



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, 29 SEPTEMBER 2022 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 7 July 2022 are available to view at
[Agenda for Council on Thursday, 7 July 2022, 5:00 pm \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk/agenda-for-council-on-thursday-7-july-2022-5-00-pm)

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
- Petitions to be debated

6. QUESTIONS

- From Members of the Public
- From Councillors

7. MATTERS RESERVED TO FULL COUNCIL

- a) Selective Licensing Order
- b) City of Leicester Awards
- c) Armed Forces Covenant Update

8. REPORTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

- a) Code of Conduct

9. EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES

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

10. REPORTS OF REGULATORY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEES

- a) Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22
- b) Audit and Risk Annual Report 2021/22

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

Defending the Right to Seek Safety from War and Persecution

Proposed by Assistant City Mayor Councillor Myers, seconded by Deputy City Mayor Councillor Russell:-

“That this Council:

A) notes that:

- (i) Leicester is proud of our history of welcoming people seeking safety in our city;
- (ii) there are significant problems with the UK asylum system that affect people in Leicester, including a record backlog of cases awaiting a decision, a de facto ban on working, and enforced poverty and homelessness;
- (iii) the Nationality and Borders Act does not address these issues, and has instead created a two-tier system, punishing people seeking safety based on the journeys they make;
- (iv) under these laws, people seeking safety will be criminalised and threatened with removal to Rwanda;
- (v) people will be warehoused in large accommodation centres, segregated from communities and denied support;
- (vi) many recognised refugees will receive a temporary and precarious status;
- (vii) over 400 charities and faith groups have signed a national pledge to ‘Fight the ‘Anti-Refugee Laws’.

B) believes that:

- (i) everyone’s claim for asylum should be treated equally and fairly;
- (ii) these are fundamentally ‘anti-refugee’ laws that undermine internationally recognised rights for people fleeing war and persecution to seek safety;

- (iii) these measures will create ever-longer delays in the asylum process, lead to greater poverty and homelessness in Leicester and will undermine people's ability to rebuild their lives;
 - (iv) people seeking safety should be housed as our neighbours and as a part of our communities;
 - (v) the UK needs an asylum system that empowers people seeking safety to rebuild their lives and enables communities to welcome them;
- C) resolves to:
- (i) defend the right to seek safety from war and persecution in the UK and sign the national 'Fight the Anti-Refugee Laws' pledge;
 - (ii) call on the UK Government to withdraw the UK-Rwanda agreement, repeal the Nationality and Borders Act, and work with Local Authorities and communities to build a refugee protection system that treats all people with dignity and compassion;
 - (iii) work with local organisations and people with lived experience of the asylum system to identify ways to mitigate the effects of these measures in Leicester;
 - (iv) join the network of cities and towns which promote the inclusion and welfare of people who are fleeing violence and persecution and become a recognised Council of Sanctuary."

13. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

PRESENT:

GEORGE COLE, LORD MAYOR
CHAIRMAN

SIR PETER SOULSBY – CITY MAYOR

Abbey Ward

VIJAY SINGH RIYAIT

North Evington Ward

LUIS FONSECA

Aylestone Ward

ADAM CLARKE
NIGEL CARL PORTER

Rushey Mead Ward

PIARA SINGH CLAIR
RITA PATEL

Beaumont Leys Ward

Saffron Ward

ELLY CUTKELVIN

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
SHAHID KHAN

Troon Ward

ASHIEDU JOEL

Eyres Monsell Ward

ELAINE PANTLING
KAREN PICKERING

Westcotes Ward

JACKY NANGREAVE
SARAH RUSSELL

Fosse Ward

TED CASSIDY

Humberstone and Hamilton Ward

RUMA ALI
DANIEL CREWE
GURINDER SINGH SANDHU

Knighton Ward

MELLISA MARCH
DR LYNN MOORE
GEOFF WHITTLE

Western Ward

GARY O'DONNELL

Wycliffe Ward

HANIF AQBANY
MOHAMMED DAWOOD

29. LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sickle Cell Awareness Month

The Lord Mayor informed Council that September had been Sickle Cell Awareness Month and he had attended two events during the month to help raise awareness of this disorder.

On 1 September to coincide with the start of Sickle Cell Awareness Month the Lord Mayor visited the children's clinic at the Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia Unit at Leicester's Royal Infirmary to learn more about the impact which the condition has on people's lives.

