



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, 21 MARCH 2019 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 24 January 2019 and 20 February 2019 are available to view at

24 January 2019

<http://www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk:8071/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=81&MId=8708&Ver=4>

20 February 2019

<http://www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk:8071/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=81&MId=8710&Ver=4>

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 Pay Policy Statement 2019/20 and Gender Pay

8. **EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES**

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

9. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

10. **NOTICE OF MOTION**

Fire & Emergency Evacuation Procedure

- The Council Chamber Fire Exits are the two entrances either side of the top bench or under the balcony in the far left corner of the room.
- In the event of an emergency alarm sounding make your way to Town Hall Square and assemble on the far side of the fountain.
- Anyone who is unable to evacuate using stairs should speak to any of the Town Hall staff at the beginning of the meeting who will offer advice on evacuation arrangements.
- From the public gallery, exit via the way you came in, or via the Chamber as directed by Town Hall staff.

Filming and Recording the Meeting

The Council is committed to transparency and supports efforts to record and share reports of proceedings of public meetings through a variety of means, including social media. In accordance with government regulations and the Council's policy, persons and press attending any meeting of the Council open to the public (except Licensing Sub Committees and where the public have been formally excluded) are allowed to record and/or report all or part of that meeting. Details of the Council's policy are available at www.leicester.gov.uk or from Democratic Support.

If you intend to film or make an audio recording of a meeting you are asked to notify the relevant Democratic Support Officer in advance of the meeting to ensure that participants can be notified in advance and consideration given to practicalities such as allocating appropriate space in the public gallery etc.

The aim of the Regulations and of the Council's policy is to encourage public interest and engagement so in recording or reporting on proceedings members of the public are asked:

- ✓ to respect the right of others to view and hear debates without interruption;
- ✓ to ensure that the sound on any device is fully muted and intrusive lighting avoided;
- ✓ where filming, to only focus on those people actively participating in the meeting;
- ✓ where filming, to (via the Chair of the meeting) ensure that those present are aware that they may be filmed and respect any requests to not be filmed.

PRESENT:

ROSS GRANT, LORD MAYOR
CHAIRMAN

SIR PETER SOULSBY – CITY MAYOR

Abbey Ward

HARSHAD DAHYABHAI BHAVSAR
ANNETTE BYRNE
VIJAY SINGH RIYAIT

Aylestone Ward

ADAM CLARKE
NIGEL CARL PORTER

Beaumont Leys Ward

HEMANT RAE BHATIA
SUE WADDINGTON
PAUL THOMAS WESTLEY

Belgrave Ward

PADMINI CHAMUND
MANJULA SOOD

Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields

STEVE CORRALL
ELAINE HALFORD
KULWINDER SINGH JOHAL

Castle Ward

PATRICK JOSEPH KITTERICK

Evington Ward

DEEPAK BAJAJ
RATILAL BHAGWAN GOVIND
SUE HUNTER

Eyres Monsell Ward

VIRGINIA CLEAVER
ELAINE PANTLING

North Evington Ward

JEAN KHOTE
ABDUL RAZAK OSMAN

Rushey Mead Ward

PIARA SINGH CLAIR
RITA PATEL
ROSS WILLMOTT

Saffron Ward

ELLY CUTKELVIN
WILLIAM SHELTON

Spinney Hills Ward

SHOFIQUUL ISLAM CHOWDHURY
MUSTAFA MALIK

Stoneygate Ward

LUCY CHAPLIN
KIRK MASTER
AMINUR THALUKDAR

Thurncourt Ward

TERESA ALDRED

Troon Ward

DIANE CANK
BALJIT SINGH

Westcotes Ward

ANDY CONNELLY
SARAH RUSSELL

Fosse Ward

DAWN ALFONSO
TED CASSIDY

Humberstone and Hamilton Ward

VI DEMPSTER
RASHMI JOSHI
GURINDER SINGH SANDHU

Knighton Ward

INDERJIT SINGH GUGNANI
DR LYNN MOORE

Western Ward

DR SUSAN BARTON
GEORGE COLE
MALCOLM UNSWORTH

Wycliffe Ward

HANIF AQBANY
MOHAMMED DAWOOD

LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cyclone Idai

The Lord Mayor expressed his sympathies on behalf of the city for all those victims of the recent cyclone in Mozambique, where thousands of people either lost their lives, had been bereaved or left without shelter or food.

Attack in New Zealand

The Lord Mayor noted the recent tragic events following the attack on Mosques in New Zealand where people had lost their lives or had been seriously injured. He expressed dismay at such actions and noted that he was happy to agree to add the urgent motion to the agenda where Council could express its collective condemnation.

Out of respect for the victims of both the above incidents, Council stood for a minute's silence.

Council Prayers – the Sikh Faith

The Lord Mayor referred to prayers prior to the previous Council meeting. He believed that the Sikh faith was inadvertently omitted when a list of the major faiths in the city was mentioned. He said that it was his intention for prayers to be as inclusive as possible throughout his year in office and he apologised to anyone who may have been offended by this omission.

Local medal winner at the Special Olympics

The Lord Mayor congratulated local resident Julie Freestone for her major achievement of being awarded a bronze medal as part of the Great Britain basketball team at the Special Olympics which were being held in Abu Dhabi.

The Lord Mayor also thanked her coaches, sponsors and supporters, who enabled her to attend the Special Olympics.

He intended to invite Julie and her team to join him in a reception at the Town Hall where her achievements could be truly recognised.

Final Council meeting before the forthcoming election

The Lord Mayor noted that it was the final Council meeting before the up-coming election. He noted that a number of members would not be standing for re-election. They would however be welcomed to attend a thank you event which he would host on 13th May.

He took the opportunity to thank all those not standing for their service to the city and wished them well for the future.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Lord Mayor invited Members to declare any interests they might have in the business on the agenda.

No declarations were made.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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

30. That the minutes of the meetings of Council held on 24th January and 20st February 2019, copies having been circulated to each Member of the Council, be taken as read and that they each be approved as a correct record.

STATEMENTS BY THE CITY MAYOR/EXECUTIVE

The following statements were made:

City Mayor

The City Mayor noted that many Councillors were not standing in the forthcoming election and he wished them well. He did however note that some may return at some point in the future. He paid particular thanks to his Executive colleagues, Councillors Andy Connelly and Manjula Sood as they were not standing.

Deputy City Mayor – Councillor Russell

Councillor Russell referred to the role of all Councillors as a corporate parent, and the recent ‘Celebrating Success’ event which celebrated the achievements of the Council’s looked after children. She noted the importance of the corporate parent role and the difference it could make to young people’s lives. She wanted to pay particular tribute to two Councillors who had gone above and beyond in their commitment to looked after children. They were Councillor Danny Myers and Councillor Ted Cassidy. They had shown unbending commitment and focus on seeking every possible opportunity for children in the Council’s care.

PETITIONS

Petitions from Members of the Public

Mr Martin Buchanan presented a petition with 14 valid signatures in the following terms:-

“We the undersigned petition Sir Peter Soulsby to allow Beaumont Lodge Neighbourhood Centre to be transferred as an asset to the residing charity Beaumont Lodge Neighbourhood Association CIO.”

Petitions from Councillors

No petitions for presentation had been received from Councillors.

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

QUESTIONS

Lord Mayor: I invite Mr Hersh Thaker to ask his question.

Matthew Reeves: He’s not attending.

Lord Mayor: He's not attending so we will supply that answer in writing. I invite Mrs Zena Morris to ask her question.

Zena Morris: The City Mayor's Public Briefing on Thursday 16th October 2014 considered a report for "Proposals for policy provision schemes and new schemes in the Housing Capital Programme 2014/15". It contained a recommendation for St Leonard's Court, that a second lift is installed, and the first lift is refurbished within the next 5 years. I live in St Leonard's Court and we the tenants and residents are still suffering with a series of breakdowns, almost a weekly occurrence just lately, I'd like to know when the second lift will be procured and installed?

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Assistant City Mayor, Councillor Connelly to reply.

Councillor Connelly: Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you Zena for the question. I will say I do share your frustrations as to the issue of the second lift in St Leonards Court. I'd like to thank Councillor Kitterick for his initial lobbying which highlighted the necessity to install a second lift. I know that Councillor Kitterick has been as frustrated as I am as to how long it has taken. As Zena said the decision to install a second lift was taken in 2015, and to create them we must procure that lift along with a need list for the entire refurbishment project. However, once we began the process it was recognised that the location that had been identified for the second lift was the store room off the communal landing which had unfortunately had been sold under the right to buy to the adjacent lease-holder. This meant that the Council did not own the cupboard anymore, so we couldn't fit the new lift. The reason for fitting the new lift was because the original lift had become unreliable and needed renewing, as Zena adequately just stated. We could not do this while getting proper lift access to all floors, so we need to fit the new lift first. The Council started negotiations with the lease-holders, and most of those negotiations were completed apart from with the lease-holder who owned the cupboard space. We are pleased to say that those negotiations are now recently being concluded, and we plan to install the lift in the summer. It doesn't give a date, but I would assume it would get to work in 2019. There will be a resident's open day which has been planned for June, which all tenants, lease-holders and residents will be invited to. I will ensure that the ward councillors are invited to as well, though I won't be here. But the second lift has been installed we will mostly be using the existing lift, so the block can have two lifts, we can't be dependent on just one lift anymore. We hope though that we can repair both by 2020, thank you.

