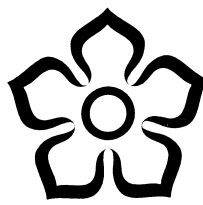


Thursday, 24 January 2013



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, 24 JANUARY 2013 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

4. PETITIONS

- Presented by Councillors
- Presented by Members of the Public

5. QUESTIONS

- From Members of the Public
- From Councillors

6. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE

Reserved to Council:

- 6.1 Treasury Strategy 2013/14 to 2015/16
- 6.2 Council Tax – Taxbase and Empty Property Discounts
- 6.3 Council Tax Reduction (Local) Scheme – Scheme Options

Call-In of Executive Decisions

- 6.4 Gypsy & Traveller Sites in and around Leicester

7. REPORT OF THE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

- 7.1 Audit & Risk Annual Report to Council

8. EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES

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

9. **NOTICES OF MOTION**

10. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

PRESENT:

ABDUL RAZAK OSMAN, LORD MAYOR
CHAIRMAN

Abbey Ward

HARSHAD DAHYABHAI BHAVSAR
ANNETTE BYRNE

Freemen Ward

ELLY CUTKELVIN
WILLIAM HENRY SHELTON

Aylestone Ward

ADAM CLARKE

Humberstone and Hamilton Ward

BARBARA ANNE POTTER
GURINDER SINGH SANDHU

Beaumont Leys Ward

VIOLET GEDDES GRAHAM DEMPSTER
SUNDIP MEGHANI
PAUL THOMAS WESTLEY

Knighton Ward

ROSS GRANT
INDERJIT SINGH GUGNANI
DR LYNN MOORE

Belgrave Ward

RASHMIKANT JOSHI
JOHN WILLIAM THOMAS

Latimer Ward

VEEJAY PATEL
MANJULA PAUL SOOD

Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields

MICHAEL ERNEST COOKE
ANNE GLOVER
WAYNE JAN NAYLOR

New Parks Ward

DAWN ALFONSO
STEPHEN PETER CORRALL
MALCOLM WILLIAM UNSWORTH

Castle Ward

NEIL CLAYTON
PATRICK JOSEPH KITTERICK
LYNN SENIOR

Rushey Mead Ward

PIARA SINGH CLAIR
ROSS WILLMOTT

Charnwood Ward

PAUL DARREN NEWCOMBE

Spinney Hills Ward

HANIF AQBANY
SHOFIQUUL ISLAM CHOWDHURY
MOHAMMED DAWOOD

Coleman Ward

MIAN MOHAMMED MAYAT
DEBORAH SANGSTER

Stoneygate Ward

LUCY CHAPLIN
IQBAL ALIBHAI DESAI
MUSTAFA KAMAL

Evington Ward

DEEPAK BAJAJ
BALJIT SINGH

Eyres Monsell Ward

VIRGINIA CLEAVER
RORY PALMER

Fosse Ward

TED CASSIDY
SUSAN WADDINGTON

Thurncourt Ward

LUIS FONSECA
ROBERT WANN

Westcotes Ward

ANDREW IAN CONNELLY
SARAH CHRISTINE RUSSELL

Western Park Ward

DR SUSAN BARTON
GEORGE COLE

LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Before the meeting formally commenced the Lord Mayor invited his Spiritual Adviser to say an appropriate prayer.

SAFEGUARDING ADULT TEAM – “ADULT SERVICES TEAM OF THE YEAR” AWARD

The Lord Mayor announced that the Adult Safeguarding Team, had beaten more than 40 finalists to be voted national “Adult Services Team of the Year” at the 2012 Social Worker of the Year Awards on 30 November 2012. The awards ceremony was hosted by the social work award organisation which is a registered charity that promotes good practice and outstanding service within the field of social work.

The Lord Mayor noted that safeguarding was a huge issue that often didn't get the coverage it deserved and by winning the Unit had helped highlight the importance of providing help and support to vulnerable people who were in danger of abuse. The Lord Mayor also noted that the team had only been together for just one year.

The Lord Mayor presented team members with the award.

PARKS INNOVATION AWARD - WATERMEAD CONTRY PARK

The Lord Mayor announced that a national “Innovation Award” from Keep Britain Tidy which recognised and rewarded excellence and innovation in improving local environmental had been won by the Parks and City Warden teams.

