



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, 25 NOVEMBER 2021 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 30 September 2021 are available to view at:
<https://cabinet.leicester.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=81&MId=10903&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 Scrutiny Annual Report
- 7.2 Gambling Policy
- 7.3 Decision to Opt into the National Scheme for Auditor Appointments managed by PSAA as the 'Appointing Person'
- 7.4 Elected Member absence from meetings

8. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE

8.1 To note any changes to the Executive

8.2 To vary the composition and fill any vacancies of any committee of the Council

9. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

PRESENT:

DEEPAK BAJAJ, LORD MAYOR
CHAIRMAN

SIR PETER SOULSBY – CITY MAYOR

Abbey Ward

MANJIT KAUR SAINI
VIJAY SINGH RIYAIT

North Evington Ward

LUIS FONSECA
RASHMIKANT JOSHI
VANDEVIJI PANDYA

Aylestone Ward

ADAM CLARKE
NIGEL CARL PORTER

Rushey Mead Ward

PIARA SINGH CLAIR
RITA PATEL
ROSS WILLMOTT

Beaumont Leys Ward

Saffron Ward

Belgrave Ward

PADMINI CHAMUND
NITA SOLANKI
MAHENDRA VALAND

Spinney Hills Ward

MISBAH BATOOL
MUSTAFA MALIK

Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields

SUE BARTON
ELAINE HALFORD
KULWINDER SINGH JOHAL

Stoneygate Ward

KIRK MASTER
SHARMEN RAHMAN
AMINUR THALUKDAR

Castle Ward

PATRICK JOSEPH KITTERICK
DANNY MYERS

Thurncourt Ward

TERESA ALDRED
STEPHAN GEE

Evington Ward

DEEPAK BAJAJ
SUE HUNTER

Troon Ward

DIANE CANK
ASHIEDU JOEL

Eyres Monsell Ward

KAREN PICKERING

Westcotes Ward

SARAH RUSSELL

Fosse Ward

TED CASSIDY
SUE WADDINGTON

Humberstone and Hamilton Ward

RUMA ALI
GURINDER SINGH SANDHU

Knighton Ward

MELLISA MARCH
DR LYNN MOORE
GEOFF WHITTLE

Western Ward

LINDSAY BROADWELL
GEORGE COLE
GARY O'DONNELL

Wycliffe Ward

HANIF AQBANY
MOHAMMED DAWOOD

34. LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Lord Mayor welcomed all those present to the meeting and invited Tony Nelson to say a prayer, which he duly did.

The Lord Mayor noted that he had attended a number of events in recent months, where he was proud to represent the city and see communities out at events once again this year, after cancellations due to the Coronavirus pandemic the previous year.

- A Business forum hosted at Winstanley House, by the High Commissioner of Antigua and Barbuda in honour of their 40th year of political independence.
- The unveiling of a new war memorial at Willowbrook Park in Thurnby Lodge which had been installed following a long fundraising campaign by residents and ward Councillors.
- The annual Remembrance Day Service at Victoria Park, which saw people taking the opportunity to show their respect to those who had served our country.
- The Diwali celebrations on Belgrave Road where a wide and varied range of activities took place for the public to enjoy.
- The Christmas lights switch on, in the City Centre where people were welcomed back into the city centre to enjoy this event in a safe way.

Sir David Amess

The Lord Mayor reflected on the sad events that lead to the loss of Sir David Amess and reminded all members to be vigilant when working out in their communities.

35. 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.

36. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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

That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 30 September 2021, copies having been circulated to each member of the council, be taken as read and that they each be approved as a correct record.

37. STATEMENTS BY THE CITY MAYOR/EXECUTIVE

The Lord Mayor invited Councillor Russell, Deputy City Mayor, Social Care and Anti-Poverty and the City Mayor to make statements:

Ofsted review – Children's Services

Councillor Russell, Deputy City Mayor, Social Care and Anti-Poverty, informed Council that following the recent Ofsted inspection into Children's Services, a 'good' rating was received across all areas being reviewed. It was also noted that this was one of the best results in the East Midlands. She further commented that the aim of the service was to ensure that children with challenges had the best possible care

and that a good service was delivered across the city on an ongoing basis and not just for Ofsted. She noted that putting Children's views and listening to them at all times was at the heart of delivering the service. She put on record her thanks to frontline Social Worker staff for working as a team, but also all the others involved in the service, including Councillors, children and families, and other parts of the Council who supported the service.

The City Mayor congratulated Councillor Russell on the Ofsted result and commented that she had been instrumental in taking the service forward to be something to be proud of.