Lord Mayor: Mrs Morris do you have a supplementary question?

Zena Morris: Yes I do, just that if you could keep the tenants up to date with plans, and this open day, if you could publicise it so that everyone could be there on that day, we'd appreciate that, thank you.

Councillor Connelly: I'll ensure that happens.

Lord Mayor: Yes, OK. Thank you very much for your questions. OK, moving on to questions from Councillors, I request that where any members have questions for tonight's meeting they bear in mind the requirements of the constitution that questions should be asked and answered without discussion and that supplementary questions must be a question with the purpose of clarifying the report and not a statement. Please note that I will be seeking to curtail any member that does not comply with these requirements. So first, let's take Councillor Rae Bhatia.

Councillor Rae Bhatia: Thank you Lord Mayor. Recently there has been an article in Leicester Mercury circulating an idea to open up Glenfield Tunnel to cyclists by spending approximately £4 million. The messages exchanged on social media since point to compulsory purchase orders for several houses on Copeland Avenue to produce an exit point for cyclists. The residents of this area, which fall in Beaumont Leys, have raised deep concern and their total opposition to this. We as ward councillors would certainly object to it on several grounds. In order to be clear and to reassure the residents, can City Mayor please advise us whether this proposal is in consideration or are there no such plans? Thank you.

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor. I can well understand the surprise and indeed dismay of the local residents and the councillors when they read in the Mercury the suggestion that this might be opened up, I think as a cycle way was a suggestion. Frankly, I think that's about it, I should probably stop speaking there, but as a serious answer, I'm aware of absolutely no serious suggestion having been made or any consideration by me given to it. Just by way of a little bit of history, some Members may have been the tunnel, but it's a very important piece of railway history. It was part of the Leicester to Swannington line. It was inherited by the council, we inherited most of the line leading up to the tunnel. It's just under a mile long and it is, reputedly, the oldest passenger railway tunnel in the world, and obviously being a mile long it is a great example of a piece of masonry deep in the ground there. I do know the tunnel quite well, I've been there a number of times, and as a cyclist, and I just can't imagine anybody wanting to use it as a serious cycle route, even were it possible to gain access to it at the city end. The only access is from the Glenfield end, and I can't imagine that it would be sensible, nor therefore right to try and open it at the other end. We have over recent years managed to get access from the Glenfield end on a number of occasions the council has obviously been very good with facilitating access and sometimes taking pictures of it in the Mercury and sometimes even go on show at weekends, and I'm very, very grateful at the work of the Leicestershire Industrial History Society, who have been very active in trying to get access into there and to take guided tours in there. So that's the sort of use I can suppose we'll get in years to come, certainly not as a good cycle route.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary question?

Councillor Rae Bhatia: No, thank you City Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. OK, Councillor Waddington.

Councillor Waddington: Is the City Mayor aware, that a loan company is delivering leaflets door to door to homes in some Leicester neighbourhoods, offering loans of between £100 and £1000, even to people with poor credit histories, with a representative APR of 535.3%? What steps can the City Council take to try to protect vulnerable people who might be tempted to take up such loans, which may, in many cases result in further financial problems and unsustainable debts?

Lord Mayor: Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Clair.

Councillor Clair: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I can see that the high rate of interest charged is quite often quoting a very high rate of interest. It is illegal to deliver the leaflets promoting credit to people's home, and it is impossible to stop people from

accessing (*inaudible*), if they so wish to take that risk. However, that promotional material must be very clear, clear, not misleading, use plain language, be easily legible, identifiable or question many promotions. The possibility of enforcing, organised with the new authority for the promotion of credit falls to Financial Conduct Authority, that Council can, and does raise awareness, what is their financial success should they find themselves facing debt, so that advice already be provided, and it is available. On the website provided, work closely with HMRC Illegal Money Lending Team to tackle loan shark activities and I will ask members if they see any doubt, or see any activities going on in their area which is not right, they should report loan shark activities to HMRC, and that is the link on the website, so I will advise members, as well as Councillor Waddington, that they should actually bring that to the notice of officers.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Waddington, supplementary?

Councillor Waddington: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Just to say that I have no doubt that the financial company is sticking to the law but my question really related to how the council might be supportive of people who were in a difficult financial situations and might want to consider finding a loan that they can afford to repay, and I would be grateful if the Deputy Mayor could perhaps indicate whether there are any measures or steps that this Council might take now or after the Council elections to provide alternative support and help for those in that situation. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Deputy City Mayor.

Councillor Clair: I think that as I said that along with, we have produced a booklet with a wide information on a range of support from DWP. Also, and financially accredited sums, you have local people manage their budget particularly while they are waiting for their benefit and seek help if they are facing any problem, and booklet is available from our Customer Service Centre, libraries advice provided, also available online, and as I said, if there is anything my colleagues and member of the public notice that this is something we need to address, then I'm more than happy to ask options and engage with those member of public, other elected Members, and that's why I can say, if there is anything you need to tidy up those loose ends, after the election, I would be more than happy to take on board.

Lord Mayor: Question three, Councillor Dempster.

Councillor Dempster: Thank you Lord Mayor. Bradford, Edinburgh and York are just some of the cities that have already banned 'A' Boards. It has been questioned at the Forum for Older People on several occasions the need for and enforcement of 'A' Boards outside business premises across the city centre. The Older Persons Forum requests that the Council conduct a trial in a specific city centre location to ban 'A' Boards with a view to consideration of a total ban across the city the following year.

Lord Mayor: Deputy City Mayor.

Councillor Clair: Thank you Lord Mayor. First if I may touch on, what those boards are. As I'm advised, that those boards, that are on the streets, the City Wardens are responsible for monitoring and enforcement of 'A' boards. They fall into two categories: One, boards which are placed stand-alone outside shops, and they may cause obstruction on the highway. These are enforced by City Wardens. There are sometimes difficulties to get straight action, either to remove or to fine,

but there is a better approach we have in our policy, that we first advise those businesses, then we write, and then we enforce to seize those boards. And the second category of those boards are, that licensed highway amenity street café provision, and 'A' boards must be contained within the curtilage of that licensed area. It may be in that area some board cause similar obstruction to people, old people and people with disability, and those boards may be slightly outside the licensed area which can be enforced in the same way as I explained in category A. And we are aware of that problem, and we have already increased the number of City Wardens, from one to three in the city centre to make sure that any, at one time, at least one City Warden is on active duty to advise and monitor and enforce. As Councillor Vi Dempster has quoted examples of other cities, it falls to people to provide information of the specific area of the city where it causes problems, and I can advise officers to investigate, to help your trial period start, on that part of the area to start.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Dempster, any supplementary?

Councillor Dempster: Thank you, that would be incredibly helpful. The area that has been mentioned on numerous occasions is at New Walk. Thank you.

Councillor Clair: Thank you my Lord Mayor, that is really helpful for me to get that place.

Lord mayor: Question number four, Councillor Cutkelvin?

Councillor Cutkelvin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. A decision to close the café at Aylestone Leisure Centre has been taken recently with users telling me there was little to no consultation on the changes. Can I ask the Deputy City Mayor with responsibility for sports and leisure to re-visit this decision with a commitment to open discussions with both service users and local Ward Councillors to explore what other options are available?

Lord Mayor: Deputy City Mayor.

Councillor Clair: Thank you my Lord Mayor. As a plan just to say this now and put this on record. That we are only seeking, in the company as to the rest of the reason, that we are a Labour group to keep those leisure centres and sports centres in-house, and we are committed to invest, and that investment programme for leisure centres and sports centres is going through the procurement process, and obviously that report will be presented to the City Mayor and the Exec Team for final approval, and that capital programme thinking of our future improvement, and Aylestone Leisure Centre is one of those, and I will advise officers to actually work with both Ward Councillors and also service users, how we can have that opportunity to improve the layout of the first floor and which look back to improve access to reception, and potentially in this case, by working to improve the problems in this facility. So, I can assure Councillor Cutkelvin that I'm mindful of the issue which is raised by some service users at Aylestone Leisure Centre.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Cutkelvin, supplementary?

Councillor Cutkelvin: Yes, thank you my Lord Mayor. Yes, I too have praised a number of times the decision that the City Council took to keep the leisure centres in house rather than privatised so thank you for that, and I also thank you for deciding to re-visit the decision. There's a disabled group, many of whom are in wheelchairs who meet there every Thursday evening and drink tea in the café and

play board games together. This is the only public venue they feel that they've got access to with suitable facilities for their needs. Would the Deputy City Mayor agree that we need to ensure that our leisure centres, just as our community centres and our libraries, continue to be a place that are accessible for all, and in being so, help tackle social isolation?

Lord Mayor: Deputy City Mayor.

Councillor Clair: My Lord Mayor. As I said, being a sportsman myself I have seen what it takes, and I can acknowledge that just as Leicester has developed equality, and there are many needs for different individuals to improve their health and wellbeing, and this is something that is taken very seriously also on board and I'll make sure officers can meet and look at all those service users as I said before, that we can do what we need to do and I'm happy to, with our staff officers, have that dialogue with yourself, and the other Ward Councillor.

Lord Mayor: Question five, Councillor Barton.

Councillor Dr Barton: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Many people have expressed concern that restructuring of Leicester City Museums Service will lead to the loss of four specialist curator posts. Within the new structure who will be responsible for leading on collections care, access and documentation across the Museums Service and can we be assured that the core Museum Service is maintained to its current high standard without the knowledge and expertise of the curators we may lose?

