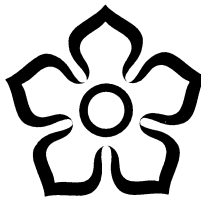


Thursday, 20 March 2014





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, 20 MARCH 2014 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. **MATTERS RESERVED TO COUNCIL**

**Reserved to Council**

- 6.1 Pay Policy Statement 2014/15
- 6.2 Capital Programme 2014 / 2015

7. **EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES**

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

8. **NOTICES OF MOTION**

Proposed by Councillor Clarke, Seconded by Councillor Sood:

“Leicester City Council recognises the plight of asylum seekers forced to flee their home countries due to conflict and persecution. Many arrive in the UK after having been threatened, detained, beaten or tortured.

An adult seeking protection in this country who has no other source of support will receive just over £5 a day to pay for food, clothing, toiletries and travel (accommodation and utilities are paid for separately for those who have nowhere to live). They are not allowed to work to support themselves. If their claims are refused by the Home Office, they lose all support and are left destitute and street homeless.

In the last six months of 2013 the British Red Cross Leicester Refugee Support Services have carried out 1,659 actions (e.g. the issuing of food parcels, sleeping bags) to support 325 destitute asylum seekers in Leicester. Of these 108 were new cases and it is likely that this reflects the impact of welfare reforms in general and has resulted in a reduction in community capacity to continue to support such persons. Leicester City Council is concerned about such destitution and its impact on local communities.

Leicester is a welcoming and inclusive city and wants to join those local authorities (Liverpool, Bristol, Sheffield, Oxford, Glasgow, Leeds and Bradford) petitioning the Home Secretary to relieve the suffering of people seeking sanctuary and especially those people who have yet to be granted leave to remain in the UK.

Leicester City Council approves the following actions:

1. Write on behalf of Leicester City Council to the Minister of State for Immigration questioning Government policies that force asylum seekers into destitution; expressing concern over the low level of support available to asylum seekers; seeking a change of policy to allow local authorities to assist refused asylum seekers who are in danger of falling into destitution; asking that such asylum seekers should be able to work to support themselves if they have been waiting for more than 6 months for their cases to be resolved; and demanding that local authorities should be permitted to provide emergency provision to refused asylum seekers as to other homeless people.
2. Ask Leicester's MPs to support the spirit of this motion, to raise the matter in the House of Commons, and to support a change in current laws regarding asylum applications by removing restrictions on local authorities in the support they can provide to destitute asylum seekers.
3. Leicester City Council officers to produce a report summarising existing support for asylum seekers available in Leicester including housing, training, education, and legal advice open to vulnerable asylum applicants.
4. Leicester City Council to join the national campaign "Still Human, Still Here" (a coalition of 60 organisations, including several city councils, the Church of England and Catholic Archbishop Conferences, Crisis, Oxfam, and the Red Cross, who are proposing practical solutions to ending the destitution of refused asylum seekers in the UK).
5. Leicester City Council to seek further support for this motion and action via the Local Government Association and by encouraging other Councils in the UK to join us on this issue."

9. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

**PRESENT:**

**MUSTAFA KAMAL, LORD MAYOR**  
**CHAIRMAN**

**Abbey Ward**

HARSHAD DAHYABHAI BHAVSAR  
VIJAY SINGH RIYAIT

**Freemen Ward**

ELLY CUTKELVIN  
WILLIAM HENRY SHELTON

**Aylestone Ward**

ADAM CLARKE  
NIGEL CARL PORTER

**Humberstone and Hamilton Ward**

RITA PATEL  
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**

MANJULA PAUL SOOD

**Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields**

MICHAEL ERNEST COOKE  
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**

CULDIP SINGH BHATTI  
PIARA SINGH CLAIR

**Charnwood Ward**

PAUL DARREN NEWCOMBE  
ABDUL RAZAK OSMAN

**Spinney Hills Ward**

HANIF AQBANY  
SHOFIQUUL ISLAM CHOWDHURY

**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

Western Park Ward

DR SUSAN BARTON  
GEORGE COLE

## **LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None.

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Lord Mayor invited the Monitoring Officer to brief Council in respect of declarations regarding item 6.1 on the agenda 'Pay Policy Statement 2014/15'.

The Monitoring Officer reminded Council that the report did not set the pay of the Council officers referred to within it. He noted that those Members who had partners or close associates who were officers but had made that declaration on their register of interests did not need to re-declare them. He suggested that his view was that unless a Members partner was at Divisional Director level or above there would not be a Declarable Personal Interest and unless a close associate was at Divisional Director level there wouldn't be a prejudicial interest. However the Monitoring Officer reminded Members that was just his advice and the judgement was for each individual Member to make. If a Declarable Personal Interest or Prejudicial Interest was declared the Member would need to leave the room.

Councillor Senior declared a Declarable Personal Interest in item 6.1 on the agenda as her partner was an officer of the Council and stated that she would leave the room for the duration of this item.

Councillor Westley declared an 'other declarable interest' in item 6.2 on the agenda as he was in possession of a concessionary travel pass.

There were no further declarations.

## **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

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

38. That the minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 23 January 2014 and the Special Budget Meeting held on 26 February 2014, having been printed and a copy sent to each Member of the Council, be taken as read and that they be approved as correct records of the respective meetings.

## **PETITIONS**

### **PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

None.

### **PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Grant presented a petition with 152 signatures in the following terms:

"Due to the deterioration of the road surface and the damage it is causing to vehicles this petition is to present Leicester City Council to raise awareness of its condition and request action to resurface the Knighton Church Road."