City Centre Development

The City Major spoke in relation to protecting and developing the City Centre in the post Covid-19 pandemic era. He noted that most city centres faced a clear danger to their future at the current time. The City Centre was a fundamental part of the City's economy, which had been the main focus for many years. He reflected upon the protection of heritage assets such as avoiding the Lanes being turned into a car park and the improvements in the Old Town area. He also commented upon the transformation of the City centre to include a good variety of retail shops, visitor and leisure attractions as well as the wide range of services, events and festivals. He felt that the city centre had a great future as somewhere to enrich lives and access services, but also to tackle the two great challenges the city faced: inequality and the climate emergency. He further noted that the city centre could enable a better, greener transport service.

The City Mayor also spoke of the need for the Council to be agile in exploring continued investment opportunities in the City Centre, which could add value to the Council's property portfolio. He therefore reported publicly that the Council had successfully purchased the Haymarket Shopping Centre. This was a strategic investment and had enabled the Council to acquire a key part of the city centre for around £10 Million. He noted that a capital investment of this sort could not be used to fund frontline services directly. The Haymarket Shopping Centre included 65 shopping outlets, a theatre, hotel and adjoins the bus station. What was particularly important for the Council was that it was itself a major current tenant, providing 19% of yearly revenue which it would now pay to itself. The Council would work with current management agents to improve performance and the rental income would go towards investments into supporting services, capital investments and to protect services.

38. PETITIONS

Petitions from members of the public

Mr Mohamed Rafik, presented a petition with 972 valid signatures in the following terms:-

"We the residents of Harrison Road, Edensor Street, Stafford Street, Lancashire Street, St Michaels Avenue, Marfitt Street, Gipsy Road, Moores Road, Flax Road, Arbour Road, Leire Street, Acorn Street, Jermyn Street, Broadhurst Street, Portman Street, Glen Street, Agar Street, Canon Street and including surrounding areas and strongly object to drawings LCC-FPB-HRA-2020-001 (proposed new TRO) and all changes to our roads and surrounding roads. This includes additionally objecting to the safer street healthier neighbourhoods planned road changes for Rushey Mead. We the undersigned concerned citizens and object to all proposed changes."

Mr Sanjeev Sharma, presented a petition with 65 valid signatures in the following terms:-

“The residents of Harrison Road, (Junction of Gipsy Lane to Rushey Fields park) of Rushey Mead Ward strongly disagree to have residential parking in Harrison Road, the 80% of the houses in this road do have driveways. The Council should not consider this road for residential parking.”

Petitions from councillors

Councillor Bajaj, presented a petition with 445 signatures in the following terms:-

“We petition, on behalf of the residents who are very concerned for the safety of the users on the A47 and Downing Drive junction and would like to ask the Council for a four way traffic light system to be introduced at this junction.”

“I would appreciate your support to avoid serious accidents happening on this junction.

I would ask Members to note the further information contained within the script”

The remainder of the written petition reads as follows:

- Over the years there have been numerous accidents however, in the past couple of years this junction has become extremely dangerous.
- I use this route everyday for the past ten years and have witnessed drivers risking lives so that they can 'dodge' the traffic in the morning. They drive on the wrong side of the road especially on St Swithin's Road to get onto the Uppingham Road slip road. Not taking into account of any oncoming traffic from the main Uppingham Road or the pedestrians. Please see some pictures attached to give you an idea.
- I have tried to report to the Council over time, but I don't even get any acknowledgment.
- I started this petition as the current traffic lights further down, may have been suitable at the time they were installed, however, the traffic has now more than doubled over the years and these have now actually become a hazardous rather than a safety precaution.
- The link for this petition is: <https://chnq.it/rbSTdsG2n6>. As you will see there are over 500 people who have signed it and agree that traffic lights should be installed there.
- You will be aware there was an accident recently and a little girl was hurt. This matter was covered by Leicester Mercury too.

Under Council Procedure Rule 13a, the aforementioned petitions will be referred to Monitoring Officer for Consideration and action as appropriate.

39. QUESTIONS

The following questions were asked by Members of the Public

1. Mr Hersh Thaker:-

“As an ex-school governor at Rushey Mead Primary school I am concerned about the impact on air quality outside of the school resulting from air pollution from idling

cars right outside of windows of classrooms that face onto Gipsy Lane. Traffic at this junction is already quite bad. Could the council clarify what traffic and air quality impact assessment has been done considering that we expect that traffic will be made worse on Gipsy Lane and Marfitt street and outside of Rushey Mead Primary school as a result of introducing a one way only system from Leire Street and Marfitt Street?”?

The Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Clarke in response noted that the air pollution levels for the city were within United Kingdom limits. The area described in the question was not in an Air Quality Management area. The air quality monitoring station on Melton Road had shown a sharp decline in air pollution, which was in line with targets. Locally, innovative work was being done with Zephyr Air Monitors at the school showing air quality that was within Government limits and programmes such as a walk to school scheme, bikeability, school run parking sessions and they had been visited by Clean Air Clive.

The modelling undertaken regarding the one-way proposals on Harrison Road, would ban right way turning from Marfitt Street, which would require a review on traffic signals. This would have a beneficial impact on the area outside St Patrick’s school. The Council was also looking at improvements Magnus Street entrance, overall, he felt there was a lot of work was being done with the school.

Mr Thaker asked a supplementary question, was the one-way junction still planned at Marfit Street?

Councillor Clarke responded that the information currently showed that it was not been taken forward and this had been shared with residents this week.

2. Ms Bernadette Martins

“Rushey Mead ward has a high population of residents for which English is an additional language and the population is also generally older and recently settled. The council had not carried out a public engagement event/ consultation or indeed a resident meeting beside doing lamp post flyers and letters to residents which means residents did not fully understand the Harrison Road TRO scheme. Therefore, any conclusion drawn from the responses (or lack of responses) should not be automatically assumed as conclusive support.

Could you clarify what steps were taken to ensure that the consultation was accessible to people without access to technology and for which English is an additional language? For example, was the consultation translated in Gujarati or any other community language, or was it advertised anywhere away from the council website (such as local radio shows, letters to residents, local temples? or any direct resident’s meetings)”

The Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Clarke in response stated that that the Council always looked to undertake an EIA (Equality Impact Assessment) to ensure the City resident’s accessibility needs were met.

He further felt that it wasn’t true to say there had not been engagement, as there had been half a decade of engagement activities. For example, there had been a survey conducted in May 2016 for residents in the Harrison Road Area, on ideas to manage obstructive pavement parking. Then a further survey in October 2018, inviting all residents to have their say on ideas to improve parking and traffic conditions. Improvement plans and explanations, including an online survey were

available on the Councils consultation hub and there were also three exhibition drop-in sessions were held at the Methodist Church held in 2018.

He further felt that officers were well versed in working where there were language difficulties and the offered a Community Language service which residents were able to access.

Bernadette Martins asked a supplementary question, noting that she engaged with the residents where she lived on Stafford Street and felt the majority did not understand what had been sent. She queried how would residents of Stafford Street be engaged with as most could not understand the information that been provided?

Councillor Clarke in response, stated that Eric Pickles, (former Secretary of State) made changes around what local authorities could and couldn't do in regard to translation services. It was noted that there were currently 77 languages spoken around the city, which was fantastic, and that diversity should be celebrated. However, he noted that the English language is there for us to bond and bring communities together. He noted there were accessible options in place, and efforts had been made to undertake consultations in different ways. Overall, the intention was to help residents to have the most environmentally friendly and pleasant environments.

3. Mr Anand Bagtharia

"The council will be using public funds to implement this Harrison Road TRO at a time when spending budgets are already tight. We are also concerned about the financial impact on local businesses due to lost revenue with lower footfall and the impact on residents of this scheme who will have to purchase parking permits.

Are the council confident that this scheme will have no financial impact on local businesses and residents? And where there is an impact of residents who cannot afford permits and visitor permits, how will the council be supporting them?"

The Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Clarke in response stated that the Council had many years of experience of implementing schemes and that experience had been applied to the Rushey Mead scheme. Schemes were only brought in where there was a clear local demand. The Council would make sure residents were aware of the scheme and respond to concerns raised. Permits for the elderly and carers were available free of charge and business permits were also available where appropriate.

Mr Bagtharia asked a supplementary question, querying whether consideration had been given to the local demographics and households which have two or three cars. He noted that each house could have to spend £100 on parking each year and the impact on those taking daily trips for things like travel to the hospital.

Councillor Clarke in response, commented that measures were put in place to reduce those burdens. The wider aim of the scheme was to achieve a modal shift to encourage people out of cars, to help unclog the city and have an impact on air quality. He also noted that there was a bus service improvement plan, cycling and walking plans to encourage traveling in a safer way.