Lord Mayor: Deputy City Mayor

Councillor Clair: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Just recently, we have appointed a new Audience Development and Engagement Manager. His name is Chris Kirby. It is a very senior post, which oversees collections, film, access and documentation, and he has a background of curator work he has done previously in his local authority, which was Coventry. And in the second tier, we have a very long-serving, experienced Collections Manager, who reports to Chris, leads on collections care, access documentation across Museum Services. A new structure across Museum Services has been established, this includes some new posts, which will be responsible for our providing a very compelling, and high-quality offer for our visitors. And stewardship of our collection, their care and access and redemption of reputation with Arts Council England remains vital to our services. I can assure Councillor Barton that going forward our Museum Service will be maintained to its current high standard and collections care, and access, documentation to our public, the wider circle the work scheme we have in Leicester, appealing to everyone, will be maintained with further work and our research that we've taken on board, and I can assure once again, Councillor Barton, that we are a authority, as I said before, we are investing in community services, we have given equipment to have Jewry Wall Museum bring back, and we have already invested in Abbey Pumping Station, and we have critical (inaudible). We have refurbished our New Walk Museum, and we have new staircases, and then we have a education programme for art and craft, Egyptian Gallery, and we can be very proud of a great link with two Attenborough brothers, and their collection of Picasso, and also our great gallery of dinosaurs, and we value that, and I can assure Councillor Barton, that we are committed and we will continue to deliver that service to a high standard.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Barton, supplementary?

Councillor Dr Barton: Yes, thank you for that answer, and thank you my Lord Mayor. It's really reassuring to know how valued and cared for the collections are and about the investment which is in the museum's fabric, but there are things like foxing of paper that people need to be looking out for. The fading of fabric items in the collection, the preservation of specimens, and cataloguing, which are specialist jobs. Please could you re-iterate that the collections themselves will be physically cared for and maintained to the high standard that we are proud to have?

Lord Mayor: Deputy City Mayor.

Councillor Clair: Yes my Lord Mayor. As I said in my answer in great detail, I covered the aspect of supplementary question. I can only further say and assure Councillor Barton that I'm happy to take your comments on board and I'm happy to ask officers we will decide and bring them back together to make sure that we provide in the Museum Service which not only cover Leicester citizens, but citizens of the region, and nationally and internationally, what they deserve, and to keep that service to a great standard.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Riyait.

Councillor Riyait: Thank you my Lord Mayor. How many dropped kerbs on Anstey Lane have been approved by planning and how many trees on Anstey Lane are at danger of failing due to damage by the dropped kerbs?

Lord Mayor: Assistant City Mayor, Councillor Master.

Councillor Master: Thank you Lord Mayor, Councillor Riyait for that question. I was tempted to walk up Anstey Lane with yourself to get a cab (*inaudible*), I'll take your advice on that! There's actually fifteen properties on Anstey Lane that have currently dropped kerbs, one application is outstanding, two applications were refused, and there is one application that's been withdrawn, and according to the Parks and Woodlands officers they are unaware of any trees at this moment in time that are in danger of damage or in danger of falling down.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary Councillor Riyait?

Councillor Riyait: Thank you for that, I was quite impressed with that. This question arises from a resident who has applied for a dropped kerb and the advice has been that the dropped kerb has potential to cause damage. Given that we, as Councillor Master said, we have a number of properties that already have dropped kerbs, and they are in all sorts of different configurations, close to the trees, further away from the trees, I'm surprised that the advice given, that more trees, if that is the real concern, that we aren't, that there aren't more trees in this situation. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Assistant City Mayor.

Councillor Master: Thank you Lord Mayor. I'm not sure what the question was, but just to kind of answer a point, I think we will seek, because Anstey Lane is a classified road, A, B or C road, we need permission for free planning or free highways to be able to do the dropped kerbs, and over a period of time those that we need permission, some we've had, and some have highways which have been able to supersede that, and been able to give them permission granted, permission to be able to do that, so there's a range of different schemes that have happened

on Anstey Lane over time. In relation to the particular address I think you're making reference to, there's a tree very close to the entrance of their, where they wish to put a driveway in, and the Trees and Woodlands are concerned about the damage or what actually having to remove that tree would actually do. There's also, as you well know given it's your area, issues around the pedestrian crossing that's very close to that location. There's also Buckminster junction which is quite busy as well, and there's obviously the entrance to Alderman Hallam School, so there's a range of different factors as to why it may or may not be possible to convene that individual request, but all of those are looked at in isolation of each other, and if you think there's something further to pursue I'm happy to do that with you.

Lord Mayor: Question seven, Councillor Willmott.

Councillor Willmott: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I would like to thank Councillor Clair for his answer to my question at the last Council meeting and the information that officers are preparing a report which will explain why our enforcement action appears to be so low at less than 2% of all breaches of planning permissions. I would be grateful if he could assure me that the report will look at practice in other local authorities, where I understand in some cases enforcement is much higher, which sends a clearer signal to developers to comply with planning regulations?

Lord Mayor: Deputy City Mayor.

Councillor Clair: Thank you my Lord Mayor. As I was picking up Councillor Willmott's correspondence with officers, as they have already assured Councillor Willmott. I'm happy to further confirm that officers have been requested to prepare a full report on the personal performance including complaint information with performance of other councils to present the full picture to Executive and Scrutiny as soon as possible, and I'm really grateful for Councillor Willmott that he has shown his trust that he is more than happy to raise with officers to make his contribution during that work, during that time, that officers actually prepared that report. I will ask Councillor Willmott, either I can arrange a meeting with him and with officers, or he can approach officers himself, so we are both now ready to talk to yourself.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary Councillor Willmott?

Councillor Willmott: I'd like to thank Councillor Clair for his answer, which was very helpful. Could he give us some idea, as soon as possible, when the report will be done? Will it be in the next couple of weeks or at least before the end of April, that would be helpful. Thank you My Lord.

Councillor Clair: It obviously helps, I don't want to go into such things of Council, nor officers leave or absence, but obviously officer who actually leads it, the Team Leader for Enforcement, I don't know the name, he is actually away for holiday, in India, and soon as he comes back, and work will start, and he will meet with you and you can plan this, obviously as soon as possible, if not at this end of the election, possibly soon after.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Question number eight, Councillor Willmott.

Councillor Willmott: Thank you Lord Mayor. I did have the replies related to this question, and I didn't have time to write a shorter question. As I am sure you recall that I raised at Scrutiny a couple of weeks ago, the issue about how the introduction of Universal Credit means that the automatic deduction of rent through Direct

Payments is not now something we can simply apply or put in place. Direct Payments have in the past helped people by ensuring their rent is paid and they don't fall into arrears with the risk of losing their home. I have since then learned from information provided by officers, that currently 400 of our tenants in receipt of Universal Credit are on the new Automatic Payment Arrangements compared to 11,000 registered for Direct Payments under the previous benefits regime. I am sure Councillor Connelly will acknowledge that the move to Universal Credit could result in many fewer instances where the council receives rent payments directly. I understand, again from officers, that government regulations prevent us as a council from transferring these 11,000 tenants to the new system on a voluntary basis. So, I would like to ask him what has he and his Executive colleagues done, or, indeed, propose to do politically to raise awareness amongst our tenants and encourage them to apply for an APA? Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Assistant City Mayor, Councillor Connelly.

Councillor Connelly: Thank you Lord Mayor. Thank you, Councillor Willmott, for the question. Obviously disappointed he couldn't shorten it, but there you go. War and Peace reads shorter than that question. There does appear to be some confusion in respect to Universal Credit. Councillor Willmott is quite correct, anybody who receives housing benefit, that housing benefit is paid directly to the landlord. So council tenants, previously 11,000 council tenants had their housing benefit paid directly to us as an authority. Under Universal Credit, that opportunity has ceased. We're not particularly pursuing alternative payment arrangements, as there is the time for Universal Credit payment to be paid in a different format should payments be paid. What we are seeking, for any tenant that qualifies, is a managed payment, whereby the housing costs are paid directly to the landlord on behalf of the tenant, where the tenant owes 8 weeks rent or more, and meets certain other criteria such as previous homelessness, or a drug problem or are deemed as being vulnerable. We have trusted partner status with the DWP, which allows us to intervene on behalf of those tenants in order to seek managed payments for them.

And so politically, what are we doing? Well, we made the decision, we introduced four Payment Management Advisors, within, paid for within the Housing Revenue Account, and they are visiting our tenants as they apply for Universal Credit to assist them to ensure that they complete the necessary forms correctly, and through the Income Management Team, working in the three DWP offices, they are seeking to ensure that any tenant that qualifies for a managed payment, gets a managed payment. Politically, I suppose, we have an election coming up, this doesn't prevent any Labour candidate from including the issue of Universal Credit in their leaflets. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary Councillor Willmott?

Councillor Willmott: Thank you my Lord Mayor, but I do thank Councillor Connelly for the clarification. This is a foggy area really, I think in terms of the changes and he's certainly confirmed my faith in him as a politician by saying it's something we should be raising in the elections and I thank him for that. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Have you got a question?

Councillor Connelly: Well I wanted to (inaudible) (laughs).

Lord Mayor: Question number nine, Councillor Chaplin.

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Councillor Willmott may have apologised for the length of his questions, but I'm not going to apologise for the number of questions that I've put forward, because I believe that's what I was elected to do in Stoneygate Ward, but please I do apologise if I stutter or I speak slowly it's because of the illness that I have. So, do bear with me.