**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**

### **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC.**

**Lord Mayor** – Mr. Dickson please.

**Mr. Dickson** – Cars parked on the pavement cause an obstruction to disabled people in wheelchairs, those who are blind and visually impaired and individuals pushing buggies. The list is endless. The damage done to the pavement in the City of Leicester by pavement parking to which the tax payer has to then foot the bill must be huge. I have enclosed a letter from my MP, Liz Kendal, in which country wide legislation is outlined by the Department of Transport giving Councils power to enforce parking restrictions across the board. Also it mentioned A boards are supposed to be within the shop's curtilage i.e. a straight line not an obstruction or obstacle course. As a visually impaired person I wish to ask the Council what their policy is with regard to pavement parking and enforcing shop furniture placement and will they consider the issues raised if, as I already believe, they don't enforce at present time with the possibility of future tougher enforcement. Thank you.

**Lord Mayor** – City Mayor.

**City Mayor** – Thank you my Lord Mayor and can I thank Mr. Dickson for his question because I know that he is actually representing a very widely held concern about the two issues, the parking on the pavements and indeed the inappropriate placing of A boards. The Council has for a long time acknowledged the impact of pavement parking and does issue fixed penalty notices to offending vehicles where there is an existing parking restriction in place because that restriction generally applies right to the back of the footway. But I think it is quite right to question whether that is done in a consistent way and whether it has the desired effect of preventing obstructions on the footway. It is of course the case that there are some streets in the City that don't have any parking restrictions and there of course it is much more difficult to take civil enforcement action. But as I say what Mr. Dickson expresses is a concern that is widely held and Members have recognised that this is a significant concern, and as a result of that the Economic Development Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission under the Chair of Councillor Waddington has undertaken to examine this issue in detail in the forthcoming months. I think it is their intention that this will provide an opportunity for members of the public, and I would invite Mr. Dickson to perhaps be one that gave evidence to them, to let them know their views on pavement parking and the approach we should take to regulation and particularly to the enforcement in future. On the matter of A boards I do know, it has been a matter of debate over many years, and I do know that the Council has a well-established policy on the placement of A boards and other shop furniture, but again I think there are legitimate questions as to how consistently and effectively this is enforced. The intention is not to allow A boards to be placed on the highway where there is sufficient room within the curtilage of the shop frontage, and if they do have to be placed on the highway the intention is that shop keepers are expected to comply with some detailed guidance on the size of them and the nature of the A board. It is also intended that there should only be one A board per shop and various other matters associated with that. What I would say is that this is essentially a matter for our City Wardens to enforce and where necessary take action against offenders and I am aware that they can't of course be on every street on every day on every hour. So they are



reliant on information from members of the public and indeed from local Ward Councillors and I would encourage Mr. Dickson, and indeed others who may hear the words being spoken in response to this question, to inform the City Wardens when A boards are not put in a way that does not provide an obstruction, to contact the City Wardens and also if they have persistent problems actually to contact Ward Councillors who I know will be pleased to pass on their concerns to the appropriate authorities to make sure that enforcement is taken.

**Lord Mayor** – Mr. Dickson do you have a supplementary question?

**Mr. Dickson** – With regards to contacting City Wardens and Councillors on the issue of both parking and on the shop curtilage, continuous contact has been made on both issues and with customer services centre, that has now moved. Often that does not bring back much response.

**City Mayor** – Yes thank you Lord Mayor. As I have said the Economic Development Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission will be looking at the issue of pavement parking and I am sure that in receiving evidence on that would also be interested in having evidence about other obstructions to the pavement, and I am sure if it is indeed the case that the City Warden service and others responsible for enforcement are not following up complaints adequately I am sure they would want to make appropriate recommendations to me and other members of the Executive to ensure that is remedied.

#### **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

**Question 1 - Councillor Riyait:** Can the City Mayor please confirm a detailed timetable and remit of the independent Adult Social Care Commission which has previously been agreed as part of the elderly care homes discussion and scrutiny? Thank you.

**Lord Mayor** - Councillor Rita Patel

**Councillor Rita Patel** – Thank you my Lord Mayor. I would like to thank Councillor Riyait for his question about this important development. In recent weeks I have been working with officers to more clearly define the nature and scope of an independent Adult Social Care Commission for Leicester. I am proposing that an independent Adult Social Care Commission should be established so that the first meeting of the Commission will take place no later than June 2014. The overarching role of the independent Adult Social Care Commission will be to provide expert advice on national and local policy developments and to stimulate creative thinking in relation to adult social care and the wider issues that affect older people. The independent Commission will use authoritative analysis to support the development of the local policy relating to adult social care and older people. The Commission will seek to enhance and support the quality of life of Leicester's diverse communities as they grow older. I am proposing that the Commission will be established for an initial period of 18 months, and that its work will be conducted in a series of six themed meetings, each of which will consider evidence and make recommendations for Leicester. Thank you.

**Question 2 - Councillor Chaplin:** Given the heavy rain this winter has the City Council considered the implications of the Environmental Agency's map of projected surface water flooding for the City and for Stoneygate Ward in particular?