The Lord Mayor noted that the award had been given for an 8 week campaign that had sought to encourage users to rethink their bird feeding habits and help tackle the excessive number of geese at Watermead Contry Park. Feedback from park users and local wildlife groups had been that the campaign had a positive impact on the numbers of Canada Geese that come to the park to feed.

The Lord Mayor presented Paul Barker from the Parks team and Barbara Whitcombe from the City Warden team with the award.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Lord Mayor invited the Monitoring Officer to make a statement in relation to items on the agenda.

The Monitoring Officer stated that in relation to the debate concerning the Call In of the Gypsies and Travellers decision at 6.4 on the agenda the advice he had given was that having a strong view on the matter did not equate to having a declarable interest in the matter for the purposes of the debate. However he suggested that the issue of having a strong view may be more pertinent to those Members who would be later involved in decision making on the matter, such as those who were members of the Planning & Development Control Committee.

In relation to the items concerning Council Tax at 6.2 and 6.3 on the agenda the Monitoring Officer offered his advice that being in receipt of Empty Homes Discount

or being a Council Tax payer did not equate to having an interest in the items under the Council's Code of Conduct.

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

Councillors declared interests as detailed below:

Councillor Kitterick	Other disclosable interest on item 6.4, 'Gypsy & Traveller Sites in and around Leicester' as a member of the Planning & Development Control Committee. Councillor Kitterick stated that he would withdraw from the meeting for this item.
Councillor Choudhury	Other disclosable interest on item 6.4, 'Gypsy & Traveller Sites in and around Leicester' as a member of the Planning & Development Control Committee. Councillor Choudhury stated that he would withdraw from the meeting for this item.
Councillor Moore	Other disclosable interest on item 6.4, 'Gypsy & Traveller Sites in and around Leicester' as a member of the Planning & Development Control Committee. Councillor Moore stated that she would withdraw from the meeting for this item.
Councillor Mayat	Other disclosable interest on item 6.4, 'Gypsy & Traveller Sites in and around Leicester' as a member of the Planning & Development Control Committee. Councillor Mayat stated that he would withdraw from the meeting for this item.
Councillor Joshi	Other disclosable interest on item 6.4, 'Gypsy & Traveller Sites in and around Leicester' as a member of the Planning & Development Control Committee. Councillor Joshi stated that he would withdraw from the meeting for this item.
Councillor Senior	Other disclosable interest on item 6.4, 'Gypsy & Traveller Sites in and around Leicester' as her partner worked for the Council in the field of transport strategy. Councillor Senior stated that as the team her partner worked in had been involved with issues relating to the matter she would withdraw from the meeting for this item.
Councillor Fonseca	Other disclosable interest on item 6.4, 'Gypsy & Traveller Sites in and around Leicester' as a member of the Planning & Development Control Committee. Councillor Fonseca stated that he would withdraw from the meeting for this item.
Councillor Desai	Other disclosable interest on item 6.4, 'Gypsy & Traveller Sites in and around Leicester' as a member of the Planning & Development Control Committee. Councillor Desai stated that he would withdraw from the meeting for this item.
Councillor Shelton	Other disclosable interest on item 6.4, 'Gypsy & Traveller Sites in and around Leicester' as a member of the Planning & Development Control Committee. Councillor Shelton stated that he would withdraw from the meeting for this item.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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

34. That the Minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 22 November 2012 having been printed and a copy sent to each Member of the Council be taken as read and that they be approved as a correct record.

PETITIONS

PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Councillor Bajaj presented a petition with 506 signatures in the following terms:

"We the undersigned, wish the Local Authority and/or Government to review road safety measures outside Whitehall Primary School in Leicester and implement appropriate safety measures. These may include bollards to prevent parking on grass verges and corners outside the school and surrounding areas. A number of parents and motorists are using these areas for off-road parking when dropping off and collecting children from school. This makes it dangerous for child and adult pedestrians. Also to include 'Child Bollards' to assist in reducing traffic speed."

Councillor Naylor presented a petition with 437 signatures in the following terms:

"In response to the proposed removal of the 302 bus service through Braunstone, we would like to register our disapproval of the plan."

