



**Leicester**  
City Council

At a meeting of the LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL held at the Town Hall at FIVE O'CLOCK in the afternoon on Thursday, 28 SEPTEMBER 2023 duly convened for the business hereunder mentioned.

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**BUSINESS**

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**1. LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ are available to view at  
Copies are also available from Democratic Support on 0116 454 6350 /  
committees@leicester.gov.uk

**4. STATEMENTS BY THE CITY MAYOR / EXECUTIVE**

**5. PETITIONS**

- Presented by Members of the Public
- Presented by Councillors

**6. QUESTIONS**

- From Members of the Public
- From Councillors

**7. MATTERS RESERVED TO FULL COUNCIL**

- 7.1
- 7.2
- 7.3

**8. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

- 8.1
- 8.2
- 8.3

9. **REPORTS OF REGULATORY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEES**

- 9.1
- 9.2
- 9.3

10. **REPORTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

- 10.1
- 10.2
- 10.3

11. **EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES**

To note any changes to the Executive. To vary the composition and fill any vacancies of any Committee of Council.

12. **NOTICES OF MOTION**

13. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

**PRESENT:**

**SUE BARTON, LORD MAYOR**  
**CHAIRMAN**

SIR PETER SOULSBY – CITY MAYOR

**Abbey Ward**

NAGS AGATH  
CHARLEIGH BARNES  
ANNETTE BYRNE

**Aylestone Ward**

SCOTT KENNEDY LOUNT  
NIGEL CARL PORTER

**Beaumont Leys Ward**

HEMANT RAE BHATIA  
HAZEL ORTON  
PAUL THOMAS WESTLEY

**Belgrave Ward**

SHITAL ADATIA  
YOGESH CHAUHAN  
JAIANTILAL GOPAL

**Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields**

ELAINE HALFORD  
KULWINDER SINGH JOHAL

**Castle Ward**

MICK GREGG  
PATRICK JOSEPH KITTERICK  
LIZ SAHU

**Evington Ward**

DEEPAK BAJAJ  
ZUFFAR HAQ  
JENNY JOANNOU

**Eyres Monsell Ward**

ELAINE PANTLING  
KAREN PICKERING

**North Evington Ward**

DILIP JOSHI  
RAVI MAHESH  
SANJAY MODHWADIA

**Rushey Mead Ward**

BHUPEN DAVE  
GEETA KARAVADRA  
DEVI SINGH PATEL

**Saffron Ward**

TED CASSIDY  
ELLY CUTKELVIN

**Spinney Hills Ward**

MISBAH BATOOL  
MUSTAFA MALIK

**Stoneygate Ward**

RAFIQ MOHAMMED  
MANJULA SOOD  
YASMIN SURTI

**Thurncourt Ward**

TERESA ALDRED  
ABDUL OSMAN

**Troon Ward**

DIANE CANK  
MOHINDER SINGH SANGHA

**Westcotes Ward**

ADAM CLARKE  
SARAH RUSSELL

Fosse Ward

SUE WADDINGTON  
SYED ZAMAN

Humberstone and Hamilton Ward

STEPHEN BONHAM  
ASHIEDU JOEL  
MANJIT KAUR SAINI

Knighton Ward

MELLISA MARCH  
DR LYNN MOORE  
GEOFF WHITTLE

Western Ward

GEORGE COLE  
VI DEMPSTER  
MOLLY O'NEIL

Wycliffe Ward

HANIF AQBANY  
MOHAMMED DAWOOD

## **27. LESSONS LEARNED FROM LEICESTER'S COVID STORY**

The former Director of Public Health and the current Director of Public Health presented to the Council, the Director of Public Health's Annual Report 2022; 'Beyond the lockdowns: Lessons learned from Leicester's COVID story.'

The presentation covered a range of matters relating the pandemic in the city, such as key data such as number of lives lost, numbers of positive cases and vaccine take up, details of the spread of cases in the city, how the city responded and how some of the initiatives were rolled out nationally; vaccination take up details and the barriers to take up; impact on mental health; impact on early years, health inequalities and older people / social isolation. Details were also provided regarding the lessons learnt such as the importance of local leadership in such circumstances, flexibility, innovation, resilience and partnerships.

The Lord Mayor thanked the former and current Director's of Public Health for their presentation.

The Lord Mayor paid particular tribute to the former Director of Public Health, Ivan Browne on behalf of the Council and city for all his work in the role, and especially during the pandemic.

## **28. LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Democratic and Civic Support Manager

The Lord Mayor noted that Matthew Reeves, Democratic and Civic Support Manager would be leaving his role at the Council. She thanked Matthew for his support and advice in her role as Lord Mayor, as well as wider service to the Council and wished him well for the future.

Charity Support

The Lord Mayor referred to a recent charity fundraising event for her chosen charity, Charity Link, the Leicestershire 3 peaks challenge. Due to other commitments could only climb one of the peaks, but noted that it was a very successful event. The Lord Mayor also noted that she had produced cards with QR code links on them in case people wanted to donate to the Lord Mayor's charity.

St Kitts and Nevis Independence

The Lord Mayor noted that she had recently attended an event to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Independence of St Kitts and Nevis. She passed on congratulations to the local St Kitts and Nevis community in Leicester who were celebrating at this time.

Council meetings – explanation of rules and expectations

The Lord Mayor gave a detailed speech which reflected upon conduct at recent Council meetings following the election. She noted that they had been fractious and combative in parts and didn't present a dignified picture of politics to the public. She also noted that Council had been used as a forum to raise misconduct allegations and that the Monitoring Officer had dealt with formal complaints arising from behaviour at council.

The Lord Mayor further outlined Constitutional rules, specifically Point of Order and Personal Explanation and the circumstances when and how these should be used,

and that she would rule from the chair when they were being used incorrectly.

The Lord Mayor also commented that she definitely didn't want to curtail debate or shield anybody from scrutiny, but stressed that any criticisms should be criticising an issue, not a person. She encouraged members to behave in a way that showed the best of politics and political life.