**Lord Mayor - City Mayor**

**City Mayor** – My Lord Mayor, as a resident in Stoneygate Ward I am very grateful for Councillor Chaplin's question on my behalf and also very grateful for the opportunity to answer this, particularly as I live immediately adjacent to Evington brook. I am very pleased to be able, having been prompted by the question, to reassure Councillor Chaplin that the City Council takes our responsibility for managing flood risk from surface water as well as from brooks very seriously. The latest surface water flood mapping produced by the Environment Agency supports a much more detailed surface water management plan that we published in 2012. We have identified those areas across the City that are more susceptible to flooding from heavy rainfall and are able to confirm that there are no areas within Stoneygate Ward that have been identified as being at an increased risk from surface water flooding. We are currently working in partnership with the Environment Agency to develop a joint integrated strategy to manage flood risk from all forms of flooding including from heavy rainfall events.

**Lord Mayor** – Do you have a supplementary question Councillor Chaplin?

**Councillor Chaplin** – Thank you my lord Mayor. There is a supplementary. I am glad to be able to support all of my constituents including the City Mayor. I would like to ask – although you say there is no risk in Stoneygate that has been identified at the moment there have been some issues recently, particularly in the wayroads area of the Ward, where there have been a number of extensions and the gardens are quickly getting swallowed up by extensions and large outbuildings. There are some pockets of flooding and excess water problems and I just wondered if there might be an opportunity for the Council to review the planning policy framework. Whereas there may not be a problem now but there may be something emerging and I think the residents of Stoneygate would particularly appreciate that. Would you give an assurance that might be the case.

**Lord Mayor** – City Mayor.

**City Mayor** – Yes my Lord Mayor. I hope I did not give the impression that there were no risks at all in the Stoneygate area. What I was seeking to identify were that there were no newly identified risks. In fact the Leicester principal urban area is in general a national flood risk area. We have in fact across the City got up to 15,000 properties that are at risk either from fluvial, that is from the water courses or from, fluvial that is flooding from one cause or another, so we do take it very seriously indeed and have been working very closely with the Environment Agency, first of all to establish the risks and then to seek to mitigate it. Part of the mitigation has, as I think members will be aware, been the programme of replacing the old inefficient road gullies to get surface water away in those areas where it has been collecting in a way that does illustrate the potential for flooding from rainfall and it may be that that is the approach that is necessary in the particular roads that Councillor Chaplin refers to. I would be happy to arrange for officers to discuss with her and report back to me on the condition of the gullies in those roads to see whether there is anything that can be done in the immediate future and also to ensure that they are properly assessed for their potential for flooding and for damage in the future. Thank you Lord Mayor.

**Question 3 - Councillor Chaplin:** Thank you again my Lord Mayor. Can the Assistant Mayor for Adult Social Care give assurances that residents of Herrick Lodge old peoples' home will not be moved from the home before the conclusion of the current legal action?

**Lord Mayor** - Councillor Rita Patel.

**City Mayor** – I will be answering this my Lord Mayor. My Lord Mayor Councillor Chaplin is aware that the Council has a settled policy with regard to the future of elderly person's homes. She is, as she acknowledges in her question, also aware that this policy is the subject of legal challenge. I have already indicated to her in another forum that I do not believe that it is appropriate to discuss in public our approach to that legal action or the position of a small number of easily identified individuals. These are matters on the one hand for the courts and on the other for the residents, their families and friends.

**Lord Mayor** – Do you have a supplementary Councillor Chaplin?

**Councillor Chaplin** – I do have a question. I obviously understand that it may not get answered. I understand there has been a letter that has been sent to the residents saying that is the case, but I have not been able to get confirmation that that is the case. Has a letter been sent to the residents?

**City Mayor** – For the reasons I have given my Lord Mayor, Councillor Chaplin is quite right in her prediction that that is a question that will not be answered in this forum.

**Question 4 - Councillor Singh:** Thank you Lord Mayor. How many public consultations have been carried out under the new governance regime of City Mayor since 2011?

**Lord Mayor** - City Mayor.

**City Mayor** – Thank you my Lord Mayor. In fact very early following my election we established what really had not been the case before, which was a corporate wide approach to consultation. We established a research intelligence team to oversee that concerted approach to consultation. What they found during the first year was that there were significant shortfalls in the way in which a Council had previously recorded consultation information and as a result of that it was only really in about July of 2012 that effective record keeping was undertaken. What we now have is a system that enables the Council to monitor and to track its consultation activity as well as to maintain corporate standards and levels of quality. Whilst it is hard for me to say what the situation was in great detail before that. I do know that between July 2012 when it came into effect and March 2014 that is the present date, there have been a total of 59 consultations that were recorded on what we describe as the citizen space system with a further 15 live consultations currently ongoing. Before this from May 2011 we are aware of 46 consultations but as I say they were not recorded in such a systematic way.

**Lord Mayor** – Any supplementary Councillor Singh?

**Councillor Singh** – Yes my Lord Mayor I do. Can I thank the City Mayor for that answer. Evidently Lord Mayor the hallmark of this administration has been to consult as widely as possible. This is of course no big Labour party notion of a pluralist and transparent exercise in democracy. Lord Mayor, would the City Mayor assure this Council that public consultation will continue to play a central part of this Executive's decision making process?

