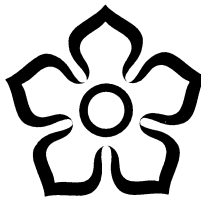


Thursday, 21 November 2013



Leicester
City Council

At a meeting of the LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL held at the Town Hall at FOURTEEN MINUTES PAST FIVE O'CLOCK in the afternoon on Thursday, 21 NOVEMBER 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 Members of the Public
 - Presented by Councillors
5. **REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE**
 - 5.1 Corporate Parenting Annual Report
6. **QUESTIONS**
 - From Councillors
7. **REPORTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**
 - 7.1 Annual Report of the Audit & Risk Committee to Council for the Municipal Year 2012-13
 - 7.2 Standards Committee Annual Report
 - 7.3 Elected Member Absence from Meetings
8. **EXECUTIVE & COMMITTEES –**
To note any changes to the Executive. To vary the composition and fill any vacancies of any Committee of Council.
 - 8.1 Appointment of Vice Chair – Audit & Risk Committee
9. **NOTICES OF MOTION**

10. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

PRESENT:

MUSTAFA KAMAL, LORD MAYOR
CHAIRMAN

Abbey Ward

HARSHAD DAHYABHAI BHAVSAR
ANNETTE BYRNE
VIJAY SINGH RIYAIT

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

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

Castle Ward

NEIL CLAYTON
PATRICK JOSEPH KITTERICK
LYNN SENIOR

Rushey Mead Ward

CULDIPP SINGH BHATTI
PIARA SINGH CLAIR

Charnwood Ward

PAUL DARREN NEWCOMBE
ABDUL RAZAK OSMAN

Spinney Hills Ward

MOHAMMED DAWOOD

Coleman Ward

MIAN MOHAMMED MAYAT
DEBORAH SANGSTER

Stoneygate Ward

LUCY CHAPLIN
IQBAL ALIBHAI DESAI

Evington Ward

DEEPAK BAJAJ
BALJIT SINGH

Eyres Monsell Ward

VIRGINIA CLEAVER
RORY PALMER

Fosse Ward

TED CASSIDY
SUSAN WADDINGTON

Thurncourt Ward

LUIS FONSECA

Westcotes Ward

ANDREW IAN CONNELLY
SARAH CHRISTINE RUSSELL

Western Park Ward

DR SUSAN BARTON
GEORGE COLE

LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Lord Mayor was pleased to inform Council that a number of looked after children and young people were at the meeting. The Lord Mayor stated that he would therefore take item 6.1 on the agenda, Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2012 / 13 immediately after the Petitions item.

INTERFAITH WEEK

The Lord Mayor reminded Council that it was Interfaith Week and called Councillor Gugnani who gave an update on the activities undertaken including the display in the High Cross.

The Lord Mayor and Councillor Moore congratulated Councillor Gugnani on what was his maiden speech.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor Potter declared an other disclosable interest in item 6.1 on the agenda, Corporate Parenting Annual report as a former looked after child.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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

23. That the minutes of the Meeting of Council, held on 19 September 2013, 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 MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Ms Calvert presented a petition with 31 signatures in the following terms:

"We the residents of Eileen / Egerton Avenues petition the Leicester City Council to introduce double yellow lines on the junction of Eileen Avenue and Egerton Avenue. Vehicles are being dangerously parked at this junction. Eileen Avenue is a narrow street and with vehicles parked at the junction makes turning into and out of Eileen Avenue very difficult. This also makes visibility extremely poor making 'near hits' a regular occurrence. Garbage collection trucks and home delivery vans have even greater difficulties at this junction. It would be a tragedy if a Fire rescue truck were to get delayed due to the 'senseless' parking."

"We the undersigned sternly request that double yellow lines be introduced at this junction as soon as possible."

PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Councillor Dr Chowdhury presented a petition with 399 signatures in the following terms:

“We the undersigned request the City Council and Leicestershire Police to take action to stop anti-social behaviour on Vulcan Street.”

Councillor Bajaj presented a petition with 265 signatures in the following terms:

“We the undersigned declare that the proposed traffic calming measures on Headland Road are vital in ensuring the safety of local school children. That Leicester City Council should implement the measures including the 20 mile per hour speed limit without delay and not wait to review the proposals in the next designated review of traffic calming measures.”

The Lord Mayor stated that under Council Procedure Rule 13h the aforementioned petitions would be referred to the Monitoring Officer for consideration and action as appropriate.

QUESTIONS

Question 1 – Councillor Waddington: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I have a question for Councillor Connolly. “Is the Assistant Mayor for Housing aware that a small terraced house in my Ward is being used by Stonham Bass, supported by the Department of Justice, to house tagged offenders and those going through the criminal justice system, and that this has caused considerable problems and concerns for the neighbouring residents in Woodgate, which include vulnerable people living nearby?”

Lord Mayor: Councillor Connolly.

Councillor Connolly: My thanks to Councillor Waddington for the question. I am aware of the difficulties that her constituents are having and in particular one of the next door neighbours of a particular property, and despite the best endeavours of both Councillor Waddington and Councillor Cassidy, I am disappointed to hear that those problems continue. So, yes I am aware of the difficulties. Thank you Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Waddington do you have any supplementary question?

Councillor Waddington: Yes can I say that I am pleased that Councillor Connolly is aware because I have written to him about this on several occasions without getting a response so I am hoping that he will agree that the questions I am asking today will enable us to move forward.

Lord Mayor: Do you want to respond to that supplementary Councillor Connolly?

Councillor Connolly: In respect of Councillor Waddington’s supplementary, I am hoping that obviously from this evening we can move this issue forward.

Question 2 – Councillor Waddington: “Can the Assistant Mayor for Housing explain why Housing Officers, when consulted about the use of this house for this purpose, raised no objections and did not carry out a full impact assessment or

consult with Ward Councillors?”

Lord Mayor: Councillor Connolly.

Councillor Connolly: Thank you Lord Mayor. In response to the question from Councillor Waddington, the second question, in respect of the use of the property, it is governed by a local government agreement agreed between the Local Government Association and the Ministry of Justice and it is quite limited in its application. In respect of who they consult with, when identifying a property that is going to be used for the bail accommodation support service they consult with the police, they consult with the probation service and they consult with the local authority. In respect of the local authority they consult Housing and they also consult with Community Safety. The police and probation have no objection to the use of this property and the Housing officer consulted with her colleagues in community safety and in private housing sector and they had no objections. The difficulty is, and it is a problem in my view with the agreement, is that the agreement says what we are expected to carry out is what's known as a 'post code check' and it says in the agreement the post code check will focus solely on asking for location if the property is fit for purpose and furthermore it is only after the property has been identified that once a final inspection has taken place Stonham then notified the local MP and also then contact the neighbours. The difficulty is in respect of the agreement and the protocol, is that effectively it does not allow us to carry out a full impact assessment that we would like because in order to do that we would obviously need to inform the neighbours of what is being proposed for the particular property and that is a difficulty. In respect of the failure to liaise with local Ward Councillors – this process occurred in October 2012 and I have confirmed that at the time the Assistant Mayor for Housing which was Councillor Dawood, was not consulted. I am aware that the local Ward Councillors were not consulted. I have now insisted that whoever is the Assistant Mayor for Housing they are consulted in future and also the Ward Councillors are consulted in future. The difficulty is in respect of the protocol, we can inform the Ward Councillors but the difficulty is the issue about then as Ward Councillors how do you then consult with local residents without identifying what the property is going to be used for. So there are problems with the agreement and the protocol.