On 6 September, the Lord Mayor joined the High Sheriff of Leicestershire at the Connecting Communities Cricket Festival at the Leicestershire County cricket ground which provided an opportunity for the Sickle Cell Society to host an information stand. Two teams from Leicester's communities played a 100 ball match during which the Lord Mayor was invited to 'bowl' an over.

The Lord Mayor also intended to visit the local Blood Donor Centre to promote the importance of blood donation for sickle cell patients.

The World Reimagined

The Lord Mayor informed Council that he recently attended the formal launch of the World Reimagined, where a number of globe sculptures were placed in various parts of the city which create a trail for people to follow.

This was part of a national art project which Leicester has taken part and it explored themes such as the lived experience of those who were enslaved as part of the transatlantic slavery trade. The Lord Mayor encouraged people to go and see this excellent project.

Honoured Citizen Scheme

The Lord Mayor gave Council a further reminder that nominations were welcome for the Honoured Citizen Scheme which sought to recognise the many people who made a real difference. Information and nomination forms were available from the Member and Civic Support Team.

Eric Hudson

The Lord Mayor reflected on the sad loss of a key member of the African Heritage community in Leicester, Mr Eric Hudson. He noted that Eric was a key campaigner in fighting for the rights of the Windrush generation locally. Eric achieved a great deal for the community, such as setting up a credit union and the formation of the West Indian Senior Citizen's Project. He noted that there was a good deal of sadness in the community at the loss of a much-admired and prominent community member. The Lord Mayor passed on his gratitude to the City Mayor for his kind words shared at Eric's funeral.

City of Leicester – recent tensions

The Lord Mayor referred to a recent trip he undertook and commented on how when he viewed the news whilst on his trip, which referred to the disturbances in the city, it made him feel sad. He noted that when he visited events in the city as Lord Mayor, it clearly demonstrated what a great place Leicester was. He felt Leicester was a special place, this was demonstrated by how many visits there are

from other places, asking us how we do it. The harmony of the diversity within the city was something to be treasured and it was what made Leicester a great place and something which was worth fighting for.

Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedure

The Lord Mayor reminded all those present of the fire evacuation procedures detailed on the agenda.

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

There were no declarations.

31. 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 7th July 2022, copies having been circulated to each member of the Council, be taken as read and that they each be approved as a correct record.

32. STATEMENTS BY THE CITY MAYOR/EXECUTIVE

Disturbances in Leicester East

The City Mayor referred to the disappointing events which had taken place in the last few weeks in the east of Leicester.

The City Mayor commented that he usually proudly speaks of how the city was a welcoming place for people of all backgrounds and had an enviable record of facing up to prejudice and discrimination which made Leicester a tolerant and understanding city. He commented on the need for the representatives of the city to focus on cohesion, reinforcing shared understanding and creating harmony, whilst challenging the small number of people who attempt to divide and segregate communities.

The City Mayor did however recognise the voices of those who were caught up in the unrest and their lived experience within the city. He informed Council that a detailed review would be undertaken to hear the voices of those affected by the disturbances. The review would not look to judge or blame, but look at what could be done together to move forward as a united city. The review would broadly look at getting a full account of what happened leading up to the unrest, and any contributory factors, learning lessons to strengthen what makes the city great and to use the information from the review for the Council to act upon and to enable communities to live and work together.

The City Mayor noted that misinformation and rumours which were circulating at the time seemed to whip up emotion, anger and fear. He noted that there was a responsibility to do everything possible to bring calm and promote tolerance and understanding. It was time for an important reflection of what Leicester represented, understand what happened and what could connect the city together. There should be no room for complacency and a strong united city was always a work in progress.

33. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

34. QUESTIONS

The following question was asked by a member of the public.

1. Sabiha Laher

“Regarding your project on Devonport Road in making safer and healthier environment, i would like to question the legality of your notices displayed on the site and the surrounding area of the location i.e. location changed on three occasions without amendment and the site made even more dangerous by huge concrete blocks without centre accessibility for the cyclist and mobility vehicles who have to share a narrow uneven raised pedestrian pathway?”

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Clarke in response stated that there were street notices places in the locality, the original order for the works was advertised in the Leicester Mercury in April and changes were advertised in June. The Deputy City Mayor stated that concrete blocks were installed, rather than planters due to protestors getting in the way during installation and it was unsafe. It was hoped that the concrete blocks could be replaced with something more aesthetically pleasing. A bollard in the middle had been installed to enable emergency vehicle access, but this was illegally removed.