## **29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Lord Mayor invited Members to declare any interests they might have in the business on the agenda not already declared on their register of interests.

Councillor Kennedy-Lount declared an ordinary disclosable interest in the report, Service Plan for Food Law Regulation 2022/23 as he was a holder of a level 3 certificate for food hygiene.

There were no other declarations.

## **30. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Moved by the Lord Mayor, seconded by the Deputy Lord Mayor and carried:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 22 June 2023 (Special Council) and 6 July 2023 having been circulated to each Member of the Council, be taken as read and are approved as a correct record.

## **31. STATEMENTS BY THE CITY MAYOR/EXECUTIVE**

There were no statements by the City Mayor or Executive.

## **32. PETITIONS**

### **Petitions from Members of the Public**

No petitions for presentation had been received from members of the public.

### **Petitions from Councillors**

Councillor Waddington presented a petition with 28 valid signatures in the following terms:-

"We the residents of Tudor Close and Rivers Street request that Leicester City Council introduce a Residents Parking Scheme in our area."

Under Council Procedure Rule 13a, the aforementioned petition was referred to the Monitoring Officer for consideration and action as appropriate.

## **33. QUESTIONS**

The following questions were asked by members of the public:

### **1. Jacqueline Nangreave**

"When is Leicester City Council going to fully reopen the Customer Service Centre on Granby Street, all day, 5 days per week? At present council tax has gone up and

our services have gone down”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin in response said that she welcomed the union led campaign regarding the customer service centre, and she was pleased to have taken on customer services as part of her Executive portfolio, stressing the importance of getting customer services right. She further noted that many residents were switching away from face to face engagement with the Council, but agreed there would always be a need for some of this provision. The Deputy City Mayor noted that the Customer Service Centre received approximately 70 customers a day, who received prompt, attentive service. She also noted that many visitors to the centre used the contact phones when visiting. It was further noted that the centre was a large space which was very much under used and there was a need to review the space and refresh the customer service offer.

Jaqueline asked a supplementary question. She felt that residents had fewer services, but higher levels of tax. She queried how the Council could show it was not biased against poor and older people as those groups had their options for contacting the council constricted?

The Deputy City Mayor in response agreed it was an important point, which was why the services were being refreshed and equalities issues would be taken in to account. She also however reiterated that the space at York House was under used and she didn't feel that the Customer Service Centre was always the right answer for providing the best service.

## **2. Jacqueline Nangreave**

“What is the average time a resident must wait for the phone to be answered When phoning the council”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin in response that the Council continued to provide a wide range of services via different phone lines, with 23 different lines available. As the contact on these lines was so varied, it was difficult to provide the average, but the average wait when contacting the Customer Service Centre was 6.5 minutes, but this could vary.

Jaqueline asked a supplementary question, querying how her 91 year old neighbour could get his bus pass on a Wednesday?

The Deputy City Mayor in response said that residents could request permits in a range of ways, but they could go through their local Councillor if they were facing difficulties.

## **3. Jacqueline Nangreave**

“Why is it that letters sent from the council to a resident have no return address and no officer named as the sender”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin in response said that the majority of letters sent from the Council did have contact details and details of the sender, but this could depend on the nature of the information or service. She asked that the questioner provide specific examples in order to provide a detailed response.

Jaqueline undertook to email examples to the Executive Member.

#### **4. Rachel Benn**

“Leicester City Council declared a Climate Emergency in February 2019. Such actions need to embrace every aspect of council activity, including food provision. Other councils, for example Oxfordshire, Cambridge City and Lewisham Borough, have committed to serve only plant-based food at their events, and I’d like Leicester to do the same.

A move to plant-based catering helps normalise a dietary choice which, according to an Oxford University study, is the single most effective thing an individual can do to reduce their environmental impact. We are currently in a cost of living crisis and meat and dairy products are almost always the most expensive part of a meal - whole food plant-based meals are considerably cheaper, and highly nutritious. By doing the right thing for the planet, and promoting eating for good health, the council can also save money. The multiple crises we are currently facing make it even more important to feed grain directly to humans, not to farmed animals.

I would like to see our council be part of the solution, not continue to spend money on meat and dairy, which we know to be part of the problem. Given the climate emergency and Leicester City Council’s stated aim to become net zero Carbon by 2030, will the council commit to serving fully plant-based fare at all future catered events as other councils have done? This will be a positive and forward-thinking step, bringing food policy into line with other climate-aware policies.”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clarke in response welcomed the question and the emphasis behind it. He noted that the Council was currently developing a new climate action plan and he invited the questioner to comment on this. He commented that it wasn’t straightforward to adopt a purely plant based approach as some products could be comparatively more expensive, not culturally appropriate or could be highly processed. It was the intention to have a balance offer which would continue to be developed. In schools 8000 meals daily were provided with a range of plant based vegan options on offer. The Deputy City Mayor thanked the questioner for her work on this matter.

Rachel asked a supplementary question. She noted the concerns about cultural norms and the expense, but felt that these were only issues if meat substitutes were used. If whole foods were used, then meals could be made more cheaply, therefore she asked if the Council would cater events fully using whole foods?

The Deputy City Mayor in response expressed sympathy with what was being proposed but noted the need to do this in a strategic way. He would take the comments on board and explore further as part of Council day to day operations and wider promotion.

#### **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

##### **1. Cllr Surti**

“I welcome the proposal in the Local Plan which will see much needed housing development in the city. However, in the interim period, given the number of people on the housing waiting list and the number of constituents that contact us on a daily basis in relation to housing, some of whom are families living in the most dire circumstances, can I please ask what is the council policy on bringing empty homes back into use and also the criteria for the buy back scheme? My personal experience when contacting the council to offer them first refusal on my late parents



3 bed leasehold property is that I was told to put it on the open market as the council is only buying back 1 and 2 bedroom properties.”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin in response noted that this was an important question, as the Council had declared a housing crisis. She explained that the Council approach for more affordable Council housing was to refurbish purchased properties and building new properties. Over £100m had been spent in the past 4 years, purchasing over 800 properties, and £150m would be spent over the coming 4 years. The Council purchased a range of properties from 1 to 5 bedrooms to meet the identified housing need. 3 bed properties were part of this and 52 had been purchased in the past 3 years, but she undertook to raise with officers regarding messaging on this matter.