Councillor Sood presented a petition with 57 signatures in the following terms:

"Anti- social behaviour such as smashing of cars, burning of items and throwing glass bottles, shouting and screaming during most nights, intimidating residents and breaking into property. This has shaken our livelihoods which has caused uncomfortable sleepless nights. Residents of Harrison Road and Allington Street are extremely worried not knowing what to do. We, therefore, request the City Council to provide security in the area such as cameras, gates in Cossington Park, which should be locked after 9.00 pm, barbed wiring around the gates of residents of Harrison Road who face the park and lighting around Harrison Road."

Councillor Thomas presented a petition with 59 signatures in the following terms:

"The members of Rushey Fields Residence Association & Residents of Belgrave, Rushey Mead and Latimer wards would like to request Leicester City Council to make substantial safety and improvements to Rushey Mead Park. The proposals are firstly to make this park a walking park for the public, as done in Cossington Park, Leicester. Secondly to move the children's play area next to the Belgrave Police Station, make it dog prohibited area, finally there is a great need for flowers and shrubs around the walking area."

PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr David Holding presented a petition with 165 signatures from residents of Leicester and 30 signatures from elsewhere in the following terms:

“This petition is presented to Leicester City Council by the people of Leicester, Leicestershire and elsewhere in protest at the closure of Belgrave Museum, and hereby call upon the said Council to re-instate Belgrave Hall and Gardens as a public, free-to enter museum as it has been since 1936.”

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

35. That the aforementioned petitions be referred to the Monitoring Officer for consideration and action as appropriate.

QUESTIONS

Councillor Singh: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Can I request the City Mayor to make a statement on the importance of the Equality Impact Assessments in the decision making process and the provision of services from the Council pre and post budget and outline the structure that has been adopted to ensure a transparent and accountable framework in the light of the 2011 census information.

Councillor Sood: Thank you Lord Mayor. I thank Councillor Singh for this question. My Lord Mayor, unlike the Prime Minister who announced in November that the government was calling time on the production of Equality Impact Assessments, I can assure Council members that the Council will continue to use Equality Impact Assessments to inform its decision making and service provision. Why are Equality Impact Assessments important? They help us to do things. They ensure that our decisions are not made in a vacuum, they help us understand the personal context of people affected by our proposals, they focus on whether there will be negative impacts on those who use our services as a result of our proposals. If there are negative impacts, the challenge for us is to identify mitigating actions that reduce these negative impacts. They enable us to demonstrate that we are meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The City Council believes that these proposals are fair for everyone and help make sure that resources go to those most in need and is able to meet their needs in other ways. Consideration of equality impacts has been a common strength throughout our budget process for last year and this year. Equality consideration has featured throughout the discussion. Our public consultation on budget proposals included summaries of the equality implications. We have asked for external views on the robustness of our budget and EIA and we hosted a review panel during this year and last year's budget proposals. This feedback helps us to improve our Equality Impact Assessments. My Lord Mayor the 2011 census figures showed Leicester as a fast growing City which increased in size by 17% within the past 10 years and increasingly diverse with increased minority ethnic representations and I am confident that our use of Equality Impact Assessments will help us ensure that we are being fair to everyone in the City and how we look at our resources.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Singh, do you have a supplementary?

Councillor Singh: Yes, thank you Lord Mayor. I am grateful for the reply by Councillor Sood. I am encouraged by the emphasis in the answer on the duty of equality. I think that is very good. Would the Assistant Mayor further agree that it may be useful to consider setting up a working group to examine the strategic impact of service delivery and orientations to a City population with a predominance

of BME communities in the coming generations?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Sood.

Councillor Sood: Thank you for the supplementary question and for your suggestion. We will look into it and I think it is a good suggestion and I will see how we can address all these issues. The area panel is made up of all different representatives from different organisations so we will certainly look into it.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Singh, question number 2.

Councillor Singh: Thank you Lord Mayor. Will the City Mayor inform the Council on whether Commissioning of Services is now operational and if the Social Value Act 2012, which requires public bodies including Councils to consider the social value of a contract when procuring services and goods is implemented. How much allocation, if any, did the Council receive towards the implementation of this central plank of Government's Localism agenda? Thank you.