Lord Mayor: Do you wish to ask any supplementary question Councillor Waddington?

Councillor Waddington: Yes, the answer is long and complex but if I understand what is being said correctly, the Housing officers simply looked up the post code and did not undertake any analysis of the impact because they could not or are not permitted to consult with the neighbours. However, the neighbours who are vulnerable people, children, single parents and a very elderly person, are known to the City Council and evidence that they use Council services and therefore they would already be known to the Council, they would not have to have their doors knocked on to be consulted. In addition the post code would indicate that this house is adjacent to an adventure playground which hardly seems an appropriate location. Having asked that question I would ask councillor Connolly to ensure that within the restrictions that exist his officers undertake as many checks as possible within the powers currently allowed to them to make sure that further properties that are designated for this use are properly researched so that other residents in other parts of the City can be assured that their interests are taken into account when Stonham or any other organisation is planning to establish a house of this kind.

Councillor Connolly: My thanks to Councillor Waddington for her supplementary.

I don't disagree with what she is saying. I think there are some difficulties in respect of what is expected of the Housing Officer in this particular instance. I have absolutely no doubt that there are lessons to be learnt from that. I will say, I suppose my overall concern in respect of the local government agreement and the protocol is that there are many paragraphs in respect of protection of the offender, unfortunately very little in terms of protection of those in the wider community.

Question 3 - Councillor Waddington: Thank you my Lord Mayor. "Does the Assistant Mayor for Housing agree with Councillor Cassidy and myself that this house is unsuitable for the purpose of housing unsupervised offenders and that the Department of Justice should be asked by the City Council to cease using it for this purpose and to move their operations to a more suitable location as soon as possible and at the very latest by the end of the current two year contract?"

Lord Mayor: Councillor Connolly.

Councillor Connolly: Simple response to that question is yes and I will be asking the Head of Housing to write to Stonham and the Ministry of Justice tomorrow in order to do this. The difficulty is of course we don't licence or authorise the premises, but I do think in light of the difficulties then the only proper thing would be to ask the Ministry of Justice and Stonham Bass to recognise the problems that have been caused by the use of this property and they should stop using it as soon as possible. In respect of the people housed there, they are housed there for relatively short periods so therefore I would not see that as being a problem in respect of when the property becomes vacant again to simply stop using it for this purpose.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Waddington do you have a supplementary question?

Councillor Waddington: Can I just say thank you to Councillor Connolly for agreeing to get this letter sent off and I would be very pleased and grateful if I could see a copy of it so that my constituents could be assured that we are taking this extremely seriously.

Councillor Connolly: I see no difficulty with that request and I will ensure that both Councillor Waddington and Councillor Cassidy and the local MP are aware of the letter.

Question 4 – Councillor Riyait: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I would like to ask the following question on behalf of the Abbey and Beaumont Leys Councillors. "Given the two new permanent traveller and gypsy sites have been given planning permission, how will the remaining shortfall in provision be met?"

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Councillors will recall that the proposals for these particular sites were made in January this year following very long and extensive and wide ranging consultation. It is perhaps just worth reminding Members because although the Planning Development Control Committee of the Council has given approval to these, they have not yet received their final planning approval, it is a matter subject to call-in should the Secretary of State choose to do so. I would just remind Members that when I put forward these particular proposals for these sites back in January I said, and I will quote what I said at the time "If approved by the Planning Committee they would still fall a significant way short of the immediate and anticipated needs and would be most unlikely by themselves to

relieve all the issues of unauthorised encampments, however, I also recognise, (this is the bit I want to stress), that any further proposed sites will also need to be subject to public consultation” and that remains the case today.

Lord Mayor: Any supplementary question Councillor Riyait? If not next question please.

Question 5 – Councillor Riyait: “Have Framework Housing Association any experience in managing traveller and gypsy sites?”

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor, I am informed that Framework has a total programme of 90 permanent pitches across Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire to deliver through funding allocated to them by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). Their organisation will be known to quite a number of members as having a long history of providing and managing hostels for the most part for homeless people and it is the view of officers that the robust management required at such hostels is seen as transferrable for the robust management that is required for gypsy and traveller sites.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary question Councillor Riyait?

Councillor Riyait: I would like to ask the City Mayor whether the agreement between the Framework Housing Association and the City Council has actually been signed?

City Mayor: I am afraid my Lord Mayor I would need to have notes of that, I would expect that there are various levels of agreement associated with this, but I would just come back to my initial response which was that essentially the Framework Housing Association are chosen for this purpose by the Homes and Communities Agency, a government agency, they are seen by the HCA as effectively a preferred organisation for these purposes and it is as a result of that that we are working closely with them. I have no doubt that there will be agreements associated with the arrangements but I will undertake to let Councillor Riyait and indeed the other Councillors on whose behalf he is speaking, know precisely where we are at with regard to those issues.

Question 6 – Councillor Riyait: Thank you my Lord Mayor. “Can the City Mayor state when the Adult Social Care Commission will be set up?”

City Mayor: Yes, thank you my Lord Mayor. The Commission is intended to be set up early in the New Year. As I think Members are aware Councillor Patel has suffered some ill-health over the last couple of weeks and has taken a bit of time off, but she is very much recovering from that. But she has assured me that as relates to Council this evening a determination to get on with this and as quickly as she can.

Question 7 – Councillor Clarke: Thank you very much my Lord Mayor. “Does the City of Culture experience signal a new era of partnership in the delivery of cultural services in the City, districts and county?”

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor, I am not sure to what extent it signals it but it is certainly symptomatic of it, because actually there has been in recent times a very significant recognition by the District and the County beyond their boundaries that they and the City are interdependent in many respects. Our economies are interdependent, our boundaries, virtually invisible to those who don't actually know

them in detail, across those boundaries many people coming into the City to shop, to work and indeed many people from the City moving in the other direction for leisure, for recreation to visit Bradgate Park and many of the other delightful parts of our county so we are interlinked. But with regard to the City of Culture I think we have had an opportunity to build on that newfound recognition, and I have been absolutely delighted by the extent to which, across the geographic, and indeed the political separation that there is between the two, there has been a sense of collaboration that has been really very refreshing and very exciting. I am going to say a little bit more about the City of Culture in a few moments my Lord Mayor in response to another question, but just in response to this particular one, that collaboration between the City and County has been symptomatic of a wider collaboration with regards to the City of Culture that does suggest a very clear focus in the City and the County on what unites us and how together we need to project ourselves not just across the rest of the UK but also internationally.

City Mayor: Do you have a supplementary Councillor Clarke?

Councillor Clarke: I do and I thank you Lord Mayor and the City Mayor for answering the initial question. But I would like to know as part of our commitment to doing 2017 sooner which was announced straight after the announcement of Hull's success, would the City Mayor be open to looking at developing ways in which the County might support the cultural excellence of say, for example, Curve and Phoenix Square and in return the City might support sustainability of, say, Bosworth Battle Field and the brilliant Snibston Discovery Museum that we in this chamber, and many of us I am sure enjoy and many children and families enjoy in the City throughout the year.