The Deputy City Mayor further explained that the Council had an empty homes team which focused on long term empty homes, with a caseload of 400 properties. 190 homes had successfully brought back to a decent standard and subsequent use, despite it be an intricate process to do this, with compulsory purchase as the final option.

## **2. Cllr Waddington**

“The extensive and long running highways work around the Fiveways junction is causing considerable disruption for residents and businesses in the area surrounding the works, with road closures and restrictions to the entry and exit of several roads. Some local businesses are reporting significant loss of trade as a consequence, and one at least has closed down because of this. Is the Council able to offer any compensation to businesses affected, if they can clearly demonstrate that the road works have severely impacted upon their financial sustainability over several months?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clarke in response stated that the Council had been contacted by businesses on this matter, but noted that the Council had no powers in highway law to give compensation for disruption caused by road works, but they could contact the Valuation Office Agency to apply for a temporary reduction in rates. There was also the option of discretionary hardship relief provided by the Council. Businesses had been advised how to apply for these. Longer term it was felt that the improvements would lead to a better local environment which should improve the shopping area.

Councillor Waddington asked a supplementary question. She noted the suggestion that in the longer term, businesses would be better off, but felt that sadly they would have closed down due to loss of trade. She further felt that business rates relief would be insufficient. She asked whether Councillor Clarke would be willing to meet businesses to look at ways to enable businesses to continue to trade.

The Deputy City Mayor in response said that he was happy to meet businesses and would refer to improvements on the A426 which had led to improvements for businesses.

## **3. Cllr Mohammed**

“Residents in my ward have lost confidence in the planning and licensing process which has drowned the Evington Rd area with over 45 fast food outlets. The majority of these now wilfully breach their planning conditions, by operating till 3am instead of 11pm. Why are such blatant and wilful breaches allowed to continue

unchallenged?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin in response said that she had spoken with Cllr Mohammed on this matter, noting the complexities of dealing with the issues raised by the question. She further commented that considerable evidence needed to be provided to take action and welcomed proactive reports of any issues noticed. She also explained that there were 5 enforcement officers dealing with such complaints, but they needed to cover the whole city. She was aware of concerns regarding Evington Road, but only a small number of formal complaints had been received. She stressed the need for ongoing evidence to be provided to the Council to demonstrate issues of cumulative impact for residents which could take months or even years. She welcomed the fact that ward Councillors were active in looking into this matter.

Councillor Mohammed asked a supplementary question, noting that residents were asked to provide evidence, and it was noted that online apps allowed residents to order food at 2/3 am, but were unaware of restrictions. He asked that the Executive Member and officers work with Councillors and residents to address this matter.

The Deputy City Mayor in response noted the limitations of only having 5 enforcement officers who had to cover 2200 restaurants within the city and they therefore didn't have capacity for ongoing monitoring. She did however note that a meeting had been co-ordinated to investigate the matter further and Councillor Mohammed's input was welcomed.

#### **4. Cllr O'Neill**

“The ward councillors have been working with the residents in the Aikman Avenue flats regarding the issues with the communal cleaning. After hearing residents' concerns and doing several patch walks, we firmly believe that the standard of cleaning isn't representative of the £5.10 weekly fee that the residents pay. What will the housing team do to ensure the Aikman Avenue flats are cleaned to an acceptable standard that is reflective of the current cleaning budget?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin in response was sorry that it was felt that cleaning standards were not felt sufficient, but provided assurance that cleaning was regularly undertaken, and that more monitoring of standards was being undertaken due to complaints. She further explained that communal areas could be difficult to maintain due heavy footfall. She committed to consider this area if there was an improvement to the Housing Revenue Account as a priority expenditure under the environmental budget. She also noted problems with rubbish disposal for which educational work had been undertaken. The Deputy City Mayor was happy to visit any particular flats with officer to consider any issues and possible options.

Councillor O'Neill asked a supplementary question. Due to the ongoing problems, she noted that residents had raised the possibility of a deep clean once or twice a year.

The Deputy City Mayor welcomed the suggestion and agreed that this would provide benefits, noting that this was something that could be funded by the environment budget.

#### **5. Cllr O'Neill**

“Following on from the announcement that the prime minister will be making a major

U-turn on the government's climate commitments. How will this impact our climate commitments in Leicester and what can we do further to encourage the use of electric vehicles long term?"

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clarke in response said that following the recent announcements by the Prime Minister, this would most likely slow the changes needed in order to meet net zero in terms of cars, vans and heating of homes. He also noted that the announcement of the removal of the target of the minimum energy standard in private rental homes was likely to slow progress of improving warmth and reduced bills for tenants. He also commented that the push back to 2035 of the net zero target would reduce access to the second hand electric vehicle market.

## **6. Cllr Dawood**

"As a result of the re occurring anti-social behaviour in Spinney Hill Park could the cabinet lead responsible advise what can be done to overcome these concerns."

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Russell in response, said that this matter was taken seriously and a joined-up approach was being taken, involving different agencies, including the dedicated team for anti-social behaviour. A QR code was planned to provide direct access to the Anti Social behaviour team in order for them to provide a detailed response and be better able for them to track the issues. Further it was noted that the team was embedded in the local Police station, and the local community Joint Action Group was being re-started to understand and respond to local issues.

Councillor Dawood asked a supplementary question, noting that this issue had been ongoing for a couple of years, and said it would be helpful if the Deputy City Mayor could meet with the ward Councillors and the community to provide assurance that the matter was being looked into.

The Deputy City Mayor said that she was happy to do this.

## **7. Cllr Dawood**

"I have been contacted by many concerned constituents about district heating could we ensure that those that need the support is available."

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin in response welcomed the question and the ongoing dialogue with ward Councillors. She noted that there had been robust discussions on this matter about support for residents who had been informed by mail about support, with contact details included. There had also been localised advice sessions with officers from the Income Management Team and sessions set up with the company delivering the metering work, as well as door to door contact.