How many Council employees and councillors have accessed the Amica counselling service in each of the last four years, and what was the cost to the Council?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you Lord Mayor. The Amica counselling service has become very highly valued and very well used, and some 80% of those who accessed Amica while absent reported that this service helped them return to work, and it's one of a number of services we provide in that respect. In direct answer to Councillor Chaplin's question about the numbers is that in 2014-15 it was 1,187 rising to 1,207 in 15-16, 1,217 in 2017, 1,372 rising up every year in 17-18, and already in the year to date we have 1,486 approaches made to Amica. I'm informed that the cost of Amica is, to us, the equivalent of £10.70 per head, and equates to some £65,000 this current year including all city-based Council employees and Elected Members. It does seem to me, from the information I've been given, that you have here a valuable service representing value for money.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary Councillor Chaplin?

Councillor Chaplin: Yes, my Lord Mayor. I agree that it is an excellent service, but I wondered what is being done at a political and strategic level about the increase in numbers year on year. Anecdotally I've been told that parts of the organisation are, and I quote "toxic," and therefore, especially with the evidence you have given us, I would hope that something would be done to have an independent review of the culture of the Council. Will the City Mayor give an undertaking that will be done?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: With respect to Councillor Chaplin, the supplementary question has very little to do with the original question she asked. If she does have evidence that parts of the organisation where the culture is, as she described it "toxic", I would very much hope that she would have taken this issue to my attention. She hasn't done so, but on evidence of that I would be happy to receive it and act appropriately on it, but until she does so I'm afraid I have to take a view that of course our staff are under enormous pressure. I have seen various reductions in spend, and inevitably that impacts on people's work and their work load, but I don't put down the increase in numbers using Amica to that in particular. (Inaudible: off-mic) it is jam-packed as I said. As I said, it is a service that is very highly-valued although I say it myself, one that is of course highly valued, word about its value is inevitably passed between work colleagues, and I'm very pleased to see that that word seems to be enabling others to know of it and make use of it and they ought to take advantage of the service it provides.

Lord Mayor: Question Ten, Councillor Chaplin.

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. How many Time to Change community grant roadshows have been organised by the Council and where in the city. How much money had been awarded under this scheme and for what activities

since the scheme launched on 2017?

Lord Mayor: Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Clarke.

Councillor Clarke: Thank you my Lord Mayor and thank you for the question. A little bit of background. Since 2017, Time to Change Leicester has been what is described as an 'organic hub'. From April 2019, Time to Change Leicester will be an official hub with some funding, following a successful application and interview which has secured that national funding. This means that Leicester City Council will be working in partnership and in fellowship with community organisations and with volunteers with national Time to Change to empower with lived experience of mental health problems to speak about mental health stigma. I'm particularly proud that we have gone from being an organic hub to an official hub. Official hub status means that we can continue to challenge stigma and discrimination linked to mental health. One way it will do this, as Councillor Chaplin alludes to, is through Time to Change Leicester road shows in 2019-20. These will be based in areas of the city where we've identified that the need is greatest through data collection and through our Health and Wellbeing survey. So, we have undergone an assessment that has enabled us to identify areas of the city where we will be initially targeting, I will be interested to hear from Members about particular areas of the city they feel that Time to Change Roadshow will be welcomed and needed. The first Roadshow is planned for May in Eyres Monsell, and then we'll be moving around the city to areas such as Beaumont Leys, Hamilton, Spinney Hills. The purpose of the roadshows will be to take the campaign into communities of the highest need as I've said, but also to develop local Time to Change champions. These champions will have lived experience and understand the areas to promote the Time to Change message. Support for the local people will be given to develop bids which could be funded by the Time to Change community grant. We've given out many community grants and I'm more than happy to provide a full list. I'll give some examples of grants here that I've been provided by officers: LGBT Mental Health Project, with the LGBT Centre, which was an event to support people and to discuss and tackle mental health stigma; Planet Leicester bakers have run a baking project with people with mental health, who are mental health service users; there have been projects with LASS; there has been a project called 'Chatter Matters'; a film called 'Word Up' has been made; 'Write Mindful', which is a really therapeutic writing; there has been young people's projects; projects with the Sikh community who have very much engaged with the Time to Change programme; there has been a project, an example of a project called Rohti and Rasi; there's been music therapy projects; there's been a carer's mental health support project, and like I said there'll be many other projects as part of our organic status. Now we have official Hub status that we gained recently, I'm very pleased that we will be able to take that and escalate that work further so that we can continue to challenge mental health stigma in our city and we're committed to doing that on this case.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Chaplin, supplementary?

Councillor Chaplin: Yes my Lord Mayor. I hope you will all forgive me, obviously I won't be at the Council meeting next time, I won't be asking questions, so this is a really important issue, and I think the answer that Councillor Clarke has kindly given actually does throw up a lot of points. It isn't clear the actual number that have been awarded under that scheme, and indeed on the Council website the latest ones are only in 2017, and I'm really surprised that given the fact that the Council has signed up to the Mental Health Charter and reducing the stigma, and the fact that we value the Amica service so much, that this hasn't been something that has been pushed and been made more visible by the Council. I'll ask for it to be more visible, but I

also ask the Council, particularly Councillor Clarke in his capacity as Executive Member on Health and Wellbeing Board, about challenging the facilities and the services for mental health treatment in this city. Scrutiny this week had a report, a CQC report about Leicester Partnership Trust, the umpteenth time that it has had a bad CQC report. I would like to know when this Council is going to live up to the hype and actually challenge the stigma and take on board and be proactive and non-judgmental about mental health and wellbeing.

Lord Mayor: Thank you.

Councillor Clarke: As Councillor Chaplin has indicated, this is a very broad area. You could probably divide it between prevention work and treatment and obviously the CQC report raised many many concerns and I was very pleased to hear the challenge that Councillor Chaplin and her community gave, has given to this, and I likewise with my engagement with the chair of LPT and the LPT itself have provided a similar challenge and raised similar concerns about the situation that Councillor Chaplin describes. Sorry I didn't give you a number, I've just gone through the list that's in front of me, I think there's 14 there, total grants of £18,240 have been announced. The fact that we applied to Time to Change, which is a partnership between Rethink and Mind, the two foremost mental health charities in the country, the fact that we made an application, the fact that we went to interview, I went to interview and sat with Rethink Mental Health and passed through that interview, we were awarded Hub status, they looked at the work we had been doing, they saw it as nationally needed work, the fact that we were providing that challenge intrigued them. The fact that we all recognise the need on this Council by signing that pledge initially, we got through the organic status, I've managed to work with partners in the city and with officers to achieve National Hub status, I would hope that that indicates that I, and we as a Council take this issue with immense seriousness, and really are determined to tackle mental health stigma and to enable people to talk about their mental health, whether that be (obscured by interruption), or just their own mental health, openly and honestly so that we can all be seen to be working towards the eradication of stigma around mental health.

Lord Mayor: Just can I encourage Councillors to get to their supplementary questions as quickly as possible, and that they relate as much as possible to the first one, but also, to provide some advice on that, being a councillor is not the only way to ask questions in council so Councillor Chaplin you will still be allowed to ask up to six questions per municipal year. Question number 11, Councillor Chaplin.

Councillor Chaplin: I don't even know what to say to that open invitation, except, yeah, I mean, we'll see.

Lord Mayor: It's in the Constitution.

Councillor Chaplin: Has the City Mayor stopped his informal street surgeries 'Meet the Mayor' events?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: The sort answer to that is 'yes'. My Lord Mayor we stopped them years ago, and it's, I'm really cross about this because I don't quite know why anybody should want to go back to it, but in fact what we sought to do it look at a variety of different ways and ensure we keep in touch with residents and citizens and hear what they have to say to me and Members of our administration. Certainly, when I was first elected back nearly eight years ago now, the 'Meet the Mayor' out in the

street seemed quite a good way of doing it. I think initially we did have quite a lot of people turning out, they were very keen to talk about, to the Mayor, but as time went on people came along to say “well are there better ways, are there other ways”, and there are many ways of doing it. Certainly, we’ve had a variety of different ways of ensuring people can make contact with the Mayor, we use social media channels, we have Twitter, Instagram profiles that are now quite widely circulated, and they brought be a lot of feedback, particularly on Twitter, where people respond and ask questions and point things out, and I also think that often with Ward Councillors, a number of citizens across the city, even in the Wards, we’ve had number of personally made question times with BBC Radio Leicester, but I’m very much up to other ways to effectively communicate, and listen to what people have to say and should I be re-elected we’ll certainly be very happy to try and take on board any suggestions that Councillor Chaplin might have made now, or subsequently, or indeed other Members or members of the public might want to suggest, as we obviously adapt to what people, to the channels of communication that people might find most useful.

Lord Mayor: Can I remind the City Mayor that any suggestions made now have to form part of a question. Councillor Chaplin.

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. The suggestion I’ve got for you is to start them again, because although you have a mode in place, residents in Leicester come and go, and some people may not have felt the need to actually meet with you before and maybe think now that they want to meet with you, and I would suggest that face-to-face contact, especially in a public role that you’re in, and I understand, you know, I appreciate, being on council myself here, sometimes it’s difficult to be in a public role when people come and ask you difficult questions, but I would have thought it would show strength of character and leadership and willingness to listen, to start those surgeries again, and although I shan’t be councillor for Stoneysgate Ward after the election, I know that residents in Stoneysgate Ward, indeed you are one of them, would very much welcome the opportunity to perhaps discuss things with you that are relevant now.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Chaplin, if there is a question to the City Mayor will you start making it?