City Mayor: Yes I think it is undoubtedly the case that taking the two examples that Councillor Clarke gave of Bosworth and Snibston that we do have opportunities to continue to collaborate. With regard to Bosworth of course the discovery of Richard III within our city boundary reminds us that of course that he suffered his defeat and death outside the City boundary at Bosworth and we have a lot to gain from working together on that. Similarly, I have recently revisited Snibston myself and was reminded just how much of the City's industrial heritage is actually on display in Snibston or installed by the County on our behalf. I did take the opportunity, after, to talk with our officers about the ways in which we collaborate with the County demonstrating that those artefacts on industrial heritage and ways in which we can continue to ensure, whether it is Snibston or in the City, that we can actually celebrate, not just what the City is today, but also what made it the industrial power that it was in the late 19th-20th century.

Question 8 – Councillor Clarke: Thank you my Lord Mayor. “Does Assistant Mayor Clair agree that despite many recent improvements and a wealth of green space, that children and young people and families in Aylestone are still poorly served compared with most of the City in terms of play facilities?”

Councillor Clair: Thank you my Lord Mayor and Councillor Clarke for asking this question. I can just now say that the Council adopted green space strategy which identifies that Aylestone Ward is deficient in children's play facilities. However, there are also other Wards within the City that show a similar or even greater deficiency in play facilities and green spaces. Officers in Park and Green spaces are currently working on a proposal to improve some of the existing play areas in Aylestone Ward, however, the centre of the Ward which actually has greater need and greater deficiency. My Lord Mayor, I thank you for Councillor Clarke the way in which he has shown trust and enthusiasm and organised meeting with officers

which I attended and officer went through all these mapping exercises what are the possibilities, where the existing play facilities are and how they can improve that and to my understanding there has been some investment and new equipment and also they have sent you new designs and photographic sort of images of those new play equipment that can be possibly installed in your Ward. But unfortunately the opportunity to create new play area are extremely limited and lack of suitable green space which you have actually acknowledged yourself and shared those views with officer, but there will be an opportunity, officers will actually liaise with you if any future opportunity arises.

Lord Mayor: Any supplementary Councillor Clarke?

Councillor Clarke: I will indulge. Thank you my Lord Mayor. I am really very grateful to Councillor Clair and the time he has given to this issue. Would you and officers meet with me again to discuss specifically a new funding stream that has come through via the Heritage Lottery Fund, NESTA and the big lottery which is providing £100,000 grants for parks of the City and I think Aylestone is somewhere that would certainly qualify for that. Would you meet with me and officers to discuss the potential for putting in a bid for that funding?

Councillor Clair: Thank you Lord Mayor. I took that actual opportunity to discuss with officers when we met. They did talk about those opportunities but obviously they will be more than happy to meet with yourself and I can be present at those meetings to see how we can explore those possibilities.

Question 9 – Councillor Singh: Thank you Lord Mayor. “Would the City Mayor join me in congratulating the work of Evington in Bloom in bringing success to the City’s Evington Ward for the second year running, in the East Midlands in Bloom Competition and note that the East Midlands organisers are recommending Evington as the only urban City Ward to compete in the prestigious Britain in Bloom 2014 competition?”

Councillor Clair: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Again I thank you for Councillor Baljit Singh asking me this question. Britain in Bloom group has done exceptionally well in achieving a silver award in only their second year of entering into the competition. I also acknowledge the hard work of both Ward Councillors – Councillor Bajaj and Councillor Baljit Singh for the way in which they are involved and meet with local groups and encourage them to actually participate in such local projects. Evington Group has accepted the prestigious opportunity to be the only urban community entered to the East Midland in Bloom National Horticultural Society Britain in Bloom for 2014. I wholeheartedly agree with Councillor Singh that I share those sentiments and do extend my congratulations on behalf of the Council and thank you for those volunteers who have been involved in that. I wish that this good work is continued for years to come.

Lord Mayor: A supplementary?

Councillor Singh: Yes my Lord Mayor I do. Would the Assistant Mayor also be the City Council’s stake via the involvement of park services would be intrinsic to that effort and the existing partnerships would mean the Friends of Evington, through the Evington in Bloom will continue in to the planning process of this and future events because I think that is absolutely intrinsic to their success.

Councillor Clair: Thank you my Lord Mayor. As Councillor Singh is aware of the fact that we are running a few projects, one of which is “it is your neighbourhood”

and another one is “grow your grubs”. I am honoured to be going to a few schools this year to actually share those good work which primary school children do throughout the City and also local pensioner and community groups actually get involved to enhance their neighbourhood in the area like even Evington and many others and I am going tomorrow morning to one of the schools to join children who have actually grown sunflowers and one of the best sunflowers was 2.5 kilogrammes which one of the 10 year old child who actually done all that good work himself. On top of that even those officers who worked with parks via our scheme of green flags actually small team waste in the Evington House and Evington Park in your Ward so you can actually liaise with them and they will be happy to work with you.

Question 10 – Councillor Singh: Thank you my Lord Mayor. “Would the Assistant Mayor Dempster tell me how many student tutorial organisations and groups are operating in the City and if those organisations and groups are operating in compliance with local and statutory regulations?”

Lord Mayor: Councillor Dempster.

Councillor Dempster: Thank you Lord Mayor. I would like to thank Councillor Singh for the question as it raises the profile of what is a very important issue. Tutoring activities are provided by a wide range of organisations from private providers, voluntary community groups, private individuals who offering tutoring. Unlike other education providers such as schools and colleges and nurseries the local authority has no statutory monitoring or regulatory functions in relation to the wide range tutorial services that are offered by that range of providers. So we hold no register, no definitive list. Now clearly if we are alerted to a particular safeguarding issue, our safeguarding unit would respond, but I think it is very, very important that parents are aware that they need to satisfy themselves if their young person is attending an organisation without the parent, carer or an adult with them, that they need to check is this an organisation that has appropriate safeguarding policies in place.

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

Councillor Singh: Yes my Lord Mayor I do. I am very grateful for the answers. It does raise some very important questions, particularly as you say safeguarding and I seem to think that here we have a collective responsibility whether it is young, elderly or vulnerable people. I am a little bit perplexed with regards to the issue here now because it could become quite complex, as it happened in the north of the country, could the Council be seen to be complicit then if a situation arose because the organisations and our groups that are running these after care student tutorial services somehow fall foul of some situation and incident which may involve children and what would the Council’s position be in that regard if there is no voluntary registration and if there is no information out there to inform parents of the duty that is imposed on them to do their own self checks. Thank you.

Councillor Dempster: Thank you for that. I agree with you and I think it is a very significant issue and I think that many parents already do if their child is going to go somewhere without them or an appropriate adult that is known to them, I think many parents do try to look at safeguarding policies, but I take the point and I think that it is something that it would be good to do in terms of reminding parents and perhaps we could look at opportunities that we can use particularly throughout schools to get that message out.

Question 11 – Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. “Does the Assistant Mayor support joint work of the three community groups broadly representing residents and groups in the Evington Road area of the Stoneygate Ward – that is MKA, ERNA and HART – to find a place for a community centre for all in the Stoneygate Ward and will the Council continue to advise and work with those groups?”

Lord Mayor: Councillor Russell.

Councillor Russell: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I would be absolutely delighted to continue to work with the three groups and want to pay tribute to how they have come together, they have worked with the local community, with the support of their Ward Councillors to look at what opportunities are available, how they can use government legislation to help them in their quests but also how they can use some of the organisations that are out there to support local groups when they are trying to move forward projects such as this. It has been a pleasure to work with them and I am very happy to continue to do so.