Councillor Dawood asked a supplementary question. He noted that whilst trying to help residents, one issue that kept being raised was in relation to standing charges and officers were often not available to discuss this. He asked for assurance that these concerns were being looked at.

The Deputy City Mayor in response stated that over the years, District Heating had been beneficial for tenants and the environment, but the war in Ukraine had changed this. Metering, once it was installed should mean reduced bills, without them charges would be much higher.

## **8. Cllr Dawood**

“Unfortunately, following last year’s disturbances tensions remains, what work has been done by the Authority to mitigate these issues and what more can be done to return Leicester as a beacon of diversity.”

The City Mayor in response noted that this was an ongoing issue of concern a review should be looking at lessons having been learnt and good partnership working. It was frustrating that there were delays to the start of the review which was meant to find out what happened in the previous disturbances. The City Mayor however noted that staff from the Community Safety and Youth Engagement teams had been deployed within communities and were supporting the work of ward Councillors. He further noted that community cohesion work was always a work in progress.

Councillor Dawood asked a supplementary question. He noted the recent comments made by the Home Secretary which referenced Leicester and asked the City Mayor’s view on these.

The City Mayor in response said that the best interpretation of the Home Secretary’s comments were that they were ill informed and not focused on the wellbeing of the city or the United Kingdom. He felt that it was dangerous and disrespectful to insult the city and was sure that those who lived in the city would not recognise her comments. The City Mayor would welcome a visit from the Home Secretary to show her that the city was a brilliant place.

## **9. Cllr Rae Bhatia**

“Can the City Mayor tell this council how much government grant the City Council has received since the start of financial year 2020 until now, and how many local schemes in total have benefitted from it. Can he also name top five schemes which have received the most grant.”

The City Mayor in response noted that the Council’s government funding had drastically reduced over the past 10 years, which had led to cuts in services. Despite this the Council had been successful in bidding, such as funding for the train station plans, Pilot House and Pioneer House, but this did not cover funding that had been lost.

Councillor Rae Bhatia asked a supplementary question. He noted the reduction in government funding, but asked the City Mayor, when he presented his budget to thank the government for the substantial amount of funding based on government grants.

The City Mayor in response said that the capital funding support was welcomed, but revenue funding had fallen from £289m to £179m per year and he would blame the party responsible for this reduction.

## **10. Cllr Rae Bhatia**

“Can the City Mayor share with this council how many race, gender, disability discrimination and unfair dismissal cases have the City Council defended over the last five years in the Employment Tribunal? Can a breakdown in each category be provided?”

The City Mayor in response said that there had been 75 claims over the past five years of which the Council lost 8, but 2 were currently on appeal, which was around the average for an organisation the size of the Council.

Councillor Rae Bhatia asked a supplementary question. He asked if the City Mayor felt that these claims showed that the Council had fallen short and were therefore disgraceful?

The City Mayor in response reiterated his point that the level of claims were par for the course for an organisation of the size of the Council, and there was nothing to be ashamed of. He invited Councillor Rae Bhatia to look at comparisons.

#### **11. Cllr Modhwadia**

“Since the Recycle Yard and Rubbish Yard is moved out of Spencer Street, there is lot of Rubbish flowing around The North Evington Area. As a councillor of this ward, there are lots of complaints every day. How are you going to address this issue? ”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin in response said that she assumed the question was referring to Spence Street and Bridge Road. She noted that there was a new facility at Gypsum Close which provided a comprehensive waste service. She also noted that residents could book 3 large waste collections a year. There was also a fly tipping strategy which reduced the number of incidents. The Love Clean Streets app could be used to report problems and Councillors could contact their local City Warden. The Deputy City Mayor also reported that she went out litter picking herself.

Councillor Modhwadia asked a supplementary question. He noted Nottingham Street and Prospect Hill were two places where rubbish was still a problem and he was getting no response from the City Warden.

The Deputy City Mayor in response said that she had always found City Wardens helpful and suggested using the Love Clean Streets app, asking officers to do a patch walk or escalating to the City Warden manager.

#### **12. Cllr Modhwadia**

“We have another big Parking issue, especially in the Greenlane Road area. People are parking on double yellow lines during the evening time 4pm and 7pm. Can you suggest how we can tackle this issue?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clarke in response said that he agreed anti-social parking was a problem and officers had visited the area to look at the problems. He also noted that 265 penalty notices had been issued and work on measures to address problems were ongoing, such as bollards and making the road one way. He asked that Councillor Modhwadia continue to engage with officers to keep reporting problems.

Councillor Modhwadia asked a supplementary question. He queried whether Councillors could provide evidence of the problems?

The Deputy City Mayor said that if Councillors saw contraventions, they could contact Parking Services who would take action where possible.

**13. Cllr Modhwadia**

“Local Residents are asking for local resident parking around Green lane road .”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clarke in response said that he would take the question as a request from a ward councillor to introduce a residents parking scheme. However, he noted that it was not always easy to establish them as there was often opposition and there were different types of schemes which could be implemented.

**14. Cllr Modhwadia**

“We have major issues with Schools admission. Children and their parents are struggling to get the admission in their attachments area. One of the Parents is working and other at home, cannot drive, so it is very hard for them to manage their 2 children in two different school. I recommend that if the Siblings are in the school already, then their other sister or brothers should get the priority. This will help the parent at home to manage to drop them at the same time. This is a major issue. Can we have a voice on this one please. Its very important. ”

Assistant City Mayor Councillor Dempster in response said that this was an important issue which caused stress to parents. She noted that the city performed better than the national average in enabling parents to have their first choice of schools. She also noted the importance of getting applications in by the deadline and all four preferences should be used when applying.

**15. Cllr Dave**

“Has the Council received s 106 monies from Sainsbury’s superstore, Melton Road, Rushey Mead as part of the agreement on their planning application and if so, how much and how was it spent?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin in response said that £114,000 was received, of which, £18,000 was for open spaces, £70,000 for public art and £16,240 for bus lane provision. There was also substantial support provided for highways improvements such as the removal of the Belgrave flyover and car parks.