Ms Laher asked a supplementary question. She asked whether the Deputy City Mayor realised the impacts to residents of the changes, particularly longer journey times. An incident of a burst pipe on Spencefield Lane was referenced where there were problems with emergency vehicle access. There were no viable alternatives. There were also issues for elderly people who had been effectively denied access to their local Mosque.

The Deputy City Mayor in response stated that there had been a working group meeting that afternoon where differing views on the scheme had been expressed, with some indications that views were changing and there was a keenness to overcome any issues. The experimental phase of the scheme was helping to tease these issues out and deal with them. It was intended to continue to engage with the community to consider further issues.

The following questions were asked by Councillors:

1. Councillor Master

“Can the City Mayor explain his understanding of why the recent troubles have arrived in the city and what is driving this, considering both the Muslim and Hindu communities have lived side by side for decades and what is his plan to address the challenge?”

The City Mayor in response stated that it was important to recognise that the communities referred to in the question have for the most part lived in the city happily and harmoniously and there was no reason to feel that would change. It was however recognised that a small number of people don't wish to live in the sort

of city we have in Leicester. He also noted that it was important to find out what motivated those people involved in the disturbances.

Councillor Master asked a supplementary question. He said that the City Mayor did not refer to the rise of extremism in the city, and that something had changed in the past 5 – 10 years. He asked that the City Mayor acknowledge that things had changed in the city and provide assurances that it not be allowed to take root.

The City Mayor in response stated that it had often been remarked that the city had a proud reputation for harmony, but it wasn't able to entirely isolate itself from the outside world. He noted that there had been times when events in other parts of the world had been expressed in the city with differing perceptions. It was hoped that the review announced issues raised by Councillor Master would be dealt with and it would identify what issues there were and how they could be combatted.

2. Councillor Master

“Can the City Mayor explain why he has made no public statement as the leader of the City council about the troubles?”

The City Mayor in response stated that he had made numerous public statements and made a comprehensive statement in the meeting tonight and would continue to do so about matters of concern.

Councillor Master asked a supplementary question. He appreciated that the City Mayor had undertaken interviews, but had provided nothing written, to offer assurance and leadership, unlike the temporary Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner and people from communities. He asked that the City Mayor make a statement to reassure people that it was the intention to bring peace to the city and that he was against extreme ideologies.

The City Mayor in response reiterated the point that he had made numerous statements and would continue to do so as necessary. He felt that it wasn't as simple as making a statement to deal with these complex issues. He undertook to continue to do what was needed to prevent any repeat of the disturbances.

3. Councillor Master

“Can the City Mayor confirm that the Public Inquiry or Independent review that we have previously asked for will be shaped by communities/community bodies, elected members and others in regards to the terms of reference and chose the body that facilitates the inquiry?”

The City Mayor in response stated that getting universal agreement on the make up of the review board could be a very protracted process. He did however undertake to widely share the review's terms of reference and take on board how they could be modified to ensure that an understanding of what went wrong. He felt that it may not be possible to ensure that everybody who had an interest can be involved due to the practicalities of managing the review. He undertook to ensure that the right questions were asked and an appropriate way forward was developed in order to avoid a repeat of the disturbances.

Councillor Master commented in response He stated that it was crucial that those in communities were allowed a role in this review. He welcomed the City Mayor's offer for those with a vested interest to take part and to shape the terms of reference.

4. Councillor Master

“Can the City Mayor confirm when the review will begin and what timeframe he expects before an outcome is presented?”

The City Mayor in response that it was hoped that it could get underway within the month of October, depending on the views expressed with regard to the terms of reference. There needed to be a realistic view about when it could report and it would likely take a few weeks, and it was hoped this would be early in the new year, The reviewers needed to have sufficient time to do a piece of work which was worthwhile.

Councillor Master asked a supplementary question. He felt that the affected communities would not want a long, drawn-out process. He sought assurance that there would be oversight by community representation, and elected Members.

The City Mayor in response stated that he certainly didn't want a review that was cumbersome, but it needed to be something that people bought into and it answered the right questions.

5. Councillor Master

“Can the City Mayor confirm he has every intention of investing some real resource (time, effort, will, finance and strategy) into the findings of the recommendation?”

The City Mayor in response confirmed that this was the intention. He was however aware that after a decade of austerity there was a lack of available funding, and the extent to which resource could be diverted was limited. He stated that the review would look at the issues and enable work with communities to combat any further issues arising.