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. As Councillor Singh is aware, and I think many other members will be, the Public Value Social Services Act comes into force at the end of the month. Essentially it requires us to better consider how and what we buy, how it improves the economic social and environmental well-being of the City. In fact, as members will know, we have not waited for this legislation. Over the last year or more we have been implementing elements of this agenda, including third tier supply, employment, apprenticeships and skill improvements and social value is central to the work of the local procurement task force which has already ensured that 100 low value contracts with a total of over £1.5m in value, have been advertised and marketed with the majority won by micro, small companies and voluntary organisations locally. Incidentally, Lord Mayor, to answer the final part of Councillor Singh's question, there has of course been no government funding made available to support this agenda. We have done it entirely with our own resources.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Singh, do you have any supplementary?

Councillor Singh: Thank you Lord Mayor. I am grateful to the City Mayor for the answer. Once again it does emphasise the importance of raised gender and disability as part of the duty of equalities from the Council and I am very grateful for that. My Lord Mayor, in a recent article in the Guardian it stated that the vast majority of local government employees, 77%, said that they needed more training to do the job of commissioning well. While 14% said they already were expected to perform this job and they actually did not have the necessary skills, and only 8% were fully equipped. Lord Mayor, this is attributed solely to the government's lack of support to their own policies. Will the City Mayor continue to keep the issues of in-service training as an on-going concern and continue to express to the Secretary of State, Eric Pickles, the need for more resources to carry out its policies?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Yes my Lord Mayor. I will certainly try to get that message through to the Secretary of State, but I think those who know him or his reputation will realise that I don't do so with any great sense of optimism. I will, however, undertake to continue to drive this agenda forward within the City Council and indeed by so doing

to seek to provide an example to others in the public and indeed the private sector locally to examine their own procurement and the way in which our procurement can be used for the benefit of the local economy. This is something which has been very much welcomed by those who engaged in procurement within the Council and I am grateful for that, but it is also something that has been very much welcomed in discussions we have had with the private sector locally, with the voluntary sector locally and indeed with social enterprises locally, all of whom are very keen to be a part of ensuring that our procurement contributes in full to the local economy.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Chaplin, question 3.

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. When will the much anticipated list of 40 events planned for Belgrave Hall Museum be published, so that people wishing to visit the house and gardens can plan their dairies.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Clair.

Councillor Clair: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Those events will be published in March this year.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Chaplin, do you have any supplementary?

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. It is disappointing that we still have to wait further. I wondered what plans there are to update the signage around the Belgrave Hall Museum in the meantime and also to communicate these activities to people of Leicester and Leicestershire.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Clair.

Councillor Clair: Lord Mayor, I am happy to confirm today that Belgrave Conservation Society members have agreed to meet with me on 12th February at 6.45pm. By then, if they have not published a leaflet, but obviously I would have some information an outline planning of those 40 events then I would be more than happy to share with those residents at that meeting.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Chaplin, question 4.

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. How many individual artists in each age category have submitted how many pieces of work to the Open 24 exhibition at New Walk Museum and Art Gallery?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Clair.

Councillor Clair: Thank you. I can confirm that 275 artists submitted 649 works and also this year it is really good news that 89 children from ages of 11-19, have submitted their 89 works and obviously this is very encouraging.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary Councillor Chaplin?

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I'd like to know how those figures compare to previous years when the open exhibition has been held at a different time of year.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Clair.

Councillor Clair: I would request Councillor Chaplin to please state her question again so I can understand whether you have that information or you need that information.

Lord Mayor: Do you want to ask the question again, is that is what is being asked?

Councillor Chaplin: I would like to know how those figures compare with previous year's figures when the exhibition has been held at a different time of year.

Councillor Clair: I can confirm that this year although entries are a bit low, but at the same time the children category and other categories are higher and obviously from the last year few artists who submitted their works they have not submitted, but an overall increase remains so high and obviously we are happy like I said to you and also said in this Council that after the event we would be more than happy to review that position.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Chaplin do you want to move on to question 5?

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. What plans does the Council have to support the Age UK Bobble Day on 8 February 2013, when councillors, Council staff and volunteers across the country are being asked to raise money for activities to help older people?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you Lord Mayor. I think many members may be unaware as yet of Age UK Bobble Day, but I hope that as a result of that question this evening they will no longer remain puzzled by it. In fact Age UK Bobble Day is a national fund-raising event which is organised by Age UK to raise money to support older people and particularly to support them to keep warm. We are going to be doing our very best to encourage our employees and others to take part in it. There will be an article published in the Face magazine, which is as I think Membes know our in-house magazine, which will go out to staff on 29th January and will be encouraging staff to organise events, raise money and encourage them to realise that it really is an excellent cause. We will actually be sending a separate note to elected members and for local voluntary and community sector groups across the City so that we can raise awareness there as well and of course I do hope that members will feel that there are ways in which they can contribute to make it a successful day.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Chaplin, do you have any supplementary?