**City Mayor** – I can indeed do that Lord Mayor and also just say to members that of course public consultation takes a number of different forms. Sometimes it is simply asking people what they think of a particular process. Sometimes it is a fairly blank sheet of paper and saying well what would you like to do about a particular issue. It does include not just asking individuals but it also included focus groups, semi-structured interviews, discussions with organisations, all of this is a part of engaging with the public in the construction of policy. Although it is sometimes asserted that consultation is not listened to, in preparation for answering this question I did think of at least three immediate examples where it has actually made a very significant difference indeed. Belgrave flyover is a very obvious one. We consulted very widely with people in the area about how they wanted to go about the deconstruction of the flyover and they came overwhelmingly to the opinion that they wanted to get it down as quickly as possible, notwithstanding the fact that it would cause quite a lot of disruption while that happened. I have to say experience has shown that they were right and that actually getting it down quickly has paid off and it has been done in a way that, while it has undoubtedly caused some disruption, has minimized the length of time that has occurred, minimized the impact on local residents and minimized, of course, as well the impact on local businesses. So consulting and listening and responding to them was important there. It was also important for example when we were doing the design for Jubilee Square. There was a lot of consultation about that, a lot of tweaking to that design as a result of the consultation and as a result of that I think we are getting a much better scheme at the end of it than would otherwise have been the case. Another example, high profile one which has just occurred to me and it is worth mentioning, was of course traveller's sites. The original proposal for that was for three traveller's sites. We listened, the Scrutiny Commission listened and we have two and they are smaller and that is an example of course, we are not making them go away because we do still need to do it, but listening to what people say as part of genuine consultation enables us to, I think as a result of that, better reflect what the people of Leicester want and get better schemes at the end of it as a Council.

**Question 5 - Councillor Singh:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. How successful has the City Council's Economic Action Plan been in retaining and attracting business into the City?

**Lord Mayor - City Mayor.**

**City Mayor** – My Lord Mayor, members will not be surprised to know that I have been drafted a very long reply to this which I won't perhaps give in its entirety. I will just give some of the headlines though because in fact it has been very successful indeed. Amongst the examples that officers have drawn out that I might want to mention to you is Dock the Council's new innovation centre at Pioneer Park. We have got a lot of businesses moving in, all part of the Economic Action Plan. They suggested I mention the Leicester Food Park which will open in November, part of the Economic Action Plan starting to generate strong pipeline of enquiries of people actually wanting the specialist accommodation there. The £2m of grants for Enterprising Leicester which are already supporting 25 local businesses and creating 35 jobs, the renewed focus on the Waterside and Friars Mills, the increased level of business confidence in the City centre as result of the Economic Action Plan, seeing the investment in Silver Arcade, the announcements by both Primark and Marks and Spencer to reinvest in their stores in the City centre and a lot of other examples here which I would be happy to share with members which

indicates that the focus of the Economic Action Plan is being delivered and is producing, not just input from us but acting as a catalyst to investment from others.

**Lord Mayor** – Any supplementary questions?

**Councillor Singh** – Yes my Lord Mayor. Thank you I do have a supplementary. Can I say that when the City Mayor went as an ambassador of the City to France I fully support those kind of initiatives because I think they are worth while and extremely important for the very reasons that have been outlined. Just to further that point can I request the City Mayor to make economic wellbeing of the City and its constituents a major priority in the coming months and particularly in the next year. Job creation through apprenticeships, employer partnerships for young people attracting investment and opportunity for qualified graduates from our excellent universities, the University of Leicester and DeMontfort will add immense asset to the City and secure its GDP potential for the future.

**City Mayor** – Can I thank Councillor Singh for that further question because I am intensely aware that all members in this chamber, myself included, will be facing the electorate barely 12 months from now, and I can reassure him that the achievements of the Economic Action Plan will be an important part of what we are able to report back to the electorate, what will then be four years after our last election. I think we will have a significant amount of success to demonstrate despite what has been happening to the economy at a national level, and I am absolutely determined to, as I am sure other Labour members are, that the progress that we have made in the economic action plan over what will then be four years, will be reflected in the commitments that we make to the electorate for our intention of the four years to come. We will be able to do that with confidence of some real achievement.

**Lord Mayor** – Question 6, Councillor Grant.

**Question 6 - Councillor Grant:** Thank you Lord Mayor. The feedback on the City of Culture bid said that "the digital element of the bid was weak". Does this indicate a failure of the large public investment by the City Council in the Phoenix Digital Media Centre, or was there a failure to capitalise on that investment?

**Lord Mayor** - City Mayor

**City Mayor** - Thank you my Lord Mayor. I am sure I have said this before in this chamber, but I am firmly of the opinion that Leicester's bid was a brilliant collaboration across the many organisations and the many stakeholders that contributed to it. The fact was that 11 cities applied, Leicester was on the final short list of four and I think the bid took us very close indeed to actually winning the prize of being designated as UK City of Culture for 2017. We did it from a standing start in February of last year. Hull had already bid and were already ready for it and had been preparing for it over the intervening four years, and obviously bidding for the second time had some advantage from that. But I do believe, as I have said before in this chamber, that developing the bid was an extremely positive process, it captured the enthusiasm of many people across the City and again I would like to pay tribute to all of those who were a part of it. In response to the specific point, I would agree that the digital element could well, had we had the length of time that Hull had had, have been further developed. I would say in defence of those who developed it that the bidding document into which you have to slot these various

elements was very prescriptive and the section highlighting digital plans was relatively short. So perhaps it could have been more detailed and we could have been more encouraged to fill in some of that detail. That is certainly the case. But I don't think any of this, as Councillor Grant would have us believe from his question, was a failure in the public investment by the City Council in the Phoenix Square Digital Media Centre or any failure to capitalise on that development. Phoenix continues to develop an innovative digital programme, it plays a key role in attracting visitors and creative agencies to the Cultural Quarter and I wish it well in continuing to do that.

**Councillor Grant** – If the City Mayor is saying that he does not accept that there was a weakness in the digital element of our bid, is he saying that he does not accept any of the feedback that we received as the City of the bid?