Councillor Dave asked a supplementary question. He noted the £70,000 spent on public art, which was commonly known as a fruitless tree. He queried whether this was money well spent, whether the ward councillors were consulted and supported or objected to it?

The Deputy City Mayor in response stated that a full commissioning process was followed, planning approval was granted, where objections could be checked. She further commented that she wasn’t the best person to ask if it was good public art.

**16. Cllr Dave**

“The Council is currently preparing an Equality strategy. Promoting Equality is everyone’s responsibility. When was the previous one prepared and implemented?”

Assistant City Mayor Councillor Malik in response said that a new strategy was being developed which was currently subject to consultation internally and with voluntary and community groups. The strategy was expected to be approved by the end of the year.

Councillor Dave asked a supplementary question. He queried, regarding the previous strategy whether there had been lessons learnt or a report prepared? Also whether any weaknesses had been addressed and if the strategy was robust?

The Assistant City Mayor said that the previous strategy did set goals and made progress, but there were some challenges. It was the intention to measure progress as the new strategy develops. There were achievements from the current strategy such as Equality Impact Assessment training and embedding equalities into the decision making process. It was also noted that the charity Scope had been engaged to review processes for the new strategy.

**17. Cllr Dave**

“This Council and all elected representatives have an important role to play in promoting inter community dialogues and relationships at the grass root level. Does the Council have a Community Cohesion Strategy which includes the specific role elected representatives have in promoting community cohesion? If yes, when was it discussed at a full council meeting?”

Assistant City Mayor Councillor Sood in response said that that community cohesion was the responsibility of all elected members, staff and all persons in the city. There was no specific strategy, but it was one of the priorities of the Community Safety Partnership Plan. There had been considerable work with partners on developing this strand as well as involving young people. She also commented that the role of elected members was very important, particularly around making officers aware of new communities so there could be outreach work. The Assistant City Mayor also made reference to the recent comments made by the Home Secretary and felt she should visit the city and see the communities working together.

**18. Cllr Gopal**

“How many council buildings stand empty in Leicester?”

The City Mayor in response said that the Council had 1404 buildings of which 47 were empty or strategically empty for possible regeneration purposes or re-purposing. There were also 6 buildings available to let within the Corporate Estate.

Councillor Gopal asked a supplementary question, requesting to know the number of empty houses.

The City Mayor in response said that was not the question which was asked and would be dealt with in a later question to be answered by Councillor Cutkelvin.

**19. Cllr Gopal**

“What is council doing to encourage schools to educate children in our schools about Cleanliness and civic responsibilities associated with it?”

Assistant City Mayor Councillor Dempster in response said that schools did have a significant role in teaching civic responsibilities such as through Personal, Social and Health Education lessons. The Council couldn't however dictate school's curriculums. The Assistant City Mayor also commented on the Eco Schools project which worked with schools on environmental projects which included litter picking.

Councillor Gopal asked a supplementary question. He noted that he'd seen on the internet that children at Japanese schools had to clean their classrooms and queried whether something like this could be introduced?

The Assistant City Mayor in response said that it wouldn't be possible. Individual schools could work with parents to undertake projects with children on certain areas. It was important to note that what may work well in one community wouldn't necessarily work well in a different one. She encouraged Councillor Gopal to become a school governor as a great way to get involved in schools.

## **20. Cllr Bajaj**

"How many referrals/cases are still awaiting allocation to an Occupational Therapist and to other adaptation/equipment 'specialist' for an assessment? Once they are allocated to an Occupational Therapist or other adaptation specialists, how many cases are still awaiting a home visit?"

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Russell in response said that the Council struggled to recruit Occupational Therapists (OTs), like all Councils. Budgets for this work hadn't been reduced, but a lack of staff had meant lengthening waiting lists. There were 1308 people waiting allocation to a member of staff and 160 people waiting for a further assessment having had an initial one, but major work was required. Allocations to staff members were only made when there was capacity for staff to take on a new case.

## **21. Cllr Bajaj**

"How many private sector cases are on the waiting list for adaptation both major and minor, in the Disability Facilities Grant (DFG) services? Similarly, how many are on the waiting list for Council House adaptations referred by Occupational Therapist?"

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin in response said that the Council had a dedicated team to process the Disabled Facilities grant which crossed both the Adult Social Care and Housing divisions. Minor cases were dealt with in days and weren't recorded. Of the major cases, 200 were in the private sector and 110 in Council properties, but this was in the context of 2,371 grants completed in the past 4 years with a total spend of £10.2m.

## **22. Cllr Adatia**

"Was there an underspend in the Adult social Care Budget in the financial year 2022/23? If yes, how much and which specific service or project area had this underspend?"

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Russell in response said that there was a minor underspend of £1.9m which was less than 1.95% of the budget and it occurred as a result of lower growth in adult social care packages than anticipated.

Councillor Adatia asked a supplementary question, seeking assurance that the underspend would be carried forward.

The Deputy City Mayor in response said that that underspends arising because there weren't enough OTs, and therefore that create underspend which was being



spent on care packages. If more money was spent on OT work, then it was unlikely that there would be an underspend.

**23. Cllr Singh Patel**

“There is a car parking problem in Harrison Road/Melton Road area which is affecting both residents and businesses. Does the Council have any strategy on improving car parking and traffic flow issues including introduction of Residents car parking schemes in Belgrave/Rushey Mead area?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clarke in response said that the area has had extensive investment and proposals between 2018 and 2022, but there was significant opposition to residents parking and a one way system on Stafford Street, therefore it wasn't taken forward. These proposals still existed and the Deputy City Mayor was happy to work with Councillor Singh Patel to bring them forward.

**24. Cllr Chauhan**

“Leicester has a significant Gujarati language speaking population. Teaching of Gujarati to those children who want to learn and obtain a GCSE grade is very important. Would the City Mayor accept that first the fees increase from £65 to £90 and now from £ 90 to £120 per child is too much and deters poor parents from encouraging their children from learning Gujarati language? Considering that sometime before Corvid it was, I believe, £35, would he consider reviewing this inflation busting fees increase?”