Councillor Chaplin: I do. Thank you my Lord Mayor. Thank you City Mayor for replying. I was expecting it to be Assistant Mayor Rita Patel, but it is really heartening to hear that the Council is going to be supporting it and I am already doing my bit. I have knitted some hand knitted wrist bands which I will be selling in support of Bobble Day. But I wonder if the City Mayor would be able to give a commitment that obviously Bobble Day is just one initiative to support lonely older people, and I want to give a commitment to continue to support, particularly our older people's homes, in the next budget to ensure that they are protected as services where older people can come together and there is a centre for older people if they are not living there to also come, so they don't have to be lonely in the winter time and also throughout the year for other activities.

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Can I thank Councillor Chaplin for her comments. Can I just say that on behalf of Councillor Rita Patel, that she has got a very bad attack of tonsillitis and she is not able to be here this evening. I will undertake Lord Mayor to pass on Councillor Chaplin's comments to her and ensure that she has an opportunity to talk directly with her in response.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. We have had apologies from Councillor Porter so questions 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 are out. So speedy recovery. I am going to move straight on to question 11, Councillor Grant.

Councillor Gant: Will the Mayor apologise for how the Council has handled the affairs of the Scout Hut in Thurnby Lodge?

Lord Mayor: You have missed a question, question 11. Move back.

Councillor Grant: Why are the roads so badly affected by snow in Leicester when they appeared not to be on the roads immediately outside the City boundary? I am asking particular about last Friday.

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: I am sure members will forgive me if there is a note of disappointment in my voice. I spent all afternoon in eager anticipation of answering Councillor Porter's questions, and not being able to do so has left me feeling somewhat flat. But I will do my best to respond nonetheless in an appropriate manner to Councillor Grant. The fact is that the main roads in the City were gritted three times in the 24 hours prior to the snowfall on Friday afternoon. They were gritted continuously throughout Friday afternoon and evening and for the rest of the weekend. I am informed that that amounted to an astonishing 240 tonnes of road salt on Friday alone across the primary road network and I understand that this is very similar to the treatment our county colleagues undertook on the equivalent roads beyond the City boundary.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary Councillor Grant?

Councillor Gant: No.

Lord Mayor: We move on then to question 12.

Councillor Grant: Will the Mayor apologise for how the Council has handled the affairs of the Scout Hut in Thurnby Lodge?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Can I thank Councillor Grant for this question since it gives me an opportunity to pay tribute to all of those who helped bring about what is generally accepted as a very reasonable compromise in the discussions about the future of the scout hut and other buildings in that area. It is a compromise which gives all parties an opportunity to meet their legitimate needs. I am particularly grateful to the Councillors for Thurncourt, the Councillors for Humberstone and Hamilton, to Keith Vaz the local MP, who played a fairly crucial role in ensuring that the matter was dealt with in a reasoned and appropriate manner, and also to pay tribute to former Councillors for the part that they paid. First to former Conservative Councillor Jack Allen and also to Labour Councillor Alan Gratrix, because between

the two of them their wise advice and diplomacy helped tremendously to bring this to a satisfactory conclusion. I am grateful to all involved.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary Councillor Gant?

Councillor Gant: Well I am surprised that the City Mayor has turned down the opportunity to apologise and I think that is a shame considering that it took so long to come to a reasonable compromise and as a result there was such a high cost incurred by the police and the public purse generally, there was such serious damage to community cohesion and the reputation of our City, and extremists were given the opportunity to come to our City and to do the damage that they did. So what lessons have been learnt that mean that we will not take so long over such a serious incident in the future, or was there some other political agenda which he thinks was worthwhile delaying such a compromise?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: I would suggest to Councillor Grant that he talks to those that were involved in the discussions that led to the ultimate compromise and the ultimate agreement. I particularly would suggest that he does talk to Councillor Jack Allen who I know will give him some wise advice about the complexity of the issue, the sensitivity of the issues and the way in which, as we address those issues, it was necessary to just to talk and to seek to predetermine the outcome, but to listen to all concerned and to seek with them to find a solution that meets, as I have described them, the very legitimate needs and aspirations of all of those involved. These things do take time. We could have sought to impose something at the beginning. Had we done so, I think we would have been rightly accused of not being sensitive, of not listening and of not doing something that has ultimately, I think, the prospect of producing a solution which is sustainable for all concerned and for all communities concerned.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Barton.