**City Mayor** – No Lord Mayor I did not say that at all. I mean other members perhaps were listening and perhaps Councillor Grant was not. I did acknowledge that in the very limited amount of time that we had to develop it there were inevitably some elements that were stronger than others. That is just part of the process. What I am saying is that overall the bid was very strong indeed, and when the panel came to look at it inevitably there were some bits that they were able to point to and say well that was not as strong as the rest of the bid, and that was not as good as that. That is part of their job to give us that sort of feedback and if, and it is a very big if, we were to seek to bid again, as I said I am a bit dubious as to whether that really does make sense for Leicester, if we were to do that no doubt we would want to take on board some of the points that have been made by the panel in a way that no doubt Hull did from their first unsuccessful attempt to be designated the City of Culture.

**Question 7 - Councillor Grant** – Apart from the weak digital element of the bid and now with the benefit of time for reflection, what else does the City Mayor think could have been done differently in the City of Culture bid to have avoided failure?

**City Mayor** – Lord Mayor as I said our bid was a very strong and credible one. So obviously were the others that were shortlisted. I think clearly a combination of factors may have led to the final decision being made, many of which were not in our control. Hull clearly made a strong and compelling case, but I think they clearly demonstrated that they needed it desperately, and I think that really is at the heart of what has come back by way of feedback from the judges. I don't consider it as anything of a failure if we as a City were not able to demonstrate that we needed it as desperately as Hull did. What it says is that we are very different Cities with very different needs and in a very different place to take advantage of being City of Culture in 2017.

**Councillor Grant:** Was it an error to put a religious festival at the heart of a bid which talked about cultural diversity in Leicester. Does he agree that there was a risk, which has been expressed to me by some members of the Hindi community, that this was not appropriate and would cause a negative reaction amongst other communities and that a truly diverse centrepiece would have been more appropriate?

**City Mayor** – I think Councillor Grant very obviously did not read the bid document. There was no question at all, and those here many of whom did read the bid document will recall, there was no question at all of putting any single festival at the

heart whether it was religious or otherwise at the heart of our bid. What we sought to do was to reflect the enormous strength that the City has got in the diversity of its communities and in the culture of its people, and I think in doing that perhaps we were in a sense too successful demonstrating how good this City is. The judge's panel, the chair, described Hull when he was saying that they were the ones that deserved to have it, as a City that needed to come out of the shadows, and I think that perhaps says it all. No matter how you present Leicester, I would not certainly want to present it as a City that is in any sense in the shadows and that is the difference between us, and frankly I think the only way we might have won would have been to pretend that we were Hull and we are not.

**Lord Mayor** – Question 8 Councillor Grant.

**Question 8 – Councillor Grant:** Does the City Mayor have any more plans to go abroad on Council business?

**City Mayor** – Thank you my Lord Mayor. As members will be aware I have recently attended the property and investment congress in Cannes. This is the second year I have been present alongside the Conservative leader of the County Council. Despite some reservations prior to going for the first time last year, I was persuaded by our private sector investors that it is important for the City's delegation to be led by the Mayor as indeed is the case in other Cities from across Europe. MIPIM as it is known is a major opportunity for representatives of developers and investors to meet with towns and cities across the world and particularly from Europe to showcase development and investment opportunities. The team from Leicester and with connections with Leicester and Leicestershire was over 50 individuals. I was really enormously impressed by the commitment that so many had shown to being there. It included people from the Enterprise Partnership, the Universities, the Enterprise Zone, a wide range of representatives from the private sector and on our stand we had conversations with over 300 individual visitors, many of whom returned more than once and we hosted six meetings to promote our offer. I took part in a number of events, including panel discussions, and also took the opportunity to meet with Mayors from other UK and European cities to discuss our approach to common problems. Following up our discussions at MIPIM we have had particular interest in residential developments in the City centre, in a number of high profile sites particularly ones around the inner ring road in the City, and also very encouragingly in some of the problematic buildings near the City centre. I think members may be able to guess which ones have been problematic for quite some time and why I was particularly encouraged by the interest in doing something useful with them. Last year, and I think this perhaps comes to the point of Councillor Grant's question, our presence in MIPIM was entirely funded by the private sector. This year at the suggestion of the Conservative Leader of the County Council I agreed to match the County's funding with a contribution from the City Council to enable us to improve our presentation of the City and the County, and as a result we were able to produce much higher quality material, impressive presentations and to take comparable exhibition space adjacent to Nottingham and Derby with whom we worked very collaboratively. I was aware however that the public sector contribution enabled those who wished to do so to suggest that the presence of City and County politicians was something that was being publicly funded this year. To avoid such a distraction from the serious intent of our

presence I paid from my own pocket for all aspects of my travel, all aspects of my accommodation, I purchased my own train ticket, paid the incidental expenses and tax in my hotel and have covered the cost of the hotel accommodation and the Easyjet flight to and from Luton. A total personal cost of over £1100. So to answer Councillor Grant's question directly, I have no immediate plans to go abroad on Council business.

**Councillor Grant** – Yes, I don't disagree actually with the attendance. I don't think I will be taking advice on my supplementary question from Councillor Porter. I don't disagree with the attendance of senior politicians abroad to support economic development; in fact I am very pleased that on behalf of the country that the Prime Minister and Chancellor have taken a very active role in that and have taken large numbers of such trips abroad. But I do think that as a City perhaps we have neglected some of our official links such as with the Chinese City of Chongqing and others. Could the Mayor tell us what it is about the millionaires and A list film star playground of the Cote d'Azur that makes it such a priority over visiting China or India.