Councillor Master asked a supplementary question. He noted the issues arising from austerity but felt these were not the main driver of the disturbances. He felt there was a need to prioritise local communities over other projects within the city, which often had not support. He asked the City Mayor to explore all avenues of funding such as Section 106 monies being invested fairly across the city as well as capital investment and regeneration funding. He felt that local communities needed help and asked for a commitment for a plan to look at the challenges they faced.

The City Mayor in response thanked Councillor Master for drawing attention to the council's approach over the period the City Mayor has been in post and stated that this would be the approach going forward.

6. Councillor Bajaj

“What action plan for future investment have been put forward for the trouble in the East of Leicester?”

The City Mayor in response commented that he was intrigued by Councillor Bajaj' question about investment as it was the government that he now supports which was responsible for reducing Council budgets which limited the amount of investment which could be made.

Councillor Bajaj asked a supplementary question. He commented that he felt that

funding had been taken away from Leicester East and depriving that area of funding. He noted that particularly funding of youth services had been taken away over the past 10 years and those affected by this reduction, if they were looked after properly would not be involved in the disturbances now.

The City Mayor in response commented that Councillor Bajaj may well be right, but following a reduction in the Council's spending power of £150m, this had impacted the ability of the Council to spend money for those 'on the ground' services. He further commented that there needed to be an end to austerity and the election of a Labour government to increase investment.

7. Councillor Bajaj

"How much youth engagement work had been done in North Evington?"

Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Russell in response stated that in North Evington, as across the City, there was a targeted model of youth services. As the government had reduced budgets it had limited the Council's ability to engage with young people. Hard to reach groups had continued to be the priority, particularly through the use of street youth workers in Evington and also targeting those who were at risk of involvement in criminal behaviour. The Deputy City Mayor also referred to the Rights and Participation service where the views of young people were sought to be included in the Council's decision making. It was also noted that there would be elections to the Young People's Council in the new year which will include young people from all wards. It was further noted that despite the much reduced budgets, it wasn't possible to provide as many services as would be liked, but those who were most vulnerable were prioritised.

8. Councillor Bajaj

"Why does the customer services centre not open every day for members of the public?"

The City Mayor in response commented that the Customer Service Centre is funded by the general revenue budget, which has been affected by the loss of £150m of spending power arising from austerity measures. It was also noted that there was lower demand for face to face contact coming out of the pandemic and officers have assured that opening times were sufficient. The Centre was open on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week offering scanners, computers and phones. Customers could book appointments by phone or call in. Libraries also offered computers and access to Council services online. The Customer Service Centre was not the only way to access Council services as many were available online or by phone, or by using Libraries or community centres. Opening times were being kept under review taking into account customer demand. Overall, there was a need to make decisions about how best to deploy resources such as answering phones to provide a better service.

Councillor Bajaj asked a supplementary question. He suggested that it should not be expected that the older age population should have to make phonecalls where they could be waiting for 20 – 30 minutes. What was the total amount of time they were needed to wait? It was queried how many staff there were to serve the 350 thousand people who lived in the city?

The City Mayor in response stated that he felt that he had explained the Council was prioritising the best use of staff resources and provision of access across the

city. He wasn't suggesting that residents were required to contact the Council online. He further noted that the Council had lost significant funding, but was seeking to maintain a full range of services.

9. Councillor Bajaj

"What is the time scale to determine a planning application once all the information has been received by the council?"

Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Singh Clair in response confirmed that government targets for Councils were to deal with 60% of major applications in 13 weeks and 70% of non-major applications in 8 weeks. An extension of time agreement can be reached with the applicant if an application was likely to go beyond this time.

The Lord Mayor agreed to consider following question at this point, from a member of the public, as they arrived to the meeting late:

Tracy Ovens

"How many complaints have Leicester Bereavement Services received in the last 5yrs?"

Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Singh Clair in response thanked Mrs Ovens for her question and noted that over the past five years, 23 complaints have been received. To the best of his knowledge, officers had dealt with these complaints with their best endeavour. The Deputy City Mayor was happy to meet with Mrs Ovens with officers outside of the meeting to discuss any issues she may have.

Mrs Ovens asked a supplementary question. She asked that concerns be investigated that her family have not had responses to.

The Deputy City Mayor in response stated that he could not discuss individual cases at full Council. He was however happy to look into any issues, take advice from Councillors Dempster and Aldred and subsequently meet Mrs Ovens with officers to discuss her concerns.