Councillor Barton: Thank you my Lord Mayor. With the opportunities for heritage brought about by the Greyfriars excavation and increased footfall that could to come to the area due to the proposed Jubilee Square, Cathedral Gardens and other improvements to heritage sites in the vicinity, could we look at the feasibility of opening the Guildhall, currently closed for the winter, and other sites with seasonal opening hours, all year round?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Lord Mayor as members will be aware over the period since my election nearly 2 years ago have done a lot to seek to bring back into use particularly to give public access to a number of the important heritage buildings we have in the City, the Castle, Magazine Gateway, Wigston House the most obvious ones, and it is certainly the case and I have expressed this on a number of occasions, that we are enormously fortunate in Leicester to have, despite all the things that happened in the '60s and '70s, such vital buildings that are a part of the proud historic past of this City and the way in which we continue to get access to them, get public use of them is something that is really right at the top of the agenda. It was, in any case, but of course the discovery of a pile of bones in our car park has made it even more important, that we actually use the assets we have got and use them effectively. For those members who have not seen it, if we needed to be reminded of the national and international importance of what has

been found there, I have now got my copy of last Saturday's Wall Street Journal. Now members may think that I buy this to check how my investments are going, but in fact I am delighted to say that the front page, as I think I have mentioned to some members before, does have on the front page of the Wall Street Journal the issue of the discovery of what is they say believed to be the skeleton of Richard III and it does mention Leicester and it does mention some very interesting debate about where those bones are to be interred. I have said on a number of occasions that those bones will be interred in Leicester Cathedral and that they will leave this City over my dead body. That having been said, to return to the question that I have actually been asked, I do believe that there are issues for us about how we use these buildings and the Guildhall is undoubtedly one of them. But I would just return to an issue that is implied in some of the other questions that others have raised this evening, and just say that I do not think that it is always appropriate or necessary to justify public access to these buildings by stuffing them full of artefacts. Particularly by stuffing them full of artefacts that don't belong there. These buildings in the City Centre and the Guildhall happen to have some artefacts in them, but actually buildings like Wigston House or the Castle or the Magazine Gateway are buildings that are important in their own right and actually having them in use, having people having access to them and using them and using them for activities and events is as important in the City Centre as it is in Belgrave Hall.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Barton supplementary? No. Thank you. We will move on then. Councillor Willmott, question 14.

Councillor Willmott: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I am very pleased to hear about buildings worth keeping open in their own right. I could not agree more. But I would like Councillor Clair to inform Council why, after three quarters of a century of being open to the public, he decided to close Belgrave Hall Museum and Gardens? Thank you my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Clair

Councillor Clair: Thank you my Lord Mayor. The changes proposed for Belgrave Hall are not actually closure. On the contrary we are investing it is for the improvement of the facility and we all know that Belgrave Hall looks tired and many rooms are being closed and we focus on the promotion of events and also to have special events and at the same time we want to focus on some income generation and I hope with those 40 events which will be finalised and then for the first year those events will bring more people. If not more, at least we can attract a similar number of people for years to come. I think it is the best course of action for the long term future of Belgrave Hall.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Willmott, supplementary?

Councillor Willmott: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I think the Assistant Mayor Councillor Clair has got a very short memory. I will remind him of a letter he wrote to me on 1st November last year when I asked him if Belgrave Hall would remain open to the public and he says, and I quote from his letter "in this sense you are correct that Belgrave Hall and gardens will no longer be open to the public as they are now". So he has got a rather short memory my Lord Mayor and I am hoping on that basis that he might actually reconsider the closure and say this evening in the light of what the City Mayor has said about opening important historic buildings, and Belgrave Hall and gardens are the only Queen Ann Buildings in the City that was open to the public before it closes, that he will this evening commit to reopening Belgrave Hall in the terms outlined by the City Mayor. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Clair.