Councillor Chaplin: It is, I suggest that we do re-start them because residents may change.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor. Say other methods of communication and listening to what people have to say were not working, we’d be more than happy to give it another try, but the fact is, that it is not a very effective way to invite people to come and talk to me, having to stand in line on a street, and wait for a couple of minutes of conversation. It is much better to do it in a systematic way, as we do, by using social media, or as we do when we do walkabouts in the Wards, and I’ll give an example of this sort of thing, we gave an excellent walkabout down the Evington footpath area, quite a while ago now, but it was something Councillor Chaplin organised, we walked down the Evington Footpath are and talked to Ward Councillors, and with residents, and people who had an interest in that area. We got a lot of feedback, and as a result of that actually got a lot of action in that area, and I think there was much better focus, better targets than the rather random encounters that we had out on the streets. As I say, once we went, having done it a few times, it particularly seemed that people in the city had found better ways to talk.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Chaplin. Question number 12.

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Could the City Mayor give the latest update on his discussions with the chief fire officer on possible changes to fire safety measures in all council homes, and across other social housing in the city, something I've asked before?

Lord Mayor: Assistant City Mayor.

Councillor Connelly: Thank you Lord Mayor. Thank you, Councillor Chaplin for the question. Following the tragic Grenfell fire in 2017, we have instituted a building safety programme for high-rise residential buildings and a review of fire safety regulations. Within the city there are 108 buildings with floors above 18 meters. Two buildings were found to have cladding that needed to be replaced. Work on Merlin Heights, Bath Lane, has now been completed, and the remedial work on the Summit Building in Eastern Boulevard is to be completed this year. The review of fire safety regulations, what is known as the Hackett Review, has proposed radically new proposals for the regulation of high-rise residential buildings, of the residents, of the home-owners and quite a lot of social housing tenants. In Leicester there are 20 such buildings with six owned by ourselves. We're proposing setting up a new Joint Competency Authority in that the Local Authority, Health and Safety Executive, and the Fire and Rescue Service, will oversee fire safety in high-rise residential buildings across their life-cycle, from initial plans from switching to occupation and redevelopment. These recommendations have been accepted by the government and we are waiting for statutory regulations and guidance on how this new arrangement is determined. Since the regulation framework will be the subject of further discussion with the Chief Fire Officer. In the meantime, as an authority, we continue, we've invested over £2 million to improve our council-owned tower blocks, with significant amounts of investment went towards improvements in fire-safety measures, and the first sprinkler system has been retrofitted in Maxfield House, and we've put aside £1.35 million to retrofit sprinklers in our other blocks. In respect to the private sector, the extension of HMO and licensing are now proposed for selective licensing scheme in the city, allowing us to raise the issue of fire safety in private tenancies. In the continued fire safety is important to us as an authority we continue to fulfil our obligations as our residents and tenants would expect.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Chaplin, supplementary?

Councillor Chaplin: No, my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Question 13.

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. It's somewhat ironic that my final question as a Stoneygate councillor is number 13, I'm not sure if that's unlucky for me or unlucky for the person who has to answer it.

Following the City Mayor's extensive work to save and regenerate Leicester's 'Old Town', what plans does he have to take that good work to Leicester's many conservation areas, where often unique residential heritage is at risk of being overlooked, converted into poor quality HMO's or demolished?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. The Council's excellent Conservation

Team under the leadership of Anne Provan have undertaken much structural work across the city, and it's most certainly not limited to the centre. They've actually provided me with a very long list of the range of funding and initiatives they're involved in. Rather than read it out tonight, I will provide a copy of it to Councillor Chaplin. I can say though that it is extensive, both in its range and in the amount of funding behind it. I refer, in answer to the earlier question, to some work we've done in the Pork Pie area for example, and I can think of other examples across the city, but we are currently undertaking, under the initiative of the Heritage Action Plan, our commitment to review the village conservation areas, particularly Aylestone and Humberstone and I was speaking to some Humberstone residents just earlier in this week actually, about more work in their area, and we're also going to have appraisals that currently don't exist, there are some new conservation areas, particularly in Knighton, Evington and Braunstone. But of course, as is always the case, it's the initiatives we take in the city centre that people tend to notice, in fact, as is always the case, the majority of the work this council does is out and about in the communities and neighbourhoods and across the city.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Chaplin, supplementary?

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you. I thank you Sir Peter for your answer, and I'd also like to thank my colleagues who gave this to me as a leaving gift. Obviously, *The Quality of Leicester* talks about the heritage of the city, and what I will say, is that I do think that we need to be mindful of the very large houses in areas like Highfields and Stoneygate, which are expensive for individuals to keep, upkeep, and which are in danger of becoming run down or lost, and I would ask that the City Mayor takes action to, or takes steps to make sure that those elements are looked at before it's too late, and as I won't be part of Stoneygate's future, I can hope that we can still maintain Stoneygate's future for the rest of us. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Yes, thank you my Lord Mayor, and I can assure Councillor Chaplin that we do already give significant support to the sorts of properties that she is talking about. Certainly, the annual Historic Building Grants Programme is one source of tenant support, but there are others as well, and I can assure her that we will continue, as long as I remain Mayor, to cherish the quality of the building environments in Leicester which is really quite remarkable, both in service, dating as it does throughout the 2000 years of our history, but also the very high standards, much of what remains. Fortunately, there is much that remains, and I think it's very appropriate that she showed us that book which is to celebrate what is there and remind us just how precious it is.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Waddington. Question 14.

Councillor Waddington: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Following my colleagues' example, can I apologise for the, perhaps not the best wording for this question, but I was trying to do it at Ten to Twelve with a deadline of Twelve Noon as the news was coming in. I think the meaning is clear enough, that the tragic attack on mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, leading to the loss of many lives demonstrates that Islamophobia is present, even in what appears to be one of the most peaceful societies. Following this Council's decision to draw up an action plan against hate crime and specifically to take measures to address Islamophobia, can the City Mayor tell me when the Council will be able to consider and implement any action plan?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor

City Mayor: Thank you Lord Mayor. Councillor Waddington need not make any apology for what is something that reflects what many of us here acknowledge I'm sure, the appalling, devastating events in New Zealand, the killing of worshippers at any time, killing of worshippers in mosques at any time, that sort of terrorist attack at any time is something that is saddening and appalling and makes, I know, all of us very angry indeed, and it's certainly the case that the thoughts of us and our prayers of many of us are with those involved in whatever way in New Zealand.

In line with the Council resolution passed in June last year I'd like to confirm that the Council were working with our partners to tackle hate crime, including of course Islamophobia, and this includes work led by Councillor Clair who is the Deputy Mayor with the responsibility for community safety and also, the Chair of Safer Leicester Partnership. Within our Community Safety Partnership, we do support the Leicester Leicestershire and Rutland Hate Action Plan which is from a period 2018/2021 which was referred to in the presentation made in the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Committee on the 23rd of January and therefore the example of Hate Crime and Hate Incident Reporting is very much encouraged through a number of routes including online through the City Council's website.

To come to the specifics of the question in line with the motion I can confirm that a draft Hate Crime Action Plan is currently being considered by the Safer Leicester Partnership. It's a panel that includes the work required in driving the motion forward and it has incorporated the issue of hate crime as a new priority of reporting on the 2019/20 Community Safety Plan. No doubt all of us involved want now to increase the pace of their efforts to make sure that we do respond to that motion that was adopted by the Council and are sure that we are aware that nowhere in this world is safe from the dreadful types of events like that occurred in New Zealand and we in Leicester must always be aware that this can happen anywhere, can happen in any community and that fighting the forces of hate and finding a solution is always a work in progress.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary Councillor Waddington.

Councillor Waddington: I'd like to thank the City Mayor and to agree with him that we do see the urgency and the importance and relevance of this work and I would welcome, and I'm sure other Members will, the opportunity to see the plan and comment on it.

Lord Mayor: Question 15, Councillor Moore

Councillor Moore: Thank you Lord Mayor. My question is one I asked some time ago, about a telephone interface between the City Council and residents, particularly older residents who are not comfortable using computers. During the last week, two of my constituents have complained to me about the length of time taken (over 15 minutes) that they had to wait when phoning the city council, before they could speak to an appropriate person. In one case, someone was telephoning to report a big flood on Knighton Road. They gave up in the end and rang me. I was then able to ring Highways on a number known to me, got an answer straight away and a promise of prompt action. Would the City Mayor undertake to investigate a phone system which doesn't cause this problem, for example, a duty officer who can answer a call immediately and route the caller through immediately to the appropriate department?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. The Council's main telephone exchange I am informed experienced a major technical problem on Monday of last week, which resulted in emergency only calls being answered. It may be that that was the day when Councillor Moore's constituent tried to phone but that problem although it was solved by the end of the day did inevitably lead to some considerable frustration with those trying to get in touch with us but as I told Councillor Moore in November, the Council receives between 50-60,000 calls every month. Now clearly that is not something that can be dealt with by a single duty officer, it actually does require a very significant number of staff and in fact we have 38 staff who are dedicated just to answering the telephone, and while obviously we do want to encourage people to do as what many other large organisations have done is to use the phone as a very last resort, and for many people of course it still is for them the preferred means of communicating with us, I'm told that the cost of answering the telephone to the Council is over a million pounds a year and the average wait time is about five minutes. But of course, as always is the case with averages, some are longer and some if you get the right time of day could be shorter, so while obviously we will want to get the numbers who are using the telephone down we do recognise that we've got to keep providing the service to at least a significant extent. It is true, and they obviously do an analysis of the phone calls, many are of a routine nature. These things are what many other organisations would actually nowadays try and do online, so making sure the online presence is an attractive and easy alternative ought to, at least to be taking some pressure off that and I think we do need to continue to work on that. I think it is important though and I think it's quite inherent in any of the questions the Councillors are always asked, that we recognise that for some of our most vulnerable residents, face-to-face support or telephone support is something that is necessary that we continue to seek to provide a level of service that are expected from a public organisation like ourselves and I do hope that given that the scale of our telephone traffic and the extent to which we do manage to keep the waiting time to albeit an average of five minutes is at least some assurance that we are trying to keep on top of.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Moore Supplementary?