Lord Mayor: Any supplementary Councillor Chaplin?

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Just to add to that if there could also be some support given to helping them find ways of communicating and integrating with the new communities, traditionally that area of Highfields is a place where a lot of new communities come to when they first arrive in Leicester, and they really would appreciate some extra help with doing that if that could be agreed.

Councillor Russell: Thank you my Lord Mayor. It is a really interesting point and a couple of weeks ago I was visiting the Somali Development Centre who are very close by and do a lot of work, not only with the new Somali community, but who also work with the Slovakian Community who have established themselves within the area. There are a lot of opportunities for groups to work in communities and a lot of lessons I think we can work as a Council about some of the best practice of how you can work with new communities. There is a very similar situation in my own Ward and I am very happy for you to meet together to discuss what opportunities there are to help new communities settle and find their homes in Leicester as quickly as possible and access services.

Question 12 – Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. “Can I ask the Deputy City Mayor what actions he has taken, what involvement he has had in developing the winter care plan for the City in 2013/14?”

Lord Mayor: Councillor Palmer.

Councillor Palmer: Thank you my Lord Mayor. The winter care plan is a partnership plan, the City Council is an active partner in ensuring that people continue to receive important services during what can be challenging winter months. In terms of my own involvement I have been briefed regularly on different elements of that plan and different services which contribute to it as Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, at two of the three Health and Wellbeing Board meetings since April I have insisted on presentations and updates and discussion on the situation at UHL around urgent care which is obviously a key and fundamental part of winter planning and service arrangements for that time of year. I also took the somewhat unprecedented step of asking to attend meetings of the Urgent Care Board which is the partnership board charged by the Department of Health nationally to oversee the implementation of the winter plan given the

challenges around A&E in Leicester in recent months, I asked to attend those board meetings which are largely operational to ensure we were represented at the highest level and are taking, rightly a leading and active part in those discussions.

Lord Mayor: Any supplementary Councillor Chaplin?

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Deputy Mayor you are obviously aware that I Chaired recently a Joint Commission of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny and the Health Scrutiny to look at the winter care plan and obviously you came and gave evidence to that and without wishing to pre-empt the report it is likely that one of the recommendations could be that all Council proposals and reports will have a section whereby the implications for winter care planning in the future would need to be addressed as part of every decision, so in the absence of Councillor Patel, can I ask him if he would give a commitment to considering that winter care planning and the impact of it in future decisions that are made particularly around the meals on wheels service and the lifeline care alarm system for older people, how that might impact on the winter care plans in the future.

Councillor Palmer: Thank you my Lord Mayor. As Councillor Chaplin has said, and I look forward to seeing the recommendations and conclusions of that review and obviously will give full consideration to those conclusions, in terms of Council policy and decisions that have been considered in the context of the winter plan, I would suggest it is a case that those policy decisions and those indeed operational decisions as well that are relevant to the winter care plan to pay due regard to it and the importance of sustaining all services through the winter months. If there is a suggestion that that is not the case in parts of the Council then obviously we would expect to see that in your report. I would not believe that to be the case from the work I have been involved in and the services that I am responsible for. In terms of making it a formal requirement of all Council papers, reports and decisions, if I am honest I am not sure that would add a lot of value to the process and might actually deter from giving due regard where it is necessary. The other thing to bear in mind as well of course is that the winter plan is exactly what it says it is about preparing for winter. There are other weather events which can also present challenges to important services as well, not least heat waves and hot summers which present very different challenges. So I think we have services which respond to extreme weather events all through the year and we have regard to those extreme weather events when planning services and taking decisions.

Question 13 – Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. “Can I ask the Deputy Mayor what actions the Council has taken to raise awareness of female genital mutilation and to help girls and women who have suffered this appalling violation?”

Councillor Sood: Thank you Lord Mayor and Councillor Chaplin for the question. My Lord Mayor the Council has recently commissioned three new specialist services for people affected by sexual violence or abuse within the City and this includes women who have experienced or could experience female genital mutilation. A new service will provide integrated services which will cater for all people and one of the commissions that service providers will see which is working with Rev. Bonny Fields the integrated faith adviser to the Bishop of Leicester on developing a women’s working group in the City which as part of this work will address the issue of FGM and we are also working with other local community organisations on raising awareness and they delivered a presentation to front line health professionals to raise awareness about FGM and FGM is also a safeguarding issue for both adults and children and my Lord Mayor next week there

is a safeguarding conference in the City. There will be a dedicated workshop on FGM delivered by the University of Leicester and Lord Mayor on 30th September at LGBT Centre a working group was set up and the Home Office is very keen to work with Leicester City and on this working group we have a school nurse, the Bishop's interfaith adviser, representatives from different organisations, NSPCC because they are getting some referrals and we are going to provide front line training services to all the professionals and the link to different agencies is established and there is a plan to have a zero tolerance date for FGM. Provisionally at the moment it is 6th February, but when it is confirmed I will let Councillor Chaplin know.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Chaplin do you have a supplementary question?

Councillor Chaplin: No.

Question 14 – Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. “Would the Assistant Mayor give an assurance that a review of the London Road/Granby Street cumulative impact zone will start at the very earliest opportunity?”

Lord Mayor: Councillor Russell.

Councillor Russell. Thank you my Lord Mayor. Yes I can.

Lord Mayor: Any supplementary please?

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you for that succinct answer. When that does happen will you also give an assurance that the views of the residents and the difference that the cumulative impact zone about the number of off licenses and opportunities to buy alcohol as off sales is taken into account about how it has changed their lives so they actually get a chance to be part of that and also to consider extending the zone down Evington Road due to ongoing problems down there.

Councillor Russell: Thank you my Lord Mayor. The review will involve consultation with local residents, Ward Councillors, existing licence holders and agencies involved in dealing with problems caused by street drinking, and we will look to not only cover the London Road area but also Evington Road because we are aware that a number of problems have begun to extend into that area as well and we will obviously ensure that everybody has the fullest opportunity to be involved in that consultation.

Question 15 – Councillor Barton: Thank you my Lord Mayor. “Could the Mayor and Council join me in congratulating the City of Culture bid team on an excellent submission to the DCMS Mayor and thank them for their superb effort on Leicester's behalf showcasing the wealth of culture, heritage and talent in the City?”

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. My thanks to Councillor Barton and I am delighted to have this opportunity to do just as she asks and to thank all of those involved on what was really a very amazing effort to demonstrate all that we have in Leicester and to be proud of and to showcase it. I want to take this opportunity actually to say a few particular thanks. First to thank all of those Members in the Chamber who gave their support to the bid. Councillor Barton is amongst them but there were many others here as well who gave tremendous amount of encouragement to support us in the bid. Councillor Cassidy was amongst the very first to try to persuade me and others that it was worth going for. I really do