**City Mayor** – The flippant answer would be that the cost of the fare is considerably greater to those other venues. But the serious answer is of course that as I indicated in my answer that MIPIM is a major international, particularly European, but they do actually come from much further abroad than that, a major international showcase. It is an opportunity for us to engage directly with potential investors and developers where they just would not otherwise. And while of course you can make an argument for going to Chongqing, you can make an argument for going to India to go to Rajkot or something, that breadth of engagement with potential investors is not the same. There is something very particular about this and I can well understand the skepticism of others about going, but I do feel that it was worth £1100.

**Lord Mayor** – Question number 9.

**Question 9 - Councillor Grant:** In the event that Scotland votes for independence will the City Mayor lobby the British Government for the repatriation of civil service jobs to Leicester, which is as we all know an ideal location for Government offices?

**Lord Mayor - City Mayor**

**City Mayor** – On that Councillor Grant and I are in entire agreement. Leicester is indeed a very good location for government officers and indeed for officers more generally and I can assure him that I have not been waiting for the outcome of the Scottish referendum to promote Leicester as such a venue. In addition to promoting the investment of MIPIM that we have just been talking about, I do frequently as Mayor, meet with potential investors here and in Leicester and recently actually had a very useful discussion with Network Rail because one of the key advantages that we have got as a potential relocation of public or private sector businesses is actually our rail link and our particular rail link down to St. Pancras International. Tantalizingly just more than an hour but from the discussions with Network Rail it is very clear that they have commitment to line speed improvements which will get us there that few precious minutes quicker. They have also of course got the commitment now to the electrification of the Midland mainline which again should improve speed but will also improve the environmental credentials of the railway and indeed the comfort if we get on the back of that new rolling stock. We do have that as a major asset and I am very pleased that Councillor Grant joins me



in expressing the view that we are an ideal location, whether it is for government offices or indeed for private sector relocation.

**Lord Mayor** – Do you have a supplementary?

**Councillor Grant** – Yes my Lord Mayor. I am in agreement with the City Mayor. It has been a frustration that previous government office relocations have overlooked Leicester which has bemused many of us. As someone who is half Scottish I believe that a vote for independence would be a great shame, but it would be right for any central government civil service jobs to be repatriated to what remains of the United Kingdom in that event. Could I suggest to him that the Department for International Development Offices in East Kilbride would be an ideal candidate for us to lobby for relocation which would be nearly 500 jobs and fit very well with the City.

**City Mayor** – In the unlikely event of the Scots voting for full independence I will certainly press that particular case, but I think as I said it is not something that needs to wait for that unlikely event it is something that we will continue to do in the intervening period. I actually do share, I'm being quite serious about this, I do actually share Councillor Grant's frustration and disappointment that despite the many views of successive governments about decentralisation from London, we have not seen our share here in Leicester. I think there is a powerful case to be made for that and was particularly disappointed in the Lyons review that you may remember a few years ago under the previous government did not actually see any relocations to Leicester and I know that together we will be trying to take every opportunity to make that case although I think it is more likely to be a case of getting things out of London than out of East Kilbride.

**Lord Mayor** – Question number 10 Councillor Grant.

**Question 10 - Councillor Grant:** Can the City Mayor comment on the regular inability of the Council to send staff to Ward Community meetings who are able to answer the obvious questions the public will raise, and commit to address this issue with senior officers?

**Lord Mayor - City Mayor**

**City Mayor** – My Lord Mayor I don't know whether there is a particular occasion behind Councillor Grant's question. I would want to try and make sure that officers are available at Ward Community meetings equipped to answer questions. I would just say though that there are some practical difficulties associated with that. Council activities are very diverse and having an appropriate officer at each and every Ward Community meeting who is conversant with every aspect of the Council's activities is very, very difficult if not impossible to achieve. I did ask officers to check and there are over 80 Ward Community meetings in a typical year, that is a lot to cover, but if there are particular issues that Councillor Grant would want us to make sure that officers were represented at his Ward to answer questions I would be very happy to try and ensure that happens.

**Lord Mayor** – Do you have any supplementary question Councillor Grant?

**Councillor Grant** – Yes thank you Lord Mayor. Yes, previously this has happened over an extended period of time with highways and over a number of years we eventually seemed to have ground the department into submission and they did start sending senior officers and we eventually dealt with some of the key issues.

But at the last Knighton meeting we asked for officers to come to explain to the public the frustrations that they have about the inability that there seems to be of the Council to protect people from inappropriate developments and to give people advice. Two officers attended who when asked questions from the people you would expect such as the Stoneygate Conservation Society, were just unable to give an answer so one of them, of the people attending our meeting had helped the Council in drafting a policy and asked the question why is it not working, and the officer replied I don't know. I agree with the City Mayor that we don't want lots of officers turning up and sitting around and being inefficient and we are quite pointed in our meetings of identifying what it is we want addressing and asking officers to come, it was incredibly frustrating but on that occasion nobody from the Planning Department came who was able to give answers. Can he reassure us that we have asked that this happens at the next meeting that the most senior planning officer available does attend and will be able to answer resident's questions.

**City Mayor** - My Lord Mayor I certainly want to do my best to make sure that there is an appropriate officer there. I can understand though that obviously development control is not necessarily something that an officer who just happens to be there would know about. I don't know who was there and to what extent notice had been given of the likelihood of detailed questions, but I will seek to make sure that this is remedied and if other members do have similar problems obviously if they can talk, I would guess to the appropriate senior member of staff well in advance I am sure we would want to try and make sure we had somebody there who can answer questions that are specific to the Ward and to have sufficient expertise to do it with confidence.

