

Councillor report for Ward meeting March 2019

Cllr Lucy Chaplin

I attended meetings of full council in October, November, January and February.

I participated in all of these meetings :

October questions – the council buying houses which private landlords were selling , to prevent tenants being made homeless.

- Proposed cuts to voluntary community organisations . I also arranged a call -in of these proposals so that the executive had to look again at this decision
- Poor signage for routes to the LRI and the discomfort for patients due to the number of speed bumps on jarrom Street.
- The entrance to the new sexual health clinic in the haymarket shopping centre
- The state of pavements in the ‘way roads’
- Timetable for second consultation on the draft local plan -including the selective private landlord licensing scheme

November questions -extract from minutes :

- **Lord Mayor:** Question number 8, Councillor Chaplin.
- **Councillor Chaplin:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. “For each of the past four years: how much Section 106 money has been generated by developments in Stoneygate Ward, and how much has been spent in Stoneygate Ward and on what?”
- **Lord Mayor:** City Mayor. Councillor Clair, Deputy City Mayor.
- **Councillor Clair:** Thank you my Lord Mayor and to Councillor Chaplin for asking this question to me. I am provided with a list of all those 106 monies which have been given to the City Council either received, spent or planned to be spent since November 2014, and I am happy to provide that list this week either via email or by hard copy to all three Councillors

of Stoneygate, and that breakdown sheet tells me that there is a total of £158,000 and £90,000 has been spent, which is the majority of that is for enhancement of open space and the rest of the money is planned to be spent and I will advise officers and ask officers to work with local Ward Councillors so that they should actually work with them and what are the priorities in their Ward so that that money is spent as it may be required and as it may be desired of the local Ward Councillors.

- **Lord Mayor:** Councillor Chaplin a supplementary question?
- **Councillor Chaplin:** I'm getting distracted by a vibrating phone here. It is not mine. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Thank you, Deputy Mayor Clair. I am actually quite surprised by the amount of money and I am delighted that you are going to share the lists with us, that would be very helpful. What I would ask is we have, certainly I have for a long time, been asking that the money be spent in the Ward on facilities for young people. We were successful with the Onslow Park development. I have got a question about Prebend Gardens in a minute, but we have also talked about the priority for the Ward is a space for young people and youth, so they have got somewhere to go. Cedar Park and the ball park area would be really helpful to actually look towards that for something for young people. So, will the Deputy City Mayor consider proposals that if they are put forward by the Ward. Thank you.
- **Lord Mayor:** Deputy City Mayor.
- **Councillor Clair:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. If I just now remind myself that whenever any planning application actually comes and there are negotiations with the developers that what will be the condition and what this money would be actually spent on, probably that is one thing I need to clarify, and as I said in my first reply there has been some meeting scheduled earlier this year between the three Deputy City Mayors to undertake that sort of task with local Ward Councillors in each three constituencies and I have checked with Councillor Adam Clarke, Deputy City Mayor, that he said just those meeting was called and it was the opportunity at that time for Leicester South constituency members to come and actually share that information, but I am happy to work with all three Ward Councillors and I am happy to instruct officers to actually just explore those possibilities and discuss with them what their local

priorities may be and all they can do to actually help and support to achieve those ambitions that Councillor Chaplin and other co-Councillors may have.