appreciate all of that support and all the work that was done. To pay tribute to some brilliant officers in the Council who led on this, they really were quite amazing in the way in which they acted as a catalyst and enthused others to get behind the bid and of course all those from so many different parts of communities who helped to make the bid so incredibly exciting and use their expertise, their enthusiasm and their creative energy to put together something that was not just credible but really was, I believe, a bid that we deserved to win. I heard the Chair of the judging panel talk about the decision making process and I heard him describe Hull as a City that needs to come out of the shadows. Well obviously I do genuinely wish Hull very well with this I really do and they clearly have put together a very strong bid and I do hope it brings about the sort of regeneration that they wanted to get from it. But I have to say it would be difficult to describe Leicester as a City that needs to come out of the shadows, we are actually pretty good at projecting ourselves and nobody would say we were hidden away in a corner, and perhaps that may be the key issue behind the way in which the decision went in their direction rather than ours. I am not knocking Hull because I do recognise that they have obviously put a lot of work into their bid, a lot of energy and enthusiasm for that and I think they will have opportunity to make a lot of the title. But I think, as I was saying yesterday immediately after the announcement, we have got a tremendous amount of momentum behind this bid, tremendous amount of enthusiasm and a tremendous amount of expectation of our City now and self confidence in our city and we must not lose any of those things as a result of this. I talked about how we take this forward, I have been enormously encouraged by a letter that I have received today, and I have actually received a lot of messages of support saying we must not stop here and we must go forward and we must not let it be any more than a disappointment, it must not be a setback. But I have had this letter today Lord Mayor from the Chair of the Arts Council, Sir Peter Bazalgette who came recently to visit us in Leicester and it is quite brief and with your permission my Lord Mayor I would just like to read it to Council: "I just wanted to write to say that despite your disappointment, we (that's the Arts Council) want to continue to partner with you as you develop your ambitious plans for arts and culture in Leicester. Like you we fervently believe in the power of arts and culture to change a place for the better. With best wishes". Now that is, I think, an indication that it was not just the judges we managed to impress as part of putting this bid forward, but it was others who actually I think can help us now deliver. So plan B. I have described it as better, bolder and brighter. That is plan B. But of course what we are also free from is the time constraints of the City of Culture, because not only can we do it better, bolder and brighter, we can do it sooner. We don't have to wait; don't have to be constrained by the City of Culture timetable. So I am very much looking forward to working with all of those who made this bid look amazing to make sure that we do take all of the momentum, all of the opportunity and make an enormous success of plan B. Thank you Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Do you have a follow up question Councillor Barton?

Councillor Barton: Thank you Lord Mayor. It is just a short supplementary because you covered that very, very fully. But whilst we are looking forward to a bigger, bolder and brighter future for arts and culture and heritage in the City, we must not lose sight of one of the reasons why we wanted to become City of Culture, which was to address some of the very deep social needs and cultural needs of some of the most deprived people in our City. So I would like some reassurance that as we do go forward to a bigger, bolder and brighter future, that we do not lose sight of those people.

City Mayor: Thank you Lord Mayor. Yes, that is absolutely the case. We must not

lose sight of what was part of the bid which was the very strong theme that culture is not just about what happens in iconic buildings, important as they are, it is what happens day to day out in communities across communities and the regenerative effect of culture is not something that just happens to the visitors who come in to visit a big show at the Curve, it is also about what you do out and with communities. And there has to be a recognition that in this very diverse City of Leicester, there are people and communities who are not entirely engaged in the life of the City or the cultural life of the City and we must not lose sight of the fact that we need to celebrate them and what they are and ensure that they are able with us to celebrate Leicester.

Question 16 – Councillor Cole: Thank you Lord Mayor. “The residents whose children attend Christ the King Primary School on Glenfield Road say that they have been waiting a long time for a crossing outside the school. Can the City Mayor say when the crossing is likely to be in place?”

City Mayor: Thank you Lord Mayor. Councillor Cole has been very assiduous in pressing this case and I recognise the work he has done as a Ward Councillor to make the case on behalf of his constituents. He did indeed raise the question of the crossing outside the school some time ago now and there has indeed also been an online petition with a number of signatures supporting that view and that case. During the summer Lord Mayor I met with Ward Members and Councillor Cole was one of those I met with to discuss the priorities in their Wards for the introduction of new measures, including pedestrian crossings and the pedestrian crossing request for Christ King Primary was one of the locations requested at that time and was identified. The situation now is that officers are working through the number of proposals put forward in that Ward and elsewhere and it is my intention to have a further discussion in the very near future with Councillor Cole and other Members about the programme of work for the near future so that together we can put priorities there. It is probably the case that if, as I think Councillor Cole would wish to be the case, this is put right at the top of the priority list, we may be able to commence work there in the summer of next year during the school holidays. There is work to be done before we can actually firm that up but I can assure Councillor Cole and other Members that we will be responding more fully and having those further discussions.

Lord Mayor: Do you have a supplementary Councillor Cole?

Councillor Cole: Can I thank the City Mayor for that proposition please regarding the possibility of the crossing being in place sometime next year. Can I also try and persuade the City Mayor to perhaps send officers to have a look outside the school to see the dangers that parents are creating when they park in the right hand filter lane because that in itself presents a problem for parents and children crossing the road and perhaps something can be done at the same time to prevent parents from parking in that lane and therefore reduce the dangers faced by parents crossing the road.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor, I think Members will be aware that inconsiderate parking by parents, and it is for the most part parents dropping off children at schools, is an issue in a number of schools across the City and I am aware that there is a problem at this school amongst others. We are looking at ways in which we can increase our enforcement of the zig zag lines and other parking restrictions that exist outside the schools and I will certainly ensure that we look very closely at the enforcement outside this particular school to see whether there are things that we need to do there along with the things we are doing elsewhere or indeed

perhaps in addition to the things that are being undertaken elsewhere.

Question 17 – Councillor Cole: Thank you Lord Mayor. “Depending on which news report you listen to the weather this coming winter is likely to be extremely cold. Can the City Mayor say what provision is being put in place to protect our vulnerable residents in the City and motorists?”

City Mayor: Thank you Lord Mayor. Yes there are perhaps two elements here – those of residents and those of motorists and to some extent the Deputy City Mayor has already touched on some of the issues for residents a little earlier. But I can certainly say with regard to the issue for motorists that our highways service actually operate a so called winter service right the way from 1st October to 31st April, and they do have a very detailed plan which Members may or may not have seen but actually it is available on the website or I can arrange for hard copies to be provided to Members who want it, but it can be downloaded as a PDF and it does go through the whole range of issues about how we respond to the challenges of winter. Obviously in an urban area like Leicester we do have to recognise that inclement weather, particularly snow as we saw last year, can cause major disruption for the City and we have to, in so far as we can, be appropriately prepared for it. But I think at this stage I would simply want to refer Councillor Cole to that website, but also perhaps to reinforce some of the things that the Deputy Mayor was saying earlier on about the winter care plan and I need to ensure that it is effective in dealing with the vulnerability of many of our residents in extremes of weather and to reaffirm our determination to do all we can to ensure that a range of services we provide do provide the necessary support and protection.

Lord Mayor: Any supplementary please?

Councillor Cole: Thanks City Mayor for those comments, and perhaps just to say as a minor contribution to that if you could ensure that the grit bins are kept filled throughout the winter.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor. Anticipating that supplementary, and guessing it quite well, I am informed that there were 310 grit bins around the City in known trouble spots including junctions and roads with steep gradients and that a further 20 bins are scheduled to be placed out this year particularly in the Hamilton area of the City. But as always if Members are aware of places where grit bins would be of benefit they can be brought directly to the attention of officers or raised at Ward Community meetings. A number of Ward Community meetings have been very generous in providing such bins which are subsequently topped up.

Question 18 – Councillor Kitterick. “With regard to the review of adventure playgrounds, can the Cabinet member give the usage figures for adventure playgrounds in the City for Decembers and Januarys since 2011?”