Councillor Moore: Very short I wasn't planning a supplementary, but I'd like to thank City Mayor for the very interesting information which I shall keep on record and try to reassure constituents that come to me again with complaints. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Question 16 Councillor Kitterick.

Councillor Kitterick: Thank you very much Lord Mayor. I'll alter the question slightly as it may be misleading in the phrasing. Can the cabinet member responsible please outline the narrowing of the criteria for the Community Support Grant operated by the City Council? To simplify this question, I understand that the amount of money has not been cut but the criteria has had to be narrowed due to the fact the Community Support Grant Fund has been heavily over-subscribed.

Lord Mayor: Assistant City Mayor.

Councillor Master: Thank you Lord Mayor, and thank you for your question. I was aware of the question relating to the funding so to answer that part in the first, yes you are correct that the Community Support Grant Fund has not been cut and the way it's projected in this moment of time it will go over this financial year as well. In

regards to the criteria which you can apply for the Community Support Grant it will include food, fuel, clothing, furniture and white goods. I'm not aware that's changed. If there is some information you have you know you can lead me to then I'd be happy to take on board but as far as those five things are concerned I'm sure that they can still apply.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Kitterick.

Councillor Kitterick: Thank you very much Lord Mayor. Kirk I will have to explain what this is. Community Support Grant as Councillor Kirk Master has pointed out is for people who have no other recourse to find funds for such basic items as a fridge or a cooker. I would ask Councillor Master to imagine what life would be like without these basics.

I have had reports that because the fund is oversubscribed that people have been turned away for this emergency funding. I'm quite happy to pass the details to Councillor Master and I furthermore have seen emails for £20,000 has been requested to top up the fund in order that these grants can continue on the wider criteria. Can I ask Councillor Master that given when I communicate with him he can look into this matter as a matter of urgency and if people are being denied these basic, basic requirements in order to live in the city that the money is found in order to restore those funds so that the criteria need not be narrowed and therefore demonstrate that this Labour Council will do all that is in its power to do what it can to help the victims of Tory austerity.

Lord Mayor: Assistant City Mayor.

Councillor Master: Thank you Lord Mayor. Absolutely, I'd be very surprised if this council and this Labour authority were not prepared to support the most vulnerable people in the city and if you have examples of that I'd absolutely welcome you to bring those in. There is a criteria to the scheme and some people will fall into that criteria and some won't, so that might be some of the difficulties around that and yes, there has been request for funds to top up this scheme and I think that demonstrates that we are willing to support these vulnerable people in and around the city.

Lord Mayor: Question 17 Councillor Kitterick.

Councillor Kitterick: Thank you Lord Mayor. Can the Cabinet Member for Housing give his opinion on the co-living model of housing being promoted by a Leicester property developer in a Leicester Mercury article on 15 March 2019?

Lord Mayor: Assistant City Mayor.

Councillor Connelly: Thank you Lord Mayor, thank you Councillor Kitterick for your question. I will say, obviously not being reselected as a Councillor for Westcotes, I will say that one of my disappointments as a Councillor for Westcotes is the fact that Bradgate House on the corner of Sykefield Avenue and Westcotes Drive in my Ward has not been redeveloped and the Kenning site on Braunstone Gate has not been redeveloped as I hoped that it would be. It doesn't mean to say that I support the present planning for the proposed development on the Kenning site. I will say, co-living is a new concept and there clearly are benefits and disadvantages to co-living. My major concern is and both myself and Councillor Kitterick have had concerns about some of the space standards in some of the developments the recent years and I would hate to think that this development was

an attempt to circumvent those space standards and I do hope that the planning officers and the Planning Committee in considering the application make the right decision.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary.

Councillor Kitterick: Thank you very much Lord Mayor. Would he agree that co-living is not a new concept, it's an old concept of overcrowding people in accommodation and that basically for those who aren't aware, it's asking people who are no longer students to live as they were in student halls of residence. Would Councillor Connelly agree, representative of a great number of students and graduates in his ward as do I, that I've met many, many graduates in my time and I've not met a single one who would wish to go back to living in student accommodation. Lord Mayor can he share my concerns that actually co-living is a way of getting very poor-quality accommodation in far too high concentrations and that this City Council should seek to oppose it becoming a model for living in the city?

Lord Mayor: Assistant City Mayor.

Councillor Connelly: I share some of the concerns of Councillor Kitterick and also clearly we do have co-living already in terms of students and one thing as an executive when we met with De Montfort University Students Union, one issue they raised is the fact that there would be many students happy to continue co-living when they graduated as a means of stopping in the city, because for many of them co-living was preferable to necessary house sharing. And just to say I do share his concerns, and as I say I do hope that the planning officers and the Planning Committee make the right decision as and when we get applications of this nature.

Lord Mayor: Question 18 Councillor Kitterick.

Councillor Kitterick: Can the City Mayor confirm that the City Council still owns the arches that form the Great Central Railway that run adjacent to Braunstone Gate and Bede Street in Leicester?

City Mayor: Yes, I can confirm that.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary.

Councillor Kitterick: Can the City Mayor confirm that the City Council will use its property ownership in order to promote the highest standards of residential amenity possible, that it is as good a development as possible, and we should exploit the fact the we own that particular site in order to achieve this.

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Yes, I can confirm that.

Lord Mayor: Question 19 Councillor Kitterick.

Councillor Kitterick: Lord Mayor can the City Mayor give a commitment that Councillors will be fully consulted before any proposed sale of the Great Central Railway arches, to private developers?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor, I think members will be aware that these arches are the ones that once supported the Bowstring Bridge. I think members will also be aware that that the questioner was very much associated with the demolition of that bridge. Indeed I did look back at the disposal of the land and the viaduct on the other side of the road. I note that Councillor Kitterick in secret, at the time that the cabinet discussed this, complained about a leaking of the report, it hadn't been made public that he was involved in this, and that he took the view that there should be no call-in of it because I guess they didn't want other Councillors to be involved in the decision there. And I have to say my Lord Mayor, and Members will know that this remnant of the arches that stay there are very much that. That actually the damage in that area was done with the demolition of the Bowstring Bridge over which as I say Councillor Kitterick presided, and I'm inclined to think that we and I have shown more concern for engaging the public with that remnant than he did when they hung his effigy on the bridge.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary question Councillor Kitterick.

Councillor Kitterick: Thank you very much Lord Mayor, I will like to share a secret with you all, me and the City Mayor have a deal, the more he attacks me, the more popular I am in the Castle Ward. Therefore, this is, between you and me Lord Mayor, not between anyone else. So, he is actually helping my campaign which I thank the City Mayor profusely. Any other cabinet member that would like to attack me are more than welcome to. Lord Mayor may I take this opportunity to thank Committee Services in order to put me on as Councillor Nigel Porter's warm-up man. Councillor Porter serves a valuable function in this Council, raising the City Mayors blood pressure during Council meetings. I'm not sure who will fulfil that duty when Nigel Porter is no longer a Councillor after the elections.

City Mayor: I'm happy to promote Councillor Kitterick's election chances in Castle Ward. I'm sure he doesn't need the help, but I am very happy to do that, but just reflecting on the issue of the Bowstring Bridge and the implications of this question here I suggest that (inaudible, off-mic) in this approach now, with this approach before, I'm suggesting that this is rather like a mugger who has knocked out the front teeth of the victim and then turns and complains about the dentist who wants to try and get the one remaining molar at the back. I think that it is perhaps a situation here where having seen the damage done some 10 years ago, we now have to seek in that area of the City to try to find a development that is of the quality and the design that will be welcomed by the community in the area which was understandable were opposed to the removal of the Bowstring Bridge, and I'm certainly actually serious about this and want to work very closely with the Ward Councillors in the area and the public in the area. We have met with the public in the area about issues to do with Braunstone Gate and will continue to engage with both in the future.