4. Mr Anand Bagtharia

"The council has stated that the Saint Patrick School has a lot of traffic during the

morning and afternoon rush hours which accounts for approximately 1 hour of the total day (30 minutes in the morning and 30 minutes in the evening) and this traffic is cited as a major reason for the Harrison Road TRO. Why is there no lollipop lady as there is outside every other school guiding the traffic flow to keep it moving and keep children safe whilst crossing including no zebra crossing or why is there no safe allocated spaces for parents to park for drop off and pick up by the school or council.”

The Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Clarke in response queried the information in the question. He stated that not every school had crossing support. There wasn't a strict criterion, but measures were in place at the school to promote safety, works for these measures had costed £21000. The Council has worked with Sustrans and Living Streets to promote walking, cycling and reduce car journeys. He further noted there were local businesses around the area, and it would create problems if there were dedicated drop off points.

Mr Bagtharia asked a supplementary question, around the businesses and school drop off's, specifically why was the Council promoting one-hour parking restrictions, when for 23 hours there was not a problem.

Councillor Clarke in response, stated that the priority would always be the safety of children.

5. Ms Poonam Vaghela

“Another reason that has been stated behind the Harrison Road TRO is that it will help blind and disabled people to walk and get around. It is also supposed to help residents who claim they do not have enough parking to make it safer for children etc. We believe there are other, more urgent, things that could be done to make Harrison Road more pedestrian friendly such as fixing broken slabs, making the roads much cleaner and updating the speed humps or repairing potholes which have been damaging cars and making it dangerous for cyclists.

Can you council confirm how much money has been spent over the last 10 years in improving the roads and pavements to fix these issues on Harrison Road?”

The Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Clarke in response, encouraged Ms Vaghela to raise such issues with her Ward Councillors for them to be included in the local environmental works programme. He noted that the total maintenance spend for Harrison Road was £39,000. In the past ten years there has been 120 repair orders for the road at a cost of £27,200. Across the city, there was a budget of £12.5 Million for road and footway maintenance. Harrison Road was inspected twice a year and any dangerous defects were dealt with. He also commented that traffic calming had been successful in reducing speed and traffic. Also, that the streets were cleaned six days a week for dog fouling and general cleansing.

Ms Vaghela asked a supplementary question, noting that residents had complained that there wasn't enough parking, and why wasn't more being provided? She noted there were 150 spaces on Belgrave Road. She noted a problem with dog excrement. She asked about investing in making the road better, and specifically mentioned that a person broke their hip when walking on Harrison Road.

Councillor Clarke in response, commented that he had provided the details on the repairs and cleaning schedules. He did not think that the accident was the result of anything that the Council had done.

6. Mr Sanjeev Sharma

“The members of Rushey Fields Residents Association had planted more than 150 roses and ever green plants in the community garden of Rushey Mead Park in the last five years and some of the roses were award winning roses, bought from RHS. The members had removed weeds and watered the roses and hanged 10 bird nests. The members had stopped managing the community garden due to COVID-19. The council gardeners didn't bother to remove the weeds or trimmed the roses, and now uprooted the roses, why?”

The City Mayor in response stated that this matter was the subject of a customer enquiry. The Council were informed in the summer that volunteer groups were no longer able to assist with the maintenance. A survey was performed which showed the area was neglected. It was not the intention to put in new rose bushes but replace them with more manageable plants. The City Mayor commended the action of officers in responding positively to improve the neglected area.

Mr Sharma asked a supplementary question; which officer dumped the roses in the skip?

The City Mayor responded that he was informed that the community group were not able to improve the area, officers moved in to repair the area and he commended them for their action.

7. Mr Sanjeev Sharma

“Did the director of parks consult with relevant Councillors before undertaking to remove these beautiful roses?”

The City Mayor in response stated that he didn't think there was a need for officers to obtain special permission, that they acted entirely appropriately, and it was to everyone's benefit.

8. Mr Sanjeev Sharma

“The members of Rushey Fields Residents Association had given a petition, signed by almost 750 residents to the Council almost 7 years ago. The residents had requested CCTV cameras at the junction of Gipsy Lane with Harrison Road and one in the Rushey Mead Park. Even, after 7 years, the residents can't see any camera. It's the only ward in the city, which doesn't have a single CCTV camera. Can you explain, why?”

The City Mayor in response, stated that he thought Mr Sharma has been misinformed of the availability of CCTV. The City Mayor was aware that there were some cameras in Rushey Mead, at the junction of Watermead Way/ Melton Road. There was also a mobile camera which could be deployed. Cameras could be used for a variety of things, if the Rushey Fields Residents Association feel it could be deployed, officers would be happy to look at where it could be used.