**Lord Mayor** – Question number 11 Councillor Porter. Do you wish to go ahead?

**Question 11 - Councillor Porter:** Yes I am planning to ask it, yes. My question is How much did the recent trip to the French Riviera cost the taxpayer?

**Lord Mayor** - City Mayor

**City Mayor** – Now my cost as I explained to Council cost the tax payer nothing. I would suggest to Councillor Porter that he will need to ask the Liberal Democrat Leader of Hinckley and Bosworth whether or not he too paid his own fare and his costs of the total hotel bill.

**Lord Mayor** – Do you have a supplementary question Councillor Porter?

**Councillor Porter** – Yes Lord Mayor. Thank you. Obviously I mean people will be pleased that he has paid £1100 towards the costs of this trip, but in light of that will he also be paying back the tax payers for all the other money that he has wasted in his time as Mayor of this City now he has set the precedent. I mean £1100 is clearly peanuts to him whereas to most of us, to most people in this City it is huge amount of money and they would not be able to afford to do it. So he is privileged in that sense but what did concern me in his reply to an earlier question was that when he was on this jolly to the South of France he said he was interested in selling more residential development land and I would like to point out a really important thing to you Lord Mayor which is that I think it was last year he sold some land in East Hamilton to a developer for £13m. Now what I have done, and I have double checked this, so even if I am out by a slight amount I am willing to accept this, but basically it was 51 acres and he sold that land for £10m under its value, and those are proper valuations. I have today got them double checked. So even if I am 50%

out he has still under-sold that land for £5m. So my question to him is why on earth when this Council is struggling to get money together is he selling land for millions of pounds under its value?

**City Mayor** – Lord Mayor I will seek not to respond to the offensive elements of Councillor Porter’s question. I think members themselves will judge whether they were appropriate or not. The fact is that the land to which he refers was sold at a proper valuation, a valuation arrived at by our Council officers who are considerably expert in these matters and was one that reflected the development potential there and produced for us the appropriate level of capital receipt. It is also the case that I have sought to encourage the development of social housing in the City, much needed affordable housing in the City, and there have taken a much less commercial approach to it. It is something I am very proud of that we have disposed to Housing Associations and I would rather appreciate it if Councillor Porter would have the courtesy of listening to me when I am responding to his question. I have sought to do that in a way that has brought much needed affordable housing to our City and it is a record I am very proud of. He did not listen.

**Councillor Porter** – I was multi-tasking Lord Mayor so apologies for that.

**Question 12 - Councillor Porter:** My next question is does the Council value public consultation?

**Lord Mayor - City Mayor**

**City Mayor** – Yes Lord Mayor I have previously given an answer about the extent of the consultation, the important affect it has had on the development of many of our approaches to important aspects of the development of the City and will continue to be listening very closely to the consultation that is ongoing at the moment.

**Lord Mayor** – Any supplementary Councillor Porter?

**Councillor Porter** – Yes thank you Lord Mayor. I know often the City Mayor says things but the reality is that they don’t actually value consultation. I went on the just to double check again just to make sure I have got my facts right, I went on the Council’s consultation hub and I traced back since the Mayor has been in charge of this City and major things have not been on that consultation site. For example the bus lanes in Aylestone that was not on the site. The recent call for sites when people could put forward their suggestions for development sites across the City, that was not on there. And crucially at the moment we don’t have the boundary review up on the site. Now, yes I thought you would catch me out on that so I will just go through some of the other stuff that is on it. On it there was the Samworth Enterprise Academy catchment area. That does not have anything to do with the City. There was also – it does not it is nothing to do with the City Council. Let me give you one that certainly does not have anything whatsoever to do with the City which is changes to council tax support in Rutland – silence. Changes to Council

tax support in Oadby and Wigston and changes to council tax support in Hinckley and Bosworth. These were all on the Council's consultation hub. I would like, this is a question, a request and a question, I would like the City Mayor to go back now and put on something which is crucial to the people of this City which is the current boundary consultation that is taking place or at least have that linked up on the site. Thank you Lord Mayor.

**City Mayor** – I think most Members have already given an appropriate response by laughing. I mean it is just so silly. The A426 was I think one of the things he mentioned well of course that was County led and it would have been on the County's consultation website. The call for sites is just that, its call for sites it's not consultation. The links to other districts I assume is a matter of courtesy but I have not double checked. But of course the Boundary Commission proposals are on the web site, they are on the website in the appropriate place which is the Boundary Commission's website. Now the Boundary Commission's proposals are on the Boundary Commission's website and that is where I would direct Councillor Porter and anybody else who is interested in making representations.

**Lord Mayor** – Question number 13 - Councillor Porter.

**Question 13 - Councillor Porter:** Thank you Lord Mayor. This year how much money will the Council collect under the business rates retention scheme?

**Lord Mayor** - City Mayor

**City Mayor** - As I am sure Councillor Porter will know the business rates retention scheme means that rates are no longer handed over directly to central government but are shared between the Council, the government still and the fire authority. It has replaced the old formula grant system. Under this the Council gets 49% of the rates collected and our estimated share in 2013/14 will be £45m. Of course against that is off-set the amount that we have lost as a result of it not going to government and then coming back to us so it is actually in net terms neither here nor there.

**Lord Mayor** – Any supplementary Councillor Porter?

**Councillor Porter** – Yes thank you Lord Mayor. The supplementary question relates to last year's collection rates and the question really is that in terms of obviously if we are planning to collect £45m this year which the Council will be able to keep to provide or go to help to provide essential services, my concern is that the collection rate within the City is not what it should be and if the Council are not collecting the amount of money then it is going to obviously have an impact on essential services. So hopefully the answer will be that the collection rate is up at 80-90% but I would just like to ask the City Mayor what is the collection rate for last year?