Lord Mayor: Question 20, Councillor Porter

Councillor Porter: Thank You Lord Mayor, and I'd like to thank Councillor Kitterick for bigging up my Mayoral Campaign, so I won't have to be a City Councillor after May. My first question relates to quite an important issue, and I do apologise if I get Sir Peter's blood pressure up, it isn't intentional, but these are important matters, and the first is, how much money has the Council got in reserves?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you Lord Mayor. I would suggest to Councillor Porter that he should re-read section 15 and 16 of the budget report brought to council on 20th February and I think in there he will find the information he needs.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: Thank you for that. I would like to remind Sir Peter that in 2015 the Government created the Adult Social Care precept which allowed local authorities to increase Council Tax by 2% and obviously the income that was generated from this was meant to be ring fenced and put into Adult Social Care Services. The Mayor at a recent council meeting was very shocked when I told him that the Council had not ring fenced this money. He is at the top of the chain of accountability at Leicester City Council. he boasts he cannot add up, so what exactly does he do day-to-day when it comes to protecting the tax payers' money?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: He says that confidently enough that he managed to believe that I once said it (**Councillor Porter:** You did, you did!)

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Porter, let him speak.

City Mayor: Lord Mayor, the fact is that the Adult Social Care precept was something that enabled us to raise an additional sum of money that went only a small way towards bridging the gap between the funds that we have for Adult Social Care and the increasing need, and in fact the amount that we raised from the Adult Social Care precept is only a small proportion of the additional spend that we have had on Adult Social Care. Which is in a matter in one sense which I regret and but it's also something that I am proud of because I believe that Members on this side are very much committed to ensuring that both adults and children get the levels of care that they need.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Porter next question.

Councillor Porter: Over the last four years how much have the Council spent on pens and paper?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: I'm afraid Councillor Porter is asking a level of detail which is beyond being reasonable, but I think the answer to that would be like that one of my colleagues suggested not very much.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: At a Planning meeting last week about a monstrous block of flats in my Ward a Labour Councillor expressed her concerns about the public perception of corruption on the Council. She quite rightly pointed out that Members of the Committee don't talk to one another during Planning meetings. She then went on to explain the reason why the Members hadn't previously been unable to make a decision at the earlier meeting. If the Members of Planning, I will come to my question, it is as relevant as stationery, if the Council Members of the Planning Committee don't talk to each other between meetings then she will be able to explain the reasons why they decided to sit on the fence at the previous meeting, how would she know what the Members of the Planning Committee were thinking?

Is she psychic? Maybe Sir Peter knows that, she certainly was not aware of the 150 grand that went into her sister's pocket. The stationery related question is since 2015 how much has the council spent on brown envelopes?

Lord Mayor: Okay Councillor Porter, I've allowed a lot of leniency today, but you may have pushed your luck too far. Can we move on to question 22?

Councillor Porter: Thank you very much. The question relates to, it's actually come from a local resident who is very concerned. He used to be a member of the Labour Party, but he is so displeased with the way they carry on these days he's left. The question is how many people are living on the streets of Leicester?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Connelly.

Councillor Connelly: Thank you Lord Mayor, thank you Councillor Porter for the question. Unfortunately I can't answer the question, the reason is there are 533 streets in Leicester, obviously how many people live on the street is determined by how long the street is and the nature of the house itself on that street. On Catesby Street there are two people living on Catesby Street, 34 living on Andrewes Street, 77 living on Belvoir Street, 203 living on Ridley Street. (Inaudible, obscured by laughter)...to those people who are below 18.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: Yeah I mean they may all find it highly amusing, but people are unfortunately living on the streets, but I think it's quite disgraceful really. They can all sit around and giggle, laughing at and mocking about the unfortunate position of some people. That's exactly why, clearly this person who lives in my ward decided to leave the Labour Party because he's sick of the hypocrisy. And one of the points he wanted to make to me was why doesn't the Labour Council encourage the Labour Party Councillors who sit on this committee who also are buy-to-let landlords, to start to let their properties to some of the homeless people who live in the city, those people who are unemployed and those people who are on Universal Credit?

Lord Mayor: Thank You.

Councillor Connelly: I'll take Councillor Porter's question seriously when he is actually able to spell out the question properly.

Lord Mayor: Question number 23, Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: I don't think attitudes like that really will be making many people to be voting for Labour in May, hopefully anyway. The question is, does the Council believe that a return below the annual rate of inflation in a non-diversified investment is a wise investment?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Yes, I'd like to refer Councillor Porter to the Investment Strategy and the Treasury Strategy that were both brought to the Council meeting on the 20th February and if he were to look back to that and actually read it he would get the answer to his question.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary.

Councillor Porter: Yet again, incredibly dismissive of the incredibly important job that he does in terms of safeguarding public money and not wasting it, it almost appears to me and I think to a lot of the people in the city that he really hasn't got the grasp (**Lord Mayor:** Question please Councillor Porter.) in any sense whatsoever in terms of his financial strategy or as he likes to call it this investment strategy. A return of 2% on an £11million or so investment is really a very, very bad use of public money and what concerns me (**Lord Mayor:** I'm sorry, it needs to be a question) is as I pointed out at a previous meeting is he trying to take on stuff that is above his pay grade and Travelodge who are a company which is owned by Goldman Sachs pay their directors huge amounts of money. The question is should the hard-working people of this city be feeding greedy bankers on Wall Street?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: I think that yet again Councillor Porter doesn't quite get it. The fact is that I think he was referring to the investment in the Haymarket Travelodge. The fact is that investment, our investment is in the building and not one penny of it is going into Travelodge, and it is an investment that is being made on the advice of our officers, partly on the that it will produce a great rate of return but also, it has a very significant regenerative effect of that part of the city. Of course, it's not possible always to get the highest rate of return, that's not the responsible thing to do. Look back at some of the examples of this Members will remember the BCCI Bank offer, where they were giving higher than the normal interest rates before its foreclosure in 1991, did we invest in it? No, we didn't. Similarly, we could have got a lot of money in investing in like other local authorities did in Icelandic Banks in 2008. They had very attractive interest rates but of course we chose not to invest in them. You know if the Councillor wants to list his own chasing inflation-busting returns then that's up to him, but obviously we have a responsibility of looking after public assets and we will do so in a way that looks after it in a safe way, while also using them wisely to promote business in our city.

Lord Mayor: Before commencing just for the benefit of any Councillors who may have missed the guidance I read out earlier, I'm going to repeat. Can I request that when any Members have questions for tonight's meeting they bear in mind the requirements of the Constitution that questions should be asked and answered without discussion and that supplementary questions must be a question for the purpose of clarifying the reply and not a statement. Please note that I will be seeking to curtail any member that does not comply with these requirements. Whilst I'll allow certain amount of latitude that will be greater if the questions are asked in a good-natured way and do not become personal. Question 25 Councillor Porter

Councillor Porter: No wonder people have started calling you Peter's poodle, especially as you seem to be praising Sir Peter, I'm not sure (**Lord Mayor:** Councillor Porter this is not a question. Will you ask a question, or I will move on to the next question. Have you asked the question Councillor Porter?) The question is, in terms of, how many empty shops are there in the city centre? And I must add you didn't behave in this way towards the other Labour Councillors.

Lord Mayor: They were not acting in the same way Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: Because they're in the Labour Party, maybe that's a clue.

Lord Mayor: I didn't realise that the standard of the Labour party was seen as such a high benchmark, whilst being sat at that level of seating. City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you Lord Mayor. Yes, the number of units empty from a total number of 942 is maybe 120, but I think that it's worth saying that in context that in 2013 towards the beginning of my period as Mayor, the percentage of vacancy in the city centre was 18.6. By 2017 that's 4 years later, we got it down to 13.7 and its down now to 12.74 and it is something that is declining all the time, because against the trend in city centres up and down the land, ours is lower.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: You won't have any issues with this one, because it relates entirely to the question that I put earlier for his response. Obviously, I'm delighted to hear that the number of vacant places is falling because a strong local economy is the bedrock on which the future prosperity of this city will be built, and you'll probably remember this Lord Mayor, under the Lib Dem/Tory coalition they introduced a Localism Act which meant that from, I think it was about 2014 onwards, rather than Leicester City Council just collecting business rates and passing them on to the government Leicester City Council were able to keep 50% of business rates and I think the government policy is that this should increase to 70% in the future. So, obviously we all want to try and make sure that we have a thriving City Centre, so will the council please put on record tonight that they will drop this ridiculous proposal to charge drivers to park in the city and I think it's going to be actually as much as £500.

Lord Mayor: I think it's quite tenuous, but I'll allow the City Mayor to answer the question.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor over the years since I've been Mayor, Councillor Porter and indeed others in the city have widely predicted that that the action that I would take would lead to the demise of the city centre. Jubilee Square is a classic example, losing that car park was supposed to lead to the devastation of the city and looking back on it a lot of it was controversial, but nobody now asks for their car park back on Jubilee Square. Nobody now asks that we return the car park on Jubilee Square because they recognise what we have done, the valuable investment we've made in the city centre is to secure its future. And it is also the case that there is an increasing awareness that the private car has the potential to strangle what we have achieved in the city centre simply by the numbers of cars on the road and the numbers of people that want to use the city centre. Finding ways of funding quality public transport across the city has led us to look around and to say, well, how can we do that, and how can we at the same time be just a little bit business savvy without actually jeopardising the future of the city centre. The prospect of workplace parking is something that's been trailed in Nottingham to the north and has enabled to invest in public transport as a result of that and to provide an alternative to the private car. What I and we this side of the chamber are doing is committing ourselves to consult on such a scheme for Leicester. We will listen to what people have to say about the potential downside of it, but it is very interesting that many of those who were so concerned about what it might do to Nottingham, are now also saying "yes, why shouldn't Leicester also adopt it", because in fact you get quality public transport provided as an alternative to the private car. So, looking back, as I say, we've done many controversial things which we've had the courage to do and in the future we will also do many controversial things and have the courage to do them, and do all of that and listen to what our people have to say to us.