The following question were asked by Councillors

1. Councillor Dr Moore

“Could the Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Singh Clair, assess the success of the

councils attempts before the firework season to persuade the public to be considerate in the use of noisy fireworks?”

Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Singh Clair in response stated there was close working between the Executive and Officers on the firework campaign. The Safety Team designed and drafted a picture, which was given to all outlets within the city boundary who sold fireworks, so they could display how to use fireworks safely. The Council had also worked with multiple agencies, with schools to raise awareness of fireworks and the effects they could have on animals and this approach was on top of the national campaign. It was noted that an email was sent to Councillor Moore from national organisations, about the firework campaigns but he couldn't comment on the impact of that. In regard to complaints around fireworks, The Deputy City Mayor was unsure of what Members may have witnessed this year and, but he was of the view that things were better than previous years. He committed to continue working with officers and partners to run a campaign for years to come in order for things to remain safe and he was happy to continue to work with the RSPCA. He hoped that progress had been made.

2. Councillor Dr Moore

“Whilst I am delighted at the recent Ofsted grading of Good for our children's services, a constituent of mine who has frequent contact with schools has raised a concern about the safety of children who are coming unaccompanied to the city and living with families without proper checks, as would happen with other children being placed with foster families. Is the City Council aware that this is happening, and what is being done to ensure effective safeguarding in these circumstances?”

Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Russell in response stated that if children were living with people who weren't close relatives, then it constituted a private fostering arrangement. If any professional officer became aware of such an arrangement, they would be required to report it to the local authority. An assessment would then be made on suitability of the arrangement. There has only been one referral in recent months. Professionals and councillors should be aware of private fostering arrangements and should report any concerns they had.

Councillor Dr Moore asked a supplementary question. She thanked Councillor Russell for the response and said she was reassured. She did however query whether schools were involved in such response arrangements and queried whether, if a child turned up at school, were they aware of what to do in that situation?

Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Russell, in response stated that the Council worked with schools on this matter, specifically with safeguarding leads, teachers, and office staff. She also confirmed that the Council did what it could to ensure information was refreshed regularly.

3. Councillor Barton

“It was recently announced that there was no need for a proposed clean Air Zone in Leicester. Will this inhibit the Council's strategy to continue to improve our air quality and to continue in our fight against climate change?”

The Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Clarke in response stated that in short no, the Council was determined to clean the City's air as much as possible. The Council looked to the Government's criteria to determine if the city needed a Clean Air

Zone, and it was noted the city was on target to meet its requirements. It was noted that delivery of the Connecting Leicester projects and bus improvements would have a substantial impact on air quality and decarbonisation in the city. The air quality levels were compliant in 2020 and current modelling showed interventions would take the city below the target in 2023. He noted that Members may be aware of the World Health Organisation safe limits, but he believed it should be viewed as being no safe limit. He expected a new Government Air Quality target in the new year, which would need to be met.

Councillor Barton asked a supplementary question, congratulating Councillor Clarke and the citizens of Leicester for achievement of the target. Were last year's results considered, and did he feel there was no backsliding on the commitments to the climate emergency arising from COP 26?

Councillor Clarke in response, stated that he believed that COP26 did backslide and not encourage city's enough to lead on ensuring better air quality. The anomalous circumstances of 2020 showed what could be achieved and to maintain and improve those levels to ensure the effects were to have as safe air as possible for adults and children.

40. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

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

That the work of scrutiny during 2019 – 2021 be noted and endorsed.

41. GAMBLING POLICY

Moved by Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Singh Clair, seconded by Councillor Singh Johal and carried.

That the statement of gambling policy for 2022-2025 be approved.

42. DECISION TO OPT INTO THE NATIONAL SCHEME FOR AUDITOR APPOINTMENTS MANAGED BY PSAA AS THE 'APPOINTING PERSON'

Moved by Councillor Kaur Saini, Seconded by Councillor Dr Moore and carried:

That Public Sector Audit Appointments invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1 April 2023, be accepted.

43. ELECTED MEMBER ABSENCE FROM MEETINGS

Moved by Councillor Cank, seconded by Councillor Aldred and carried:

That:

- a) the waiver of the six-month attendance rule provided for within section 85(1) of the Local Government Act for Councillor Ratilal Govind due to illness, be approved;
- b) having regard to the extenuating circumstances arising from Councillor Govind's illness an extension of time until the end of the current municipal year, 19 May 2022, be granted.

44. EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES

There was no Executive or committees business.

45. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no further or urgent items of business the Lord Mayor declared the meeting closed at 18:35pm.