- **Lord Mayor:** Councillor Chaplin, question number 9.
- **Councillor Chaplin:** Thank you again my Lord Mayor. “What is the update on the work to improve Prebend Gardens?”
- **Councillor Clair:** Just my Lord Mayor if I recall exactly now precisely that earlier this year there has been some leaflet drop and some public consultation on Prebend Gardens how local members and also local Ward Councillors may desire to see this Prebend Gardens shaped up with a mix and match of seating arrangements and some health and fitness equipment, may be how they want to improve the little area of the lake and that work has been complete, and now there is a meeting on 29th of this month at the African-Caribbean Centre to share that design which officers have a set of options while local people and local Ward Councillors to actually you know give some steer and also I have asked officers to take this with the consent of local Ward Councillors on I think 6th December to their Ward meeting in Stoneygate. So once local Councillors give some steer on the options which are the best suited for the requirements of the local people for Prebend Gardens I will instruct officers that work is scheduled and I am hopeful that if that is done then it will be done by the early part of next year by February, March or April.
- **Lord Mayor:** Councillor Chaplin do you have a supplementary?
- **Councillor Chaplin:** I do my Lord Mayor. Thank you again Deputy Mayor
- Councillor Clair. So, I hear what you say about a meeting earlier this year for people and Councillors from Leicester South. I myself was unable to attend that. I am not going to go into the details of why but I had not been well and I would hope that you don't just rely on one Ward Councillor attending from Stoneygate Ward for those meetings and that you will already have had requests from co-Councillors about the money for 106 funding and we certainly would want the work on Prebend Gardens to be funded from 106 money. Is that going to be the case?
- **Lord Mayor:** Deputy City Mayor.

- **Councillor Clair:** Thank you Chairman. I am surprised by this. I would advise Councillor Chaplin that all three Ward Councillors should speak to each other and should actually share that information and if it has not been possible for Councillor Chaplin to attend previous meetings and these two meetings for which I have given dates and venues, I would be more than happy to brief Councillor Chaplin with officers personally myself.
- **Lord Mayor:** Thank you. Question 10, Councillor Chaplin.
- **Councillor Chaplin:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. "What is the update on the scheme to replace windows in council homes in the conservation areas of Stoneygate Ward?"
- **Lord Mayor:** Assistant City Mayor Councillor Connelly.
- **Councillor Connelly:** Thank you Lord Mayor. Thank you Councillor Chaplin, for the question. We have 316 properties across the city that are either listed or fall within conservation areas of which 108 of these are in the Stoneygate area. In the summer this year we carried out a full windows condition survey of all of these properties and where planning consent has been previously given, we have replaced those properties with UPVC windows with new UPVC windows. (mobile phone rings)
- **Councillor Westley** Sorry, my phone has gone.
- **Councillor Connelly:** I can tell.
- **Lord Mayor:** Whilst Councillor Westley is turning his phone off could I just remind Councillors, whilst I understand that mobile phones can be useful in Council meetings and a number of people are using them, could everybody make sure they are on silent or do not disturb and it may be useful to frequent yourself with how to use these functions before attending meetings. Assistant City Mayor do you want to carry on?
- **Councillor Connelly:** Perhaps not surprisingly I won't be asking Councillor Westley for his ring tone
- **Lord Mayor:** It did seem appropriate.
- **Councillor Connelly:** It did indeed. So, Lord Mayor as I was saying planning consent however is normally only granted if the replacement of original the windows with UPVC to the rear elevations of these properties. Our officers are currently at the stage of collating and analysing this condition survey data, and once this process has been

concluded options will be considered and agreed for the remaining wooden windows. A programme of works which has yet to be agreed is likely to commence in the 2019/20 financial year.

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- **Lord Mayor:** Councillor Chaplin is there a supplementary question?
- **Councillor Chaplin:** Yes, there is my Lord Mayor. It was a hideous ring tone wasn't it.
- **Lord Mayor:** Do you want me to put that motion to Council.
- **Councillor Chaplin:** If you would like to do that my Lord Mayor then I am pretty sure that the vote will be carried. Thank you very much for the information Councillor Connelly. I am aware that the City Mayor earlier this year had talked about this and had recognised the need for homes where there are large windows because perhaps they have been big houses split into flats or maisonettes and the planning rules for the conservation areas obviously make it slightly more complicated and the City Mayor earlier this year had talked about this as an important role, not just in terms of the greener and energy saving, but also given the universal credit and the poverty that is bringing in I would hope that we would be able to look at that as something that could be prioritised in the next financial year and perhaps put in our manifesto for the election next year because
- **Lord Mayor:** Councillor Chaplin rather than making suggestions for your manifesto which I am sure would be better made in Labour Group could you get to the question.
- **Councillor Chaplin:** The question is will it be prioritised in the next financial year, recognising the poverty that the extra energy use with the heat escaping from people's homes and the universal credit that is causing poverty? – will that be brought in and I hope it is in our manifesto?
- **Lord Mayor:** Assistant City Mayor.
- **Councillor Connelly:** Thank you Councillor Chaplin for your supplementary question which I am pleased to say was not interrupted by a ring tone. I think it is due credit to the City Mayor who recognised the issue around these particular properties. He instructed for the survey to be carried out. Clearly in respect of replacing the wooden windows