Lord Mayor: Question 25 please.

Councillor Porter: We should really be increasing car parking I think, not reducing it, but that's for the voters to decide. What the question relates to here is, is it correct that the City Council plans to give or has given a significant amount of public money to the owners of buildings so that privately owned buildings can be lit up?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor, I don't know about all private buildings, but we have made a contribution towards the costs of some architectural feature lighting in the city centre which has been widely praised.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary.

Councillor Porter: What gets me actually is that the Labour party and the Labour Councillors here constantly complain about austerity and people's difficult decisions between heating and eating, but what the Council is actually doing is deciding to make a decision using public money to pay somebody else's electricity bill. I don't understand how this can be deemed as the right thing to do when we are obviously trying to protect the environment, and (**Lord Mayor:** Sorry Councillor, we need the question) we are trying to keep the polar bears happy. So, can the Council please scrap this environmentally costly, and financially costly, bad idea.

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor, yet again Councillor Porter fails to understand the difference between revenue and capital. For someone who has been here quite a long time, this is just one of the many aspects of the way in which the council is funded that he has obviously failed as yet to grasp. One of them is the YMCA building improving the quality of the architectural feature lighting there. Look at Jewry Wall, and the way that that's been lit. Notice St Nicholas Church, and the way in which that's been lit. Look at the Sue Townsend Theatre, the way that's been lit (inaudible due to whispering on mic) and to recognise that we do have some real quality built environment in Leicester, and celebrating in the evenings and night is a way of drawing people's attention to it, and ensuring that they value it for the future and make sure as we have, that it is (inaudible- off mic).

Lord Mayor: Supplementary? Sorry, next question. Question 27 please Councillor Porter. Apologies.

Councillor Porter: Question 26.

Lord Mayor: 26 sorry. Wishful thinking

Councillor Porter: No, we're not finished yet. What does the Council's Travelodge business plan say about a rival hotel operation setting up just down the road?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor the fact is that about a decade ago, no one would have thought we would attract new hotel developers to the city. The fact that we are able to attract new hotel developers is because visitors want to come to Leicester, and the fact that visitors want to come to Leicester, is because we and the city are now worth visiting. And I'd like to think that Members on this side of the chamber have played a significant part in making our city a place people want to visit and stay in,

because each one of those visitors spends money and it's not just in the hotel, it's restaurants and shops and the attractions of the city, and that is very good news indeed. Now to answer the direct question about Travelodge, I'm afraid that I would have to suggest to Councillor Porter that he goes to Travelodge to discuss their business I can't pretend I have any understanding of it. Our investment as I said earlier on is in the building, an investment from which we will get very good revenue and excellent regeneration, hopefully we'll get another addition to the many hotels that want to make a base in our city.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary to question 26 Councillor Porter

Councillor Porter: Yes, thank you Lord Mayor, the supplementary actually relates to something that I spoke about earlier on about the Planning Committee. Obviously, the matter is out to public consultation at the moment but there seems to be some concerns about it. I wouldn't want to think that the Council's own objectives in trying to get Travelodge into the thing on the Haymarket isn't going to put any pressure on people within the Planning Department to either refuse this or put in some onerous conditions. These aren't my words this is what was said at the Planning Committee, that peoples concern is that there is corruption, that's what they were saying, with possible interference from the City Mayor. That's what was said (**Lord Mayor:** Councillor Porter moving on to question 27) can we make sure this planning application is treated fairly.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Porter you've had fair enough opportunities we move on to question 27.

Councillor Porter: This is an important question, and its saddening that you're doing this. Since 2016

Lord Mayor: Can you sit down please, it is part of our constitution, without people following the constitution with the leeway that the Lord Mayor has in his power, this meeting will break down. So, you have to follow the rules and the rules require you to ask a question without excessive discussion or statement at the beginning of it. (**Councillor Porter:** What about the other Labour Councillors?) I did not give very much leeway, I certainly did not give as much leeway as I've given you at certain opportunities tonight and you have pushed me too far, so we now move on to question 27 without preamble.

Councillor Porter: Since 2016 how much public money has the Council given or pledged to businesses or business owners whose properties front Orton Square?

Lord Mayor: Deputy City Mayor

Councillor Clarke: Thank you my Lord Mayor. The Council granted £150,000 to Park Portfolio Ltd. for the regeneration of 37-43 Rutland Street on the 30th June 2016 for the decision notice to support the refurbishment of the unused building with economic action plan funds. The refurbished building delivered 14 apartments and a ground floor basement pleasure unit which were advertised on the open market. The council granted £18,000 to Moorehouse Construction Ltd towards the design and development cost relating to the Caron building located at 5 Rutland Street on the 10th January 2017. This was part of the ongoing work to encourage the re-use of empty buildings throughout the cultural quarter and has enabled the owners to submit a planning application for the refurbishment of the building planning approval on the 21st September 2018. Further, the Council invested £780,000 to Leicester Theatre Trust to enable additional auditorium seating. I'm sure that members will

agree that regeneration of this sort in the Cultural Quarter, which provides a fantastic service to the city at the moment that with the potential that is absolutely worth it as further regeneration projects in the city as mentioned earlier are, because they bring jobs and prosperity to our city.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary question, Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: Thank you and I'll keep it as short as possible, Hopefully I get a direct and straight answer. Before Councillor Clarke spoke at the Planning Committee Meeting in support for the £900,000 plans to cut down trees in St Georges churchyard was he aware of Sir Peter Soulsby's daughter's business interest in the building opposite received £???(inaudible- interruptions) tax payer's cash.

City Barrister: I must make a point Councillor Porter that firstly, you are subject to the Code of Conduct to speak in this chamber and you may find yourself liable to face allegation that you are treating others with disrespect or slandering them. Secondly if you have any allegations of impropriety as I have advised you in this chamber previously you ought to properly make those to me and not certainly casually in this chamber and thirdly, the privilege that you enjoy in this chamber to speak is a qualifying privilege, it is not an absolute privilege.

Councillor Porter: In response to that I'd just like to say that Sir Peter was making it absolutely crystal clear that he knew nothing about it, so I don't understand what the issue would be.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Clarke, do you wish to answer.

Councillor Clarke: My Lord Mayor, I am pleased to let the chamber know that I am above that.

Lord Mayor: Question 28 Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: Interesting place to be. According to the 2010-2011 budget that was approved by the Full Council the level of government grant recorded in the report that came to the Full Council and was verified by the Council was £182.4 million – however in the 2018 and 2019 letters sent out by the Council to every council taxpayer in the city, the Council quoted a different amount of money for the 2010 government grant. Can the Council explain what was the figure was that they gave in those letters?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you Lord Mayor. Councillor Porter already knows he's been told many times by the Director of Finance, that the City Council funding from the government fundamentally changed in 2013/2014 with the introduction of some business rate retention and of course, since 2010 number of new responsibilities being transferred to the Council such as public health and Council Member support. I can say to him as I have said on many other occasions, the answers to questions provided by the Director of Finance, and were they to be in any way misleading, I'm sure that would be pointed out both to him and to the public, and he is absolutely (inaudible, off-mic) and if Councillor Porter does have issues with the figures, then I suggest he talks to her again.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary.

Councillor Porter: Thank you Lord Mayor. Just to help Sir Peter out there, the figure that he quoted in the letter was and he advised me to do this, never ask a question unless you know the answer. So, the answer is £289 Million. As we all know Sir Peter loves to over inflate his Tory Grants including the one on my right. But at a time when large numbers of people in Leicester have lost confidence in Labour because its divided and split and anti-Semitic should the Council be misleading the taxpayers of Leicester and using public money to do it? Disgraceful.

MATTERS RESERVED TO COUNCIL

7.1 Pay Policy Statement 2019/20 and Gender Pay Gap Report 2018

Moved by the City Mayor, seconded by Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clair and carried:

31. That Council approves the Pay Policy Statement for 2019/20 and notes the Gender Pay Gap Report 2018.

EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES

Moved by Councillor Cank, seconded by the City Mayor and carried:

32. That Mr Mohit Sharma be appointed to the Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission as parent governor representative (primary school) co-optee for a term of 4 years.

ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Lord Mayor stated that he agreed to accept the following notice of motion as an item of urgent business. This was in order to allow the Council to respond to the recent tragic events in New Zealand in a timely and reassuring manner.

Notice of Motion – New Zealand attack

NOTICE OF MOTION

Moved by Councillor Dr Chowdhury, seconded by Councillor Waddington and carried:

33. It is imperative that the survivors of last Friday's terrorist attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand - plus their families and the Muslim community of which they are a part - realize the extent of the outrage felt around the world. It is crucial that every public body, as an act of solidarity, expresses this outrage and also conveys its most sincere and heart-felt sympathy to those directly affected.

Leicester City Council, therefore, utterly condemns the murderous attack made by the far-right fanatic who is now, thankfully, in custody. The Council can confidently say that the citizens of the cosmopolitan city it represents, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, fully concur with this condemnation of the massacre, for warped, racist reasons, of fifty men, women and children and the serious wounding of many others. This hateful ideology cannot be allowed to prevail.

CLOSE OF MEETING

The City Mayor, noting that this was the last business meeting of the Lord Mayor's term, thanked him for his competent and even-handed chairing over the past year.

There being no further items of urgent business, the Lord Mayor declared the meeting closed at 8.02pm.