Assistant City Mayor Councillor Dempster in response said that these classes had been delivered at the Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre for many years with no increase in fees, but this went up in 2021 from £55 a year to £90 a year, and subsequent increase to £120 a year. It was noted that there were alternative arrangements at other local establishments at a lower cost.

Councillor Chauhan asked a supplementary question. He said that there was no notification of the increase in costs from £90 to £120 and the classes didn't start in August. He felt that there should be better political management of this situation.

The Assistant City Mayor in response said that costs had to be recovered due to stretched budgets and the council couldn't use public money to subsidise the classes.

**25. Cllr Bajaj**

“Leicester City Council encourages ‘Reverse mentoring’ when Senior Managers are mentored by junior staff from different backgrounds.

Could the City Mayor please inform us how many Strategic Directors, Directors and service managers/Head of service have received this reverse mentoring from junior staff from the Ethnic minority background? What is this in terms of the percentage figures of the total managers employed in the categories mentioned above?”

The City Mayor in response said that reverse mentoring was where reverse mentors were encouraged to discuss their lived experience. Mentors were chosen to be different to the mentees, for example in terms of race / orientation and this scheme was run by local health services. Initial cohorts had focused on Adult Social Care staff and it would be widened out in the future.

**26. Cllr Joannou**

“How many Homes and Flats stand empty on Hospital Close?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin in response agreed that progress was not as fast as hoped, but a procurement process had been undertaken 3 times previously without success, but developers were currently risk averse and this was exacerbated by wider economic conditions. It was felt that a Labour government would provide a significant number of affordable homes.

**27. Cllr Orton**

“Residents have complained about the dirty state of the water in Abbey Park. The Paddle plus Club based at the outdoor Pursuits Centre informed me they have cleared 4000 bags of rubbish from Abbey Park over the years. Can the council confirm how often they clear the water in the park of rubbish?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin in response said that the responsibility for the river did not sit with the Council although it did provide volunteer opportunities. The Council could influence the situation by promoting environmental volunteer as it had done.

Councillor Orton asked a supplementary question. She queried what steps the Council would take to address the problem such as working with the Environment Agency.

The Deputy City Mayor in response said that the responsibility for the river lied with the Canal and River Trust.

**28. Cllr Agath**

“Parts of the city witnessed flooding due to torrential rain. Many residents suffered property damages. These were mainly due to the Clogged-up drains and gutters lack of capacity to drain the water away. Can the deputy mayor please advise what provisions have been made since then this doesn’t happen again and has the council provided monetary support to the residents to recover their damages as a result of this? If yes, then how much has been paid out?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clarke in response said that he couldn’t ensure a similar issue didn’t happen again due to the climate emergency. He also said that the Council couldn’t provide monetary support, but other support would be provided if possible. This could include elected members advising residents to become aware of their flood risk and get adequate insurance. The Council also worked with other agencies to undertake practical steps such as cleaning gulleys, sewers and widening flood warnings.

Councillor Agath asked a supplementary question. He noted that some of the drainage system was 100 years old and queried whether it was the Council’s responsibility or the Environment Agency?

The Deputy City Mayor in response said that the subterranean drainage system was from the Victorian era and it wasn’t feasible to update, but also that it wasn’t felt to be appropriate for our current circumstances.

## **29. Cllr Mahesh**

“There are several issues that the taxi drivers face like:

City council doesn't allow over 11 years old Car where as the county council does.  
Why?

MOT stations have limited capacity for taxis- that's not fair

Black colour cars are not allowed for the city council private hire where as the other councils do

Due to lack of badges being issued drivers go to other councils for it and there are several other issues hat the city council private hire driver face.

Can the city mayor agree to meet with the representatives of the taxi drivers and assure them of a fair hearing to help rectify the issues faced by them?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin in response noted that since taking over this part of her portfolio, she'd had meetings with the taxi industry and agreed to set up a regular forum to discuss issues such as inspections and stop and search, which had been received positively. She recognized the important of the taxi sector to the city's economy and was happy to meet with Councillor Mahesh to discuss any broader sector issues. She was also keen to involve other members in the discussions with the taxi trade.

Councillor Mahesh asked a supplementary question about insight into links between the climate and emissions.

The Deputy City Mayor in response commented that she wasn't best placed to answer such a question.

## **30. Cllr Gregg**

“What plans does the City Mayor have to follow Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham's lead and begin reversing the de-regulation of bus services in Leicester?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clarke in response congratulated the Mayor of Greater Manchester for his new bus services, but noted that Leicester was in a different position as they used powers not available to the city. He also noted that Greater Manchester had better access to funding and therefore could support fare levels, costs of managing a franchise and deal with associated risks. He did however note that Leicester had its own benefits from its enhanced bus partnership model which had led to 90 electric buses, new bus shelters and totems and a zero-emissions bus station.

Councillor Greg asked a supplementary question. He asked for a response in writing and queried whether there were any plans to de-regulate buses?

The Deputy City Mayor said that the enhanced bus partnership model had brought positive developments and a move to a franchising model would have meant the city would have been much further behind on those positive developments, but he didn't rule out a franchising system at some point in the future.

## **31. Cllr Sahu**

“Will the council consider introducing a Public Space Protection Order to protect people on New Walk from the dangers posed by speeding bicycles and scooters?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clarke in response noted that this had been a long-term issue made more acute since the advent of electric scooters and cycles. There was a bylaw in place preventing cycling, measures to prevent cycling had been considered in the past and the Police regularly undertook enforcement activity. It was felt that a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) wouldn't add any value to the existing restrictions, but other measures could be looked at.

Councillor Sahu asked a supplementary question suggesting it would be useful to regularly look at this issue and consider a PSPO if felt useful.

The Deputy City Mayor in response said that he was happy to do so and look at what benefits a PSPO could bring.