Lord Mayor: Councillor Dempster.

Councillor Dempster: Thank you Lord Mayor. Actually I understand that the sites statistics are monitored quarterly making it impossible for me to give you that statistic. December reaching one quarter and January’s in another quarter. But I take it that this is regarding the proposal that December and January would be months that we would not put in any tender and that is where this question has arisen from. I would want to point out that in fact there is no detailed specification for any tender as such and therefore anything that has been in the public domain in terms of what would possibly be in a tender I am very happy to receive comments

on.

Lord Mayor: Any supplementary Councillor Kitterick?

Councillor Kitterick: Thank you Lord Mayor. Can Councillor Dempster confirm that in the Executive Briefing on 7th November under supervised play, there is an assertion bullet point under proposal which says there would be no provision during December and January when demand is at its lowest and these resources have been used to enhance provision at times of high demand. Can Councillor Dempster also confirm that, as part of this Executive report, there were no usage figures given for December and January and that tonight's answer reveals that there is no disaggregated figure available at the Council about how many kids use the adventure playgrounds in December and January. Does this not point to a fundamental flaw in the Executive Briefing. I will not name the report authors, but will Councillor Dempster bring up this lack of detail with the authors of the report to the Executive Briefing on 7th November because it is clearly deficient in crucial information.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Dempster.

Councillor Dempster: Thank you. I understand that the outline proposal to close during December and January did consider the evidence collected during visits and discussions with Monitoring Officers. There are officers of the Council who do have regular contact with them, and furthermore that during visits to adventure playground sites staff reported that unsurprisingly there are lower numbers during the winter months given the dark evenings and adverse weather.

Councillor Kitterick: I would say that if there are no figures available tonight Lord Mayor, then actually how can we make a reasoned decision.

Question 19 – Councillor Kitterick: “With regards to the review of adventure playgrounds will the Cabinet Member release the consultant's report into adventure playgrounds immediately in time for consideration by the Children's Scrutiny Commission on 26th November?”

Lord Mayor: Councillor Dempster.

Councillor Dempster: Yes I can confirm that that the report is actually going out tomorrow, but I would like to just explain why there has been a little delay. Actually I spoke with the Chair of Children's Scrutiny last week and there was an agreement that this matter would be dealt with at Children's Scrutiny. Unfortunately it does not appear on the agenda for the simple reason that we could not get the report ready in time for Monday. What had to be done was that if it was going to go out into the public domain I had to ask legal officers to check for anything that was commercially sensitive. So in terms of any changes the report has not been changed but anything that is commercially sensitive, a very small amount of the commercially sensitive data has now been taken out of the report. It will be circulated tomorrow because my understanding is that the Scrutiny Chair has accepted this as an item of urgent business.

Lord Mayor: Do you have a supplementary question Councillor Kitterick?

Councillor Kitterick: Thank you very much Lord Mayor. I can confirm that I have received a copy of the Executive Briefing paper and I would like to thank the Cabinet Member for that reception. Besides asking the obvious question of if we

are going to cut December and January, can we actually have the figures about how many kids use the adventure playground in December and January which is not available tonight, but can I ask Councillor Dempster whether she sees working together with Scrutiny and Members of this Council that it would be a better way forward in terms of determining the future of the adventure playground. And not only would it be more inclusive and come to a better decision, given the cost of the consultancy for the Council so far it might be a darn sight cheaper.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Dempster.

Councillor Dempster: Thank you Councillor Kitterick. I have always, as has Children's Services, always worked in partnership and in actual fact I think if we were to add up the report, children's is a very big department, we put I think virtually every report through Scrutiny whether asked for or not, and I am very keen as always to work in partnership with communities, with those people that this will most affect as well as with Scrutiny.

Question 20 - Councillor Kitterick: Lord Mayor. "With regard to the review of adventure playgrounds, can the Cabinet Member inform me how many times consultants on the review visited St. Andrews Play Association?"

Lord Mayor: Councillor Dempster.

Councillor Dempster: Thank you. The review of the adventure playgrounds was undertaken by Council officers. The team included the service manager responsible for the adventure playground contracts and the monitoring officers. These officers visit regularly and they had regular contact with all providers including the play association over the past three years. Now in addition to the regular visits, I commissioned a specific visit to gather further information about provision and to talk to providers and inform the review. I would just like to clarify that staff who are leading on this piece of work are permanent members of Council staff as well as an interim transformation director.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Kitterick, any supplementary question?

Councillor Kitterick: Yes indeed Lord Mayor. Given that the interim project director who has been employed on a consultancy basis, and for the benefit of the chamber visited St. Andrew's Play Association on one occasion for one hour and did not speak to any children, given that the cost of this consultancy in the five months since the consultancy was engaged, has cost the Council approximately the cost of one and a half Assistant Mayors, I would ask the Cabinet Member which one and a half Assistant Mayors would she swap for this consultant's report.

Councillor Kitterick: Lord Mayor, I take no offence in there being no answer to that, it was a rhetorical question, however, I believe the cost of the consultancy to the City Council, and it is employed through a consultancy, is an extremely important matter at a time when we are making cuts and people of this Council are being made redundant across the City.

Question 21 – Councillor Kitterick: "With regard to the review of adventure playgrounds, is the Cabinet Member satisfied that the current voluntary organisations that run the adventure playgrounds are fully able to participate in an official journal of the European Union process?"

Lord Mayor: Councillor Dempster.

Councillor Dempster: Thank you Lord Mayor. I recognise that this is quite a departure from previous practice in respect of adventure playgrounds and their funding and there will need to be significant opportunities for support and guidance.

Lord Mayor: Do you have a supplementary question?

Councillor Kitterick: Lord Mayor, given that it is quite clear that the adventure playgrounds are not ready to take part in a full office of the General European Union process by the 9th December when this process is due to begin, would Councillor Dempster be amenable to a short pause in this exercise to allow an outside third party which has the trust of both the Council and the adventure playgrounds, to work a way forward?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Dempster.

Councillor Dempster: Thank you. I think that it is quite important that we have an opportunity to work in partnership as I said earlier and to reflect and consider what opportunities there are for ways forward and that takes time, so looking at the current time length proposed I think given the piece of work that we want to do that I would want to push that time line back by a three month period in order to ensure that we can get that genuine meaningful partnership.

Councillor Kitterick: Mayor, I welcome that offer by Councillor Dempster. May I warmly welcome that offer by Councillor Dempster.

Question 22 – Councillor Kitterick: “With regards to the review of adventure playgrounds would the Cabinet Member release the full legal advice into following an OJEU tendering exercise for adventure playgrounds in time for consideration at the Children’s Scrutiny Commission on 26th November. I take on board the issues about releasing it from commercial sensitivities?”

Councillor Dempster. Yes what I can say is that the report will be going out tomorrow with a section on legal advice.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary Councillor Kitterick?

Councillor Kitterick: Can Councillor Dempster confirm that since 2011 that the Children’s Services Department in terms of OJEU tendering for services has not successfully issued a single contract under the full Official Journal of the European Union process, and indeed the oldest one that goes back is the pupil placing system bid which has been doing the rounds for the last 18 months. Would Councillor Dempster therefore look at alternative ways of negotiating savings from the adventure playgrounds amongst other tools that could be used would be soft market testing which offers an opportunity for a dialogue between current providers and the City Council. Would Councillor Dempster be amenable to looking at this as a way forward?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Dempster.