Councillor Clair: Yes my Lord Mayor. As Cllr. Willmott has actually mentioned that after three quarters of a century I hope Councillor Willmott knows better than I do when this whole project was bought by the City Council in 1936 that the economic climate and situation at that time of the Council available funds which were totally different from now. After 77 years, in the year 2013, I think we need to think what is the best way we can provide those facilities and also those services to the city of Leicester. We are investing in Belgrave Hall and we are planning those events. I hope with those events there will be more public come through the gate and also like you quote from one letter I sent Cllr. Willmott my Lord Mayor a reply in my e-mail where I sent him all the copy of the report of the scrutiny processes, decision notice and also for the last three or four years visitors' figures, which are on the decline. Now at this moment in time only 16,000 people come through the gate, which is the very lowest of any competitive museum in the City. So I would suggest my Lord Mayor that the action we are proposing is the right one. I think that it will actually make Belgrave Hall sustainable for the long term future and we are encouraging to have local voluntary groups if they actually form that then obviously we can manage to open even longer and have more events with the help of the volunteers and obviously if Councillor Willmott is keen because he lives just a few yards away he can have the key and he may want to do that.

Councillor Willmott: I am quite happy to take you up on that offer my Lord Mayor. I look forward to collecting the key later on.

Lord Mayor: We will move on. Councillor Cole.

Councillor Cole: Please can the Deputy City Mayor give an update on the appalling situation that exists at Westcotes Health Centre where there has not been any permanent doctors for several months?

Lord Mayor: Deputy City Mayor.

Deputy City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Thank you Councillor Cole for his question. As I updated at Council in November an interim provider to cover the practice on the 1st October and I hope that that provided an improvement to the situation and has allowed the continuity of care for patients. A full procurement exercise is now underway to secure a new permanent long term provider to take on the running of the practice. Today is the actually the deadline for those interested to have expressed an interest in taking on that contract and in due course a report will go to the PCT Board making a recommendation on the preferred provider.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Cole, supplementary?

Councillor Cole: I wonder if the Deputy City Mayor has any idea if there have been many takers on it?

Lord Mayor: Deputy City Mayor.

Deputy City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I am not aware of the numbers, but the deadline was 5pm today for organisations to express an interest. What I have asked officers and NHS colleagues to arrange is that at an appropriate point in the procurement process, is that there will be an opportunity for interested Ward Councillors in the area to have a look at what different organisations have

presented in terms of their offer to take on the running of this practice. I do want to thank those Councillors who have taken up concerns of patients and constituents in relation to the Westcotes Health Centre problems.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Cole, question 16.

Councillor Cole: Thank you Lord Mayor. I wonder if the City Mayor could say whether there are any plans to bring 20 mph speed limits to Western Park Ward? Because of rat runs in the Ward, the lives of children and their parents are put at risk in the morning.

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you Lord Mayor. I know that it is true of all members in this chamber that encouraging people, and particularly children, to walk and cycle and to do so in a safe environment is right at the top of our priorities when we look at neighbourhoods across the City. It was with that in mind that the Deputy City Mayor confirmed a programme of new 20 mph zones across the City to be implemented during this and the next two years and that was made in June of last year. The programme has 9 new 20 mph zones based on areas around schools and where there has been personal injury accidents. In fact, the roads in Western Park were not part of the ones that we announced at that stage, but I have had a very powerful case by Councillor Cole and by Councillor Barton made on behalf of Western Park and indeed had a very powerful case made on behalf of Eyres Monsell by the Deputy Mayor and his co-councillors and others in that part of the City. But I think that what this leads me to conclude is that we ought to press ahead with those already announced and also to be looking at others and indeed seeing whether there are other members who feel that their areas should be given a high priority and perhaps to look to see whether we can indeed accelerate the programme such that, if it is possible to extend what are undoubtedly measures that bring about safety in particular residential areas to a wider area of the City. So I will certainly take very careful note of the point that has been made about Western Park. The case has been made for Eyres Monsell and particularly I have also had my arm metaphorically twisted by Councillor Cleaver on this issue to make sure that we do actually respond where there are cases being made.

Lord Mayor: Any supplemental question Councillor Cole? OK. Thank you.

REPORTS OF EXECUTIVE

Treasury Strategy 2013/14 to 2015/16

The City Mayor submitted a report which sought to establish the strategy for the Council's borrowing and investments during 2013/14.