A number of other questions were submitted to the meeting but were not asked following apologies having been received from Councillor Porter.

35. SELECTIVE LICENSING ORDER 1A

Moved by Assistant City Mayor, Councillor Cutkelvin, seconded by Councillor Gee and carried:

- a) That the introduction of a selective licensing scheme be approved, to be known as 'Leicester City Council designation for Areas for Selective Licensing within parts of the Wards of – Stoneygate (East Cluster); Westcotes, Fosse, Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields (West Cluster); (No.2)' which will comprise the streets and individual properties erroneously omitted from the scheme approved on 7 July 2022; and
- b) That the implementation of the scheme will be the 29 December 2022 and the end date will be the 9/10/27.

36. CITY OF LEICESTER AWARDS

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

That Council confirms the conferment of the City of Leicester Award to Dr Richard Buckley OBE, Professor Turi King, Professor Emeritus Kevin Shürer and Professor Emeritus Ken Pounds CBE in recognition of both excellence in their respective fields and the international acclaim which they have brought to the city of Leicester through their endeavours.

37. ARMED FORCES COVENANT UPDATE

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

- a) That the report and action plan at Appendix A be agreed as a reflection of the Council's ongoing commitment to the Armed Forces community; and
- b) That the ongoing work to raise awareness of our Covenant commitments be supported and also support working with the Armed Forces Community and meeting the requirements of the new legal duties placed upon education, health and housing services.

38. CODE OF CONDUCT

Moved by Councillor Barton, seconded by Councillor O'Donnell and carried:

That the changes to the Code of Conduct be accepted.

39. EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES

There was no Executive or committees business.

40. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

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

That the report be noted and the work of scrutiny during 2021-2022 be endorsed.

41. AUDIT AND RISK ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

Moved by Councillor Pantling, seconded by Councillor Dr Moore and carried:

That the report be received.

42. NOTICE OF MOTION

Moved by Councillor Myers, seconded by Councillor Russell and carried:

That this Council:

- A) notes that:

- (iii) Leicester is proud of our history of welcoming people seeking safety in our city;
- (iv) there are significant problems with the UK asylum system that affect people in Leicester, including a record backlog of cases awaiting a decision, a de facto ban on working, and enforced poverty and homelessness;
- (iii) the Nationality and Borders Act does not address these issues, and has instead created a two-tier system, punishing people seeking safety based on the journeys they make;
- (iv) under these laws, people seeking safety will be criminalised and threatened with removal to Rwanda;
- (v) people will be warehoused in large accommodation centres, segregated from communities and denied support;
- (vi) many recognised refugees will receive a temporary and precarious status;
- (vii) over 400 charities and faith groups have signed a national pledge to 'Fight the 'Anti-Refugee Laws'.

D) believes that:

- (ii) everyone's claim for asylum should be treated equally and fairly;
- (ii) these are fundamentally 'anti-refugee' laws that undermine internationally recognised rights for people fleeing war and persecution to seek safety;
- (iii) these measures will create ever-longer delays in the asylum process, lead to greater poverty and homelessness in Leicester and will undermine people's ability to rebuild their lives;
- (iv) people seeking safety should be housed as our neighbours and as a part of our communities;
- (v) the UK needs an asylum system that empowers people seeking safety to rebuild their lives and enables communities to welcome them;

E) resolves to:

- (i) defend the right to seek safety from war and persecution in the UK and sign the national 'Fight the Anti-Refugee Laws' pledge;
- (ii) call on the UK Government to withdraw the UK-Rwanda agreement, repeal the Nationality and Borders Act, and work with Local Authorities and communities to build a refugee protection system that treats all people with dignity and compassion;
- (iii) work with local organisations and people with lived experience of the asylum system to identify ways to mitigate the effects of these measures in Leicester;
- (iv) join the network of cities and towns which promote the inclusion and welfare of people who are fleeing violence and persecution and become a recognised Council of Sanctuary.

43. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Lord Mayor noted that there was no urgent business.

The Lord Mayor made a general comment to Council that Leicester was a wonderful place to live and that the Council should push back against those who seek to divide us. He also felt that as Councillors the benefits of living in a harmonious diverse community were well known and there was a responsibility on all to promote this and to continue to believe that we can deliver for the citizens of Leicester.

The meeting was declared closed at 19.04.