outcomes of this scrutiny work will then be considered by the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment in formulating the final recommendations on how the provision of HWRCs could look in the future.

## **Flood Risk Management**

As part of its statutory role to scrutinise flood risk management activity, the Place Select Committee received a report on the Council's (as the lead local flood authority) response to the flooding that had occurred in Worksop and surrounding areas in August 2022.

## ***A forward looking and resilient Council***

### **Review of council office buildings**

In Autumn 2022 members of the Overview Committee carried out a "task and finish" review that looked at how the Council's office buildings were used and how they could be used most effectively in the future to deliver effective, accessible value for money services to Nottinghamshire residents.

Several recommendations emerged from the review. The recommendations focussed on how the Council's existing buildings could be used most effectively in the future, giving regard to the changes to working practices that had been accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic as well as by the ongoing budgetary pressures being faced by the Council.

As part of the review process, members considered in detail the role of County Hall as part of the Council's office accommodation. Members of the review group recognised the historical significance and value that County Hall, but also noted the significant improvements that it required to create a modern working environment and to reduce the environmental impact of the building. As such the review recommended that consideration should be given to County Hall's role as a building within the Council's operational estate.

The findings of the review were considered and approved at the January 2023 meeting of the Overview Committee. A full response to the recommendations was provided by the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Asset Management at the 23 March 2023 meeting of the Overview Committee. The Overview Committee will be receiving a progress report on the activities that have taken place around the recommendations from the review during 2023/24.

### **Review of Council Consultations and Resident Engagement**

In late Spring 2023 members of the Overview Committee carried out a "task and finish" review of Council consultations and resident engagement. The review was set up as members were keen to learn about the Council's approach to consultation and resident engagement, and how this activity could best be used to support the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities and support the delivery of the best possible services to the residents of Nottinghamshire. A specific area of focus for the review was the Council's annual budget consultation process and other whole-council consultation activity.

In the context of the review, it was noted that the statutory consultations that the Council was required to carry out and that had legally defined rules on how they must be conducted, and the consultations on employment matters that were governed by agreed policies and procedures, were not included in the scope of the review.

The review highlighted the good practice being that was being delivered across the Council and recommended that further opportunities should be put in place to enable departments across the Council to share feedback and best practice around their consultation and resident engagement activity. The review also made several recommendations on how the Council's annual public budget consultation could be delivered in future. These recommendations focused on activities that would make the consultation as accessible and engaging as possible with residents and that would also enable the information received to be fed into the budget development process in the most timely manner.

The findings of the review were considered and approved at the June meeting of the Overview Committee and received by Cabinet at its July 2023 meeting. A full response



to the recommendations is scheduled to be provided by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transformation at the September meeting of Cabinet.

## ***Budget scrutiny***

Overview and scrutiny is an integral part of the council's governance and decision making structure contributing to the council's budgetary and policy making function, as well enabling members to hold the executive to account.

At the December 2022 meeting, Overview Committee received a report that provided an update on the current budget position for 2022/23 as well as outlining the processes for developing the budget for 2023/24 and the related budget consultation with residents. At this meeting members of the committee agreed that the task and finish review on the Council's approach to consultation and resident engagement, that would also look at the approach to the public budget consultation (that was carried out in early Spring 2023) should take place.

The Overview Committee then undertook detailed scrutiny of the Council's budget proposals in January 2023 ahead of the formal budget and council tax setting by the Council in February 2023. In reviewing the draft budget that Cabinet would be proposing to Council for approval members were mindful of the impact of inflationary pressures that were not only creating cost of living pressures for residents but were also creating new challenges for the authority.

In examining the budget proposals members examined how:

- all the risks that could potentially impact on the delivery of the budget had been fully understood and mitigated for in its creation.
- robust processes were in place to implement and monitor the transformational activity that would enable the delivery of both the current and future budgets.
- the Council had good levels of financial reserves and that these were being managed effectively.
- the consultation with residents on the proposed budget had been carried out effectively and that the responses received had been considered in its preparation.
- the proposed Budget would support the delivery of the objectives as detailed in the Nottinghamshire Plan 2021-31.

During 2023/24 Overview Committee will continue its important role of contributing to the development of the Council's budget. The committee will also look to ensure that future budgets are robust and sustainable, deliver high quality services to Nottinghamshire residents and support the delivery of the ambitions of the Nottinghamshire Plan.

## Call-in

Call-in is an important mechanism for Councillors to use when they feel that a decision being made by the Executive needs to be revisited due to a perceived procedural error. During 2022/23 there was one decision that was called-in for review by the Overview Committee.

On 31 March 2023 Overview Committee considered a call-in request in relation to the decision – Nottinghamshire Healthy Families Programme: 2024 and beyond that had been taken by Cabinet at its meeting on 9 March 2023. The Nottinghamshire Healthy Families Programme is a public health nursing service that supports families to provide their children with the best start in life.

At the meeting a variety of comments and views were discussed by the committee which concentrated on the grounds that had been detailed in the request for the call-in.