The meeting also noted the minute extract from the meeting of the Overview Select Committee held on 17 January 2013 which was attached to the meeting papers.

Moved by Councillor Cassidy, seconded by Councillor Joshi and carried:-

36. That Council approve the Treasury Strategy 2013/14 to 2015/16.

Council Tax – Taxbase and Empty Property Discounts

The City Mayor submitted a report regarding the setting of a 'taxbase' by the Council and determination of the level of discounts.

Moved by the City Mayor, seconded by Deputy City Mayor and carried:-

37. That Council:

1. Endorse a taxbase for 2013/14 of 62,070 properties expressed as the equivalent number of "Band D" properties;
2. Approve the level of discounts as recommended in section 3.9 of the report submitted to Council.

Council Tax Reduction (Local) Scheme – Scheme Options

The City Mayor submitted a report outlining details of scheme proposals to enable the Council to adopt a Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Moved by Councillor Russell, seconded by Deputy City Mayor and carried:

38. That Council

1. Approve the adoption of the Localisation of Council Tax Reduction Scheme proposals as detailed in Scheme One (details given at paragraph 4.18, page 5) of the report submitted to Council excluding removal of backdating
2. Approve a £315,000 fund (detailed at paragraph 4.16 page 9 of the report submitted to Council) for the Council Tax discretionary relief fund (also known as Section 13A within the Local Government Finance Act) to financially assist the most vulnerable individuals in the City against the adverse impacts these groups may face following the introduction of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Objection to Decision

Gypsy and Traveller Sites in and around Leicester

Having declared an 'Other Disclosable Interest' in the item as a member of the Planning & Development Control Committee Councillors Kitterick, Choudhury, Moore, Mayat, Joshi, Fonseca, Desai and Shelton left the Chamber for the duration of the debate.

Having declared an 'Other Disclosable Interest' in the item as her partner worked for the Council in a team that had been involved with issues relating to the matter Councillor Senior withdrew from the meeting for the duration of the debate.

In accordance with Rule 12 of the City Mayor and Executive Procedure Rules, Councillors Westley (Proposer), Byrne (Seconder), Meghani, Dempster and Bhavsar had objected to the decision of the City Mayor of 7 January 2013.

The submitted grounds for objection were:

“that the residents of Beaumont Leys and Abbey Wards have raised a number of concerns that lead us to believe that the decision should be reconsidered.”

A copy of the report and background information considered by the City Mayor and the subsequent decision notice had been circulated, along with a minute extract from the meeting of the Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Commission on 16 January 2013 which had considered the Call In.

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

39. That, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 22 [which provides for speeches of up to 15 minutes], a single extension of time of 10 minutes be granted for the City Mayor’s speech

Moved by Councillor Westley, seconded by Councillor Grant and carried:

40. That, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 22 [which provides for speeches of up to 15 minutes], a single extension of time of 10 minutes be granted for the speech of Councillor Westley.

Moved by the City Mayor, seconded by Councillor Waddington:

That Council endorse the decision taken by the City Mayor on the matter.

AN AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Westley, seconded by Councillor Bhavsar

That the decision taken by the City Mayor with regard to Gypsy and Traveller sites be reconsidered and that these proposals be looked at again in line with his statement to the press which would include privately owned land as well as public.

The Lord Mayor put the amendment to the vote and declared it lost.

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

- 41 That Council endorse the decision taken by the City Mayor on the matter.

REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

Councillor Westley, Chair of Audit and Risk Committee updated Council on the work of the Audit and Risk Committee for the financial year 2011-12.

Moved by Councillor Westley, seconded by Councillor Potter and carried:

42. That Council receive the report.

EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES

Moved by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Kitterick and carried:

43. That Councillor Ross Willmott be appointed as Chair of Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission.

Changes to the Executive

The City Mayor notified Council that Councillor Connelly had joined the Executive with responsibility for housing matters and thanked him for taking up the post. The City Mayor also formally thanked Councillor Dawood who had moved on from the Executive for personal reasons for the considerable burden he had borne and difficult issues he had faced as a member of the Executive.

NOTICES OF MOTION

No Notices of Motion were received.

ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There was no other urgent business.

The Lord Mayor declared the meeting closed at 8.25pm.