with new wooden windows when there is so many of them there is an economy of scale that is required. Clearly in consideration of all of the different factors I am certain we will be having a discussion both in Labour Group and within the Executive about where this should be prioritised in respect of our programme of works for next year and I am sure we will also have a discussion about the manifesto.

January questions -extract from minute:

Lord Mayor: Question 3, Councillor Chaplin.

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. If Banksy reads the Leicester Mercury let's hope that he comes to Leicester, Stoneygate has spaces and areas that could well do with a Banksy as well as Tic Toc Park. Question number 3 is to ask the Assistant Mayor for Housing how many meetings he has had in the last 12 months with: housing associations, housing department staff in the Council and other landlords to discuss ways to improve homes (most often flats) in converted large old houses in Leicester's conservation areas?

Lord Mayor: Assistant City Mayor Councillor Connelly.

Councillor Connelly: Thank you Councillor Chaplin for the question. I can confirm that I have not met with any of the organisations or people quoted to specifically discuss ways to improve homes or flats in converted houses in Leicester's conservation areas. I have had discussions and the Council has been surveying such property in the conservation area, in turn conservation areas in the city as a result we have recently announced that we are making £60,000 available for grants towards replacement of traditional wooden doors and windows in conservation areas and particularly in the Spinney Hill conservation area and also by monies allocated within the housing revenue account to also begin improving Council properties in conservation areas in the city.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Chaplin do you have a supplementary?

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Thank you for your announcement about the funding and well done Spinney Ward. Obviously these homes have got high ceilings, they have got big windows, single glazing and people often have come to me with problems of damp and mould which lead to health and well-being problems and given especially what Councillor Clarke has said in

response to the question about climate change, I do think that it would be worth it if organisations could co-ordinate because many of the homes in Stoneygate Ward are also housing association homes and again it is about giving an example to other landlords. So I would ask if you could agree to set up regular meetings with these organisations with a view to ensuring that some of the families who are in these homes who are already struggling with day to day expenses are not also the ones who are hit with the highest energy bills in the cold weather, and I hope you will be able to give an assurance that it will become something that would be regularly on the meeting agenda with these organisations.

Lord Mayor: Assistant City Mayor.

Councillor Connelly: My thanks for the suggestion from Councillor Chaplin.

Obviously one of the issues about replacing windows and doors in conservation areas is obviously the fact that we can't replace them with UPVC and we believe we should be setting an example within these areas so where they do need replacing we replace them sympathetically, and last year we did that with two council hostels on Loughborough Road and Lower Hastings Street we were able to bring them back into use and conservations officers were helping to make that happen. In respect of future meetings with housing associations and private landlords, as Councillor Chaplin knows both me and her have not been re-selected and I can't give a commitment from whoever succeeds me in this role, but I will pass on this to them whoever it is, to ensure that happens.

February was the annual budget meeting and I am delighted to say that all the questions I have asked over the last year about replacing windows in council properties situated in conservation areas have been listened to. There is a commitment in the budget for an increase in investment specifically for this work to be done.

In addition to attending meetings of full council I have attended health and wellbeing scrutiny meetings when I have been available to do so.

I have also attended planning cttee in support of residents.