Councillor Dempster: Thank you. I mean I have to say that if it is the case that Children’s Services have been non-compliant for a number of years I don’t think that that’s anything to say ‘oh well we should just continue to be non-compliant’. However, I am more than happy to look at appropriate ways forward for a tendering process.

Question 23 – Councillor Kitterick: My Lord Mayor. “With regard to the review of adventure playgrounds will the Cabinet Member consider pausing the tendering exercise in order to examine all the evidence behind the consultant’s report on the future of adventure playgrounds?” I believe I have already got the answer in fact if you wish to just.

Councillor Kitterick: Sorry. Can I have a supplementary my Lord Mayor. Can I just take this opportunity to thank Councillor Dempster as warmly as I can the offer to pause the process for three months in order to engage with Scrutiny and to look at all avenues for designing this work that the adventure playgrounds do and can I please take the opportunity Lord Mayor to welcome these offers of help and would Councillor Dempster agree with me in the words of Frederick Douglas, “it is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men”. Would Councillor Dempster offer to work together with members of this Labour Group to try and minimise the damage that has been done to services, adventure playgrounds, children’s services, all services in this City by this damnable Lib/Dem Tory government?

Councillor Dempster: The short answer is absolutely yes and I think that it is very important that we try to focus as well on the fact that this government has hit children’s services and deprived areas far harder than any other service in any other areas of this country. Thank you Councillor Kitterick.

Question 24 – Councillor Grant: Thank you Lord Mayor. “Now that planning permission has been given for new gypsy encampment pitches in the City, will the City Mayor confirm he has no plans to build more pitches and will not build more whilst he is City Mayor?”

City Mayor: Thank you Lord Mayor. I can do little more than to refer Councillor Grant to my earlier answer in which I referred back to the statement of the position in January of this year which was that the two particular pitches being put forward are most unlikely by themselves to relieve all the issues of unauthorised encampments. As I said earlier on in reply to that answer, that remains my view today.

Lord Mayor: Any supplementary Councillor Grant?

Councillor Grant: In that case Lord Mayor, which Wards is the City Mayor considering building more pitches in?

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I have made it very clear that while I think it was very appropriate for us to look in the first instance particularly closely at the opportunities in the areas of the City where the greatest problems of unauthorised encampments occur, that it would be unreasonable to expect that area of the City to take the full burden dealing with a problem that while, particularly acute there, is certainly not absent elsewhere, and I have made it very clear that in looking for further opportunities we ought not to concentrate on just one particular part of the City, we also need to look much more widely than that. I have to say officers are undertaking such a review at the moment but of course quite predictably are not finding it easy to find any solutions anywhere, never mind in any particular part of the City because of course the City has very constrained boundaries. Boundaries that for the most part were drawn in the 1920s and have subsequently been very significantly developed and many decades ago it was possible for travellers to come and go and stay in the City without being anywhere near settled residences. That is no longer the case, and that is a problem for them but it is much more important it is

a problem for those areas of the City where we have unauthorised encampments and very significant problems as a result of that. It is a problem that does need to be addressed and I am determined that as a City we should not run away from it.

Question 25 – Councillor Grant: “Why did the City Mayor decide to veto the establishment of a University Training College in Leicester?”

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor, there is overwhelming evidence in the City that there is a need for improved technical education for young people of secondary age and indeed for improved access to vocational skills and that is very much reflected in the skills gap that many employers talk about in the City and indeed young people themselves who in many cases would wish to have opportunity for development of vocational skills or indeed opportunities for technical education. Of course that is true across a very large number of schools and a very large number of young people. I did ask in preparation for this for a snapshot of the number of young people today in Leicester in secondary education, and it is 17,838 now that is an awful lot of young people. It is similarly the case that we have got very large numbers of young people in further education, some 8,330. I believe all of those, where it is appropriate for them and wanted by them, should have access to appropriate technical education and appropriate development of vocational skills and what I am certainly not convinced of is that the establishment of not a university training college as it is described but a university technical college in the City would be any sort of panacea. It would take some small number of hundreds of young people and give them the opportunities and I have spoken with the secondary heads about this and said to them it really is a challenge for them and their schools and colleges to actually provide those opportunities for all rather than thinking they can somehow absolve themselves of that responsibility by providing those opportunities for all by having a single quick fix silver bullet type solution of a UTC. And that is why I certainly very much prefer the more wider general provision than that single focus on a UTC as the solution.

Lord Mayor: Any supplementary Councillor Grant?

Councillor Grant: Yes, I mean the arguments that the City Mayor makes apply to many other places which we could quite easily look at as competitors such as Derby, the West Midlands and others which have gone along the lines of university technical colleges, and I think and doesn't he think that this was a missed opportunity for the City to provide choice to parents and pupils, particularly the pupils at the age of 14, for whom it is going to be difficult for us to provide the sorts of opportunities that the university technical college would have provided?

City Mayor: No my Lord Mayor I believe it is a missed opportunity for many of those 25,000 young people of secondary school age or in further education in the City if they do not all have increased opportunities for vocational and technical education and that actually establishing UTCs I think is a mechanism that has a tendency to absolve us all and particularly those involved in the leadership of secondary education or further education, absolve them of their responsibility to ensure those opportunities are available for all not just the chosen few.

Question 26 – Councillor Grant: “How worried should people be about the reports in the Leicester Mercury of police involvement in fraud cases at the Council involving procurement, especially after the work done to strengthen the Council's procedures in this area after long investigations by the Audit Commission?”

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor. I think that the reports in the Leicester Mercury to

which Councillor Grant refers are the ones that refer to the investigations that have been undertaken by the police at the Councils instigation following some events some years ago with regard to some particular contracts. It is certainly the case today that we have a zero tolerance policy towards fraud and corruption and whenever there is sufficient evidence will immediately refer to the appropriate authorities.

Lord Mayor: Do you have a supplementary Councillor Grant?

Councillor Grant: Will the City Mayor assure us that he and his Cabinet or his Assistant Mayors will properly review large contracts with senior managers?

City Mayor: Yes of course I will my Lord Mayor, but it is also the case that we have in the Council an Audit and Risk Committee whose job it is, chaired very ably by my colleagues here to undertake an oversight of the work of those officers who serve the Council in the very specialist and forensic role of ensuring that these contracts are properly awarded and properly monitored subsequently and I understand the event, although I don't have the detailed knowledge that Councillor Westley has, but I understand that these events are as a result of the work that they have done to monitor contracts, retrospectively in this case, because as I said it refers to a few years ago, and to ensure that where there is any question at all of there having been a departure from proper procedures that the police and other agencies appropriately are involved and investigated.

Question 27 – Councillor Grant: “Does the City Mayor believe that business continuity management is an important function in protecting people from the consequences of a serious disruption to critical Council services?”

City Mayor: Yes of course I do my Lord Mayor.

Councillor Grant: In other industries business continuity would also be called disaster recovery and we should be clear that these sorts of incidents do occur. We have had fires in Council properties in recent years and other major incidents that disrupt services so what worries the City Mayor most, the central heating schemes relied on by thousands of our Council house tenants does not have a fit for purpose plan, especially given his previous answer to Councillor Cole about the cold weather, or that our children's social care does not have adequate plans in place to work if it was to suffer some sort of incident.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor we keep these plans continuously under review and it is the purpose of that review and the work of the Audit and Risk Committee to ensure that across a whole very, very wide range of services the Council provides there are appropriate plans in place and when they detect occasions where there may be weaknesses in plans or where they need to update plans for them to make appropriate recommendations through to officers and I have no reason to doubt they do that work very effectively, very assiduously and that officers respond very quickly to any recommendations they might make.