The Committee considered all the information it had heard from the members and officers who attended the call-in meeting and felt that on balance there was sufficient basis in respect of formal scrutiny and on the consideration of alternative options to warrant further consideration of the decision by Cabinet. As a result, the Committee resolved to refer the decision back to Cabinet for further consideration.

As a result of the call-in:

- Cabinet has carried out further work on the recommissioning of the Healthy Families Programme.
- A joint working group comprising various members of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Select Committee, the Children and Families Select Committee and the Health Scrutiny Committee will be undertaking further scrutiny on the future delivery of Nottinghamshire Healthy Families Programme.

## The year ahead

Overview and scrutiny is an integral part of the council's governance and decision-making structure, contributing to the council's budgetary and policy making function as well as holding the executive to account. This report has provided an opportunity to reflect on the experiences of the last year and to recognise the challenges and opportunities that are ahead.

The next few years will continue to be challenging for the council; operating as it does in an environment of diminishing resources and increasing demand for services. As such, it is important that scrutiny focuses on activity where it can support the council to make the best use of the resources available and in ensuring that frontline services are still delivered to the highest possible standards.

As part of the development of scrutiny at the Council, committee work programmes will be focussed and directed towards the key issues that face both the council and Nottinghamshire residents.

### Throughout 2023/24

the Overview Committee will:

- continue to review how activity across the Council is delivering on the ambitions of the Nottinghamshire Plan.
- be involved in the development of the Councils budget for 2024/25.
- carry out detailed scrutiny of the Council's budget proposals ahead of the formal budget and council tax setting by the Council in February 2024.

the Adult Social Care and Public Health Select Committee will:

- be focussed on activities that support the continued delivery and development of high quality adult care services.
- examine the activities that are being taken to improve the public the health of residents.
- carry out a detailed review to support the implementation of the council's Day Opportunities Strategy.

the Children and Families Select Committee will:

- be focussed on activities that support families and that provide children and young people with the best start in life.
- carry out a detailed review of how the council works to ensure the delivery of sufficient school places across Nottinghamshire.

the Place Select Committee will:

- be focused on activities that will make Nottinghamshire cleaner, greener and provide good quality roads and transport infrastructure.
- carry out a detailed review around how the delivery of the council's Household Waste Recycling Centres could look in the future.

## ***Issues scrutinised by each committee during 2022/23***

### **Overview Committee**

- Budget Monitoring Process and Budget Framework
- Budget 2023/24 Development
- Nottinghamshire Plan Performance Monitoring
- Budget 2023/24
- Outcomes of the scrutiny review of council office buildings
- Nottinghamshire Plan – Annual Delivery Plan
- Outcomes of the scrutiny review of Council Consultation and Resident Engagement

### **Adult Social Care & Public Health Select Committee**

- Adult Social Care Market Pressures
- Nottinghamshire Adults Safeguarding Board Annual Report and Plan
- Overview of Public Health Outcomes in Nottinghamshire
- Day Opportunities Strategy 2022-27
- E-cigarettes and vaping
- Discharge to assess.

### **Children and Families Select Committee**

- Elective Home Education
- Financial Support for the Provision of School Uniform
- Response to the Ofsted Focused Visit to Nottinghamshire County Council Children's Services
- SEND Provision and Sufficiency
- Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report
- Pupil Place Planning
- Provision of Support to Looked After Children Transitioning Out of the Care System
- Child Poverty – Free School Meals

### **Place Select Committee**

- Public Transport and Concessionary Travel
- Highway Services
- Road Safety
- Waste Management/Recycling in Nottinghamshire
- Response to the Flooding in Worksop and surrounding areas in August 2022
- Climate Change
- Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure
- Household Waste Recycling Centres Review
- Outcomes of the scrutiny review of Concessionary Travel
- Safer Nottinghamshire Board - Nottinghamshire Community Safety Agreement 2023-2025

## ***Scrutiny Minutes***

### **Overview Committee**

[Monday 13 June 2022](#)

[Wednesday 7 September 2022](#)

[Thursday 1 December 2022](#)

[Tuesday 24 January 2023](#)

[Thursday 23 March 2023](#)

[Friday 31 March 2023](#)

[Thursday 18 May 2023](#)

[Thursday 29 June 2023](#)

### **Adult Social Care and Public Health Select Committee**

[Monday 20 June 2022](#)

[Monday 6 October 2022](#)

[Monday 12 December 2022](#)

[Monday 13 March 2023](#)

[Monday 12 June 2023](#)

### **Children and Families Select Committee**

[Monday 27 June 2022](#)

[Monday 10 October 2022](#)

[Monday 19 December 2022](#)

[Monday 20 March 2023](#)

[Monday 19 June 2023](#)

### **Place Select Committee**

[Wednesday 6 July 2022](#)

[Wednesday 12 October 2022](#)

[Wednesday 11 January 2023](#)

[Wednesday 15 March 2023](#)

[Wednesday 5 July 2023](#)