**City Mayor** – My Lord Mayor as I have explained the change is simply one of distribution. The amount that we would have received under the old formula grant is now split between the rate we are able to retain and the revenue support grant and in fact it is not the collection rate that makes a difference, what is happening is

the extent to which government is cutting our revenue support grant. As Members will be aware that is the best part of £150m overall which makes its collection rate as important as it is, actually something that is comparatively speaking the small change of what we have to spend. Of course we want to seek to achieve as much as we can but the fact is that our total support fell by £10m in 2013/14, a further £19m in 2014/15 with more to come and of course that is what makes a real difference not the amount that we collect.

**Lord Mayor** – The next item is...

**Councillor Porter** – Hang on, I've got one more question.

**Lord Mayor** – Yes question number 14.

**Question 14 - Councillor Porter:** Yes I think some people are quite interested in how many properties are available so this is my question Lord Mayor, can the Council list the twenty or so properties they plan to sell for £1?

**Lord Mayor** - City Mayor

**City Mayor** - My Lord Mayor the community asset transport policy has been discussed previously particularly at OSC which is where this issue arose and had Councillor Porter been listening I am not sure if he was still there at that stage he does leave these meetings very early, but had he been there he would be aware that the policy provides for the community use of property assets by the way of disposal by lease, licence or sale at market value or lower. With each case and this is the significant bit to stress, with each case based on its merits and dependent upon a business case put forward by potential occupiers. So while I was asked to speculate how many it would be there already having been two, I did say there could be a number more, but of course it will be entirely dependent on the business case that is made and our subsequent consideration of that business case and I would suggest to Councillor Porter, first of all that he stays to the end of meetings and secondly that he reads the papers.

**Lord Mayor** – Do you have a supplementary Councillor Porter?

**Councillor Porter** – Yes, he does not have to be so rude. He did get ...

**City Mayor** – In the circumstances comparatively mild I thought.

**Councillor Porter** – I mean he did get worked up at one of the last Overview and Scrutiny meetings when I asked him quite a simple question, but on to my supplementary question if I may Lord Mayor. In answer to an earlier question he mentioned that when he was on his jolly to the Cote d'Azur that they had a stand and he said there was a lot of people went up to the stand. So my question is did he have a banner on the top of the stand saying Poundland?

**City Mayor** – My Lord Mayor I can only remark that Councillor Porter is indeed the master of asking simple questions.

### **MATTERS RESERVED TO COUNCIL**

Having declared a Declarable Personal Interest in this item Councillor Senior left the Chamber for the duration of the following debate.

### **Pay Policy Statement 2014 / 15**

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

39. That:

1. The Council approves the Pay Policy Statement 2014/15; and
2. that the Employees Committee will continue to act on behalf of Full Council as the Remuneration Committee in relation to matters concerning policy on senior pay, and will specifically consider any salary packages in excess of £100,000 and any severance packages in excess of £100,000.

### **Capital Programme 2014 /15**

Councillor Senior returned to the Chamber.

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

40. That the City Council approve the Capital Programme as:

1. described in the report attached to the Council agenda and;
2. set out in the specific recommendations reproduced in Appendix B to the script and attached hereto.

### **EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES**

None.

### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

41. Proposed by Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Sood and carried:

“Leicester City Council recognises the plight of asylum seekers forced to flee their home countries due to conflict and persecution. Many arrive in the UK after having been threatened, detained, beaten or tortured.

An adult seeking protection in this country who has no other source of support will receive just over £5 a day to pay for food, clothing, toiletries and travel (accommodation and utilities are paid for separately for those who have nowhere to live). They are not allowed to work to support themselves. If their claims are refused by the Home Office, they lose all support and are left destitute and street homeless.

In the last six months of 2013 the British Red Cross Leicester Refugee Support Services have carried out 1,659 actions (e.g. the issuing of food parcels, sleeping bags) to support 325 destitute asylum seekers in Leicester. Of these 108 were new cases and it is likely that this reflects the impact of welfare reforms in general and has resulted in a reduction in community

capacity to continue to support such persons. Leicester City Council is concerned about such destitution and its impact on local communities.

Leicester is a welcoming and inclusive city and wants to join those local authorities (Liverpool, Bristol, Sheffield, Oxford, Glasgow, Leeds and Bradford) petitioning the Home Secretary to relieve the suffering of people seeking sanctuary and especially those people who have yet to be granted leave to remain in the UK.

Leicester City Council approves the following actions:

1. Write on behalf of Leicester City Council to the Minister of State for Immigration questioning Government policies that force asylum seekers into destitution; expressing concern over the low level of support available to asylum seekers; seeking a change of policy to allow local authorities to assist refused asylum seekers who are in danger of falling into destitution; asking that such asylum seekers should be able to work to support themselves if they have been waiting for more than 6 months for their cases to be resolved; and demanding that local authorities should be permitted to provide emergency provision to refused asylum seekers as to other homeless people.
2. Ask Leicester's MPs to support the spirit of this motion, to raise the matter in the House of Commons, and to support a change in current laws regarding asylum applications by removing restrictions on local authorities in the support they can provide to destitute asylum seekers.
3. Leicester City Council officers to produce a report summarising existing support for asylum seekers available in Leicester including housing, training, education, and legal advice open to vulnerable asylum applicants