### **32. Cllr Sahu**

“In light of proposed changes to government targets on energy saving measures what polices are contained within Leicester's current local plan to promote sustainable energy use in new developments?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clarke in response noted that in addition to the government announcements, there were now restrictions on Local Authorities as to how they could address the climate emergency. The Council would however make the best use of powers available to them such as setting expectations through passive design. He did however feel that the planning regime was not set up to address the climate emergency.

### **33. Cllr Kitterick**

“When will the City Mayor reveal his plans for the Leicester Railway Station?”

The City Mayor in response said that the plans for the railway station, funded partly by government grant and the Council's capital programme had been widely revealed and public consultation had been undertaken via the internet and drop in sessions and responses were now being considered.

Councillor Kitterick asked a supplementary question. He felt there was a lack of specific plans and was concerned that the Council would take the hit for any delays, which he'd heard would be £40,000 per week.

The City Mayor in response said that he'd not heard of a cost associated with delay. A demolition application had been made and a planning application was now being worked up due for committee consideration in the new year. There was joint working ongoing with Network Rail and East Midlands Railways who were supportive of the plans.

### **34. Cllr Kitterick**

“Who decided the list of proposed names for rooms at Leicester Town Hall due to be revealed at a ceremony on 31<sup>st</sup> October?”

The City Mayor in response said discussions had been held with the family of Eugene O'Dowd who was a former employee and also civic historians Ned Newitt and Derek Seaton to determine the proposed names. The City Mayor however noted that there were a large number of rooms at the Town Hall which could benefit

from a new name and suggestions were welcome if there was an important connection to the civic life of the city.

Councillor Kitterick asked a supplementary question noting that there were 5 men and 2 women suggested and none were people of colour. He felt that these proposals should have been discussed with all political group leaders and asked for a review of the proposals with suitable nominations from people of all of Leicester's communities.

The City Mayor in response said that he agreed that the names should reflect the diversity of the city and suggestions were welcomed from elected Members. The City Mayor noted that former Lord Mayor Gordhan Parmar was an important figure who could be recognised.

### **35. Cllr Kitterick**

“As of the year to date how many council homes are currently empty as an absolute number and as a percentage of council stock? How does this number compare with 2021/22 and 2022/23?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin in response said that in 2021/22 there were 404 voids, in 2022/23 there were 424 voids and in 2023/24 there were 379 and these figures were in line with the industry standard.

Councillor Kitterick asked a supplementary question, noting that regardless of the industry standard, he sought an assurance that the issue of voids would be addressed.

The Deputy City Mayor in response said that the Council had declared a housing crisis and she received calls daily from people in housing need and acknowledged this was a serious issue. She noted that there had been development work over the past 18 months which had reduced the number of voids and this was regularly reported to scrutiny meetings.

### **36. Cllr Kitterick**

“To ask the Cabinet Member for Housing - What is £1554 divided by 520 and £2394 divided by 520?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin in response said that she had considered what was being referred to by the question and felt it wasn't clear, but specifically to the question being asked; 2.99 and 4.60.

Councillor Kitterick asked a supplementary question. He asked for an explanation regarding the update to the Housing Scrutiny Commission where it said that the cost of heat meters would be paid back over 10 year and at a charge of £5.97 a week which would mean a tenant paying twice the cost of the meter to be installed.

The Deputy City Mayor in response said that as far as she was aware the amount to be charged to tenants would be £1500 and she was happy to check this. She noted that there were some complexities around this such as charges not levied for 52 weeks a year and some charges for contingency.

### **37. Cllr Kitterick**

“How long is the expected life expectancy of a heat meter installed under the proposal put forward by Leicester City Council’s Housing department?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin in response said that a meter should last up to 20 years.

Councillor Kitterick asked a supplementary question. He queried why, if meters lasted for 20 years, why was the cost being repaid over 10 years and could it be confirmed that the figures were wrong. He also queried the detail of these charges which could add up to £400 to a tenant’s bill and also the impact of the system losing 43% of its energy. He felt the figures should be correct regarding the costs of the system.

The Deputy City Mayor in response asked for the detail of these points to be sent to her and agreed it was vital that the costs were accurate. She did however further comment that consideration should be given to what would have been charged if meters weren’t installed and felt that this was the best affordable option.

### **38. Cllr Porter**

“How do the council categorise personal data regarding tenants in rent arrears?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin in response said that the council could hold all or some of the following information around contact details, age, gender, tax/benefit situation and some details about social circumstances.

Councillor Porter asked a supplementary question. He queried whether the Deputy City Mayor could confirm if the Council had ever published the ethnicity of the people most high in arrears.

The Deputy City Mayor in response said it was not to her knowledge that this had been done.

### **39. Cllr Porter**

“Over the last six months have the council received any complaints about Aylestone’s 87 bus service?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clarke in response said that there had been 30 complaints about this service and they had been directed to the bus company and to Bus Users UK. He also confirmed that he had written to Arriva asking them to look into the complaints which had been raised and general satisfaction levels across the network.

Councillor Porter asked a supplementary question. He said that he’d been inundated with complaints and the Council response was that it was the responsibility of the bus company, he asked that the Council work together with the bus company to deal with the issues.

The Deputy City Mayor in response said that he had a good relationship with the bus companies and does work closely with them, but they are dealing with an issue of reduced patronage. He also noted that the Traffic Commissioner could levy fines if standards weren’t met.

### **40. Cllr Porter**

“Is the council aware of and are they following all the requirements in the Traffic Management Act 2004?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clarke in response said that the Council was aware of the act and was of the view that it was acting within its requirements.

Councillor Porter asked a supplementary question. He felt that the Council had not acted in accordance with the act in relation to cycle lanes where they were temporary and had now become permanent requiring a Traffic Regulation Order and not providing notice and undertaking consultation, and would the Council now abandon schemes and consult properly?

The Deputy City Mayor noted that under the supplementary guidance to the act, the Council was given expectations to retain, expand and improve road allocation schemes. There had been engagement with the community throughout and the majority were in favour of retention or neutral. There was no change to existing access and egress and since the scheme there were no fatalities. He further felt that objections to cycle lanes should be better directed to deaths on the road.