Question 28 – Councillor Grant: Is the City Mayor concerned that senior officers are reporting false information about the preparedness of critical activities to the manager of business continuity?

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor, if there is evidence that Councillor Grant has that senior officers are reporting false information and are somehow misleading others as a result of that about our preparedness, I would very much welcome seeing that

evidence and of course will pass it on to the management of the department involved to ensure that they did take the appropriate disciplinary action.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary Councillor Grant?

Councillor Grant: Yes Lord Mayor. I will in that case refer the City Mayor to the minutes of the last Audit and Risk Committee which received a report last week detailing how for a number of time we have been self-certifying at senior management level the preparedness over this and in good faith the Audit and Risk Committee has been accepting that, and then it is suddenly shocked to find that having had additional resources the business continuity manager has found that actually the majority of vital services in the City are not fit for purpose. To be honest I am slightly shocked that after hearing that at that meeting that none of the members of the Labour Group have challenged the Executive about this but it is a very, very serious issue. I don't know whether, and I will ask for the City Mayor's opinion, does this show a lack of competence by managers, of complacency or an extension of the culture we have seen from the City Mayor himself were it is acceptable to not provide accurate information.

City Mayor: I think members will judge from that final shot from Councillor Grant how seriously we ought to take his contribution on this issue, but I will try and take it seriously. And I just repeat the point that if he has evidence that officers are deliberately providing false information about matters of this sort or indeed on other significant matters relating to the conduct of their duties, I will invite him to provide the evidence to me or to the appropriate managers, and having done so I am sure that I or the appropriate managers would ensure that the proper disciplinary action was taken.

Councillor Grant: I will send him the report from the Audit and Risk Committee tomorrow.

Question 29 – Councillor Grant: “Did the City Mayor say as reported that “his role included most of the responsibilities of the Chief Executive” (BBC) and “I knew my style of working would not sit easily with having a Chief Executive. I looked closely and thought ‘No, I’m doing that, it’s the job of the Mayor” (Guardian 12th April 2012).

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor, I am delighted to discover that Councillor Grant is an avid reader of back copies of the Guardian. Actually I am puzzled, but anyway I would not have expected it of him. I did look up the report this relates to and it actually seems to relate to a report by a reporter at a meeting at 10 Downing Street where I shared a platform with the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson and Michael Heseltine. All of whom were very supportive, both of the role of the Elected Mayor and of the recognition that the mayoral form of governance might require different forms of senior management. It is a point that they have taken. It is not perhaps one that he seems to share. But I did take the trouble to look back at some of the papers that I had used at the time and of course was particularly aware of the job description of the former Chief Executive. Amongst the things there that I was referring to when I was making those remarks was the expectation of the former Chief Executive to manage the interface between Elected Members and senior officers. Well actually I do think that is part of the job an Elected City Mayor. To work closely with the local strategic partnership and family of partnerships, well actually that is what Mayors are expected to do to work closely with others in matters of partnership and to provide strong visible leadership and direction. Well

again I think that is what is expected of an Elected Mayor and I could go on, there is a whole range of things there. But quite clearly looking at that job description and indeed looking at the way in which the Council has used its Chief Executives in the past I came to the conclusion that I am reported to have made in the Guardian.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Grant.

Councillor Grant: Lord Mayor. I am quite surprised because I have never seen a previous leader of the Council abdicate his responsibility to the Audit and Risk Committee in the way that we have seen the City Mayor tonight and I agree with the principle that the City Mayor can carry out the functions of the Chief Executive, but given that we have seen that the majority of our vital services do not have fit for purpose disaster plans, that means that if we had the central heating system fail in the way that we saw when steam was pouring out of the Central Library, we could have thousands of the City's homes not being heated, and or we could have an incident which means that child social care is inoperable for an unknown period of time when people are trying to report cases, given these serious management failings I wonder what his opinion would be if he had a Chief Executive in place and it was reported that senior management was failing in the way it is and does he think that perhaps he should be spending more time dealing with the proper, efficient running of services in the City than re-planning the City Centre?

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I just don't accept Councillor Grant's fundamental premise that there is evidence that we have a systemic absence of disaster recovery plans. It just simply is not the case and you know there is no evidence of that, and I think Councillor Grant also misses the point that while it is certainly my view that the role of the Chief Executive as previously defined is not one that I certainly believe in Leicester's context is appropriate in a mayoral form of governance, that does not mean that I believe that it is appropriate for an Elected Mayor to be the Head of the Paid Services. There is a very significant distinction between that. The Head of the Paid Service is an appointment made by the Council and of course Members will be aware that that is currently occupied by Andy Keeling. It is appropriate that the head of the management of the City Council continues, but that is not the same as having the role of Chief Executive as previously defined and I think most Members here understand those distinctions even if Councillor Grant does not.

Lord Mayor: I shall not be taking the next three questions because they are from Councillor Porter and he is not here.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE

As previously announced the Lord Mayor took this item prior to the consideration of questions from members of the public and Councillors.

Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2012/13

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

24. That Council suspend standing orders under Council Procedure Rule 34a for the duration of this item.

A report was considered which gave an overview of progress made by the Forum over the last 12 months.

The meeting was addressed by Helen Bannister, Team Manager Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Unit and Emma Sawyer who was a Children in Care Council representative on the Forum. Helen and Emma summarised the activities and achievements of the Forum.

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

25. That Council receive the report.

REPORTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee to Council for the Municipal Year 2012/13

Councillor Westley, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee presented the annual report of the Committee which sought to demonstrate its work in overseeing the City Council's control environment and set out what had been achieved in the municipal year 2012-13. The work regarding business continuity planning was particularly noted.

Moved by Councillor Westley, seconded by Councillor Naylor and carried:-

26. That Council receive the report.

Annual Report of Standards Committee 2012/2013

Councillor Waddington, Chair of Standards Committee presented the annual report summarising the work of the Committee in 2012/2013, which had been its first full year of operation under the provisions of the Localism Act.

Moved by Councillor Waddington, seconded by Councillor Sood and carried:-

27. That Council note the report.

Elected Member Absence from Meetings

With the agreement of the Lord Mayor and Council the report was withdrawn.

EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES

Moved by City Mayor, seconded by Councillor Clayton and carried:-

28. That:

1. Councillor Naylor be appointed as Vice Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee; and
2. Council note the appointment of Stephen Purser and Fiona Barber as Independent Members of the Standards Committee, recruited by the Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance and the

Monitoring Officer pursuant to the authority granted to them by Council on 28th June 2012.

NOTICES OF MOTION

The Lord Mayor stated that he had agreed to accept the Motion below as an item of urgent business under Council Procedure Rule 32 as a response was required to Government.

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

29. The government is currently consulting on ending the requirement for a personal license to sell alcohol.

This Council believes that Personal Licences are an important part of Licensing legislation designed to promote the safe and responsible sale of alcohol by ensuring training is a prerequisite and that appropriate criminal records check are carried out.

We therefore call on the government to maintain the personal license requirement.

Close of Meeting

There being no further items of business the Lord Mayor wished all present a very happy and peaceful Christmas and declared the meeting closed at 7.30pm.