Councillor Porter raised a point of information noting that there had been a fatality in November 2022 since lanes were installed. The Deputy City Mayor accepted this point, but still felt that roads were now safer.

#### **41. Cllr Porter**

“In the existing local plan how many dwellings were allocated in Ashton Green?”

The City Mayor in response said that under a previous Liberal Democrat / Conservative Council administration, despite having adopted the Local Plan, they had not delivered any dwellings. The City Mayor noted that in Ashton Green, there had now been 180 homes built and occupied, 160 under construction, 67 with planning permission and 440 committed to be built and this represented a good achievement.

Councillor Porter asked a supplementary question. He noted that the allocation in the Local Plan was 3500 and Labour had been in control of the Council since 2007 but had only delivered less than 800 completions on site, he asked whether the Council should finish Ashton Green before blighting other parts of the city?

The City Mayor in response that delivering 847 dwellings was a major achievement and he was happy to show Councillor Porter this popular development which was one of the many achievements of the Labour administration.

#### **42. Cllr Porter**

“The council spent about £4m on the refurbishment of the Haymarket Theatre. Can the council confirm the value of the equipment that has allegedly gone missing following its closure in 2020?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clarke in response said that the value was zero because nothing had gone missing.

Councillor Porter asked a supplementary question. He commented that this was

excellent news and asked for it to be confirmed in writing.

The Deputy City Mayor said he could if Councillor Porter wanted him to waste his time typing a zero into an email.

**43. Cllr Kennedy-Lount**

“How many trees are there on the footpath on Saffron Lane between Grace Road and the Pork Pie island?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clarke in response said 78.

Councillor Kennedy-Lount asked a supplementary question, noting the cycle lane due to be installed, he asked that none of the trees be removed?

The Deputy City Mayor said that whilst this provided challenges, both he and the City Mayor had been to the site with officers and have stressed the need to retain the trees, as both the cycle lane and trees were required.

**44. Cllr Kennedy-Lount**

“The general ticket admission for the BBC Radio 2 Party in the Park was £54 plus a £4.50 booking fee.

Were any Complimentary tickets available and if so how many were offered to and accepted by Council Elected Members or Council Employees?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clarke in response said that he was invited and some other Executive members and 70 pairs of tickets were made available to Council officers and the Chief Operating Officer called for nominations for staff to receive them.

Councillor Kennedy-Lount asked a supplementary question, noting the current economic circumstances, was it wise to accept these tickets?

The Deputy City Mayor in response said that he appeared on the guest list and it was reasonable to accept. He noted the economic benefits of the event to the city, which totalled £5.82m and the profile the city received went beyond the city into the country as a whole.

**45. Cllr Kennedy-Lount**

“What contingency plans were in place by Leicester City Council, East Midlands Railway, the BBC and other stakeholders to get visitors to the BBC Radio 2 Party in the Park Event back to their original railway destinations after the railway points section was hit by lighting on the evening of the 19th September?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clarke in response said that he was proud of the response and that there were extensive contingency plans which were led on by Council staff and in conjunction with partners such as Festival Republic and East Midlands Railway. The contingency plan was put into place on the night and actions were taken such as taxi and bus providers to source additional capacity and a pick up point and an emergency centre were established. By 9.30pm it appeared that rail services had been restored and by 10.00pm crowds at the railway station were minimal.



Councillor Kennedy-Lount asked a supplementary question, noting that the Park and Ride was not in operation on the Sunday and queried whether it would have been better to have had this to help with travel arrangements.

The Deputy City Mayor said that he was keen to show off the park and ride service, but empty buses would have created more problems than was necessary and it was proved not needed for the event.

**46. Cllr Kitterick**

“What progress have council officers made on reviewing the executive mayor model of governance in Leicester?”

The City Mayor in response said that officers had checked the legislation and had confirmed that it was not possible to make changes to the model of governance until May 2027. He was determined that there would be a proper and sensible debate on this issue with a degree of public consultation on the three models before a final decision within the next few months.

Councillor Kitterick asked a supplementary question. He welcomed the commitment to have a wider ranging debate and proposed that there was an opportunity to have a referendum in May 2024, also noting that parties against the mayoral system achieved 60% of the vote in the recent local elections.

The City Mayor in response said that the issue of governance model could be discussed in the Council Chamber and in the community, but the turnout for a referendum would be better if it were to coincide with a general election. Public opinion on this matter could be tested, but there wasn't a need to do this at an early point.

**47. Cllr Sood**

“Leicester is a beacon of diversity & multiculturalism.

Will Deputy Mayor of Culture join me in congratulating & thanking Leicester communities for celebrating vibrant festivals & council officers for their support to the communities for safe celebrations?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clarke in response said that he agreed with the High Bailiff that the city was a beacon of diversity. He was proud of the city's well organized festivals which reflected the City's diversity such Diwali, Eid, Hannukah, Carnival and Christmas and each had an equal value. He also noted that he'd recently attended the Evington Mela and at the invitation of Councillor Agath he had attended the Ganesh festival. He felt that contrary to what the Home Secretary said, the city was successful in its diversity.

**34. SERVICE PLAN FOR FOOD LAW REGULATION 2022/23**

Moved by Councillor Cutkelvin, seconded by Councillor Dawood and carried:

That Council note the contents of the plan and endorse the delivery of the food service plan 2023/24.

**35. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23**

Councillor Moore made a suggestion that future Scrutiny Annual Reports contain details of any changes which had occurred as a result of the activity of Scrutiny Committees.

Moved by Councillor Cassidy, seconded by Councillor March and carried:

That Council note the report and endorse the work of scrutiny during 2022-23.

**36. REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE TO COUNCIL COVERING 2022/23**

Moved by Councillor Kaur Saini, seconded by Councillor Surti and carried:

That Council receive the report.

**37. EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES**

Moved by Councillor Halford, seconded by Councillor Cassidy and carried:

That Councillor Surti be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Overview Select Committee.

**38. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There being no other business, the Lord Mayor declared the meeting closed at 9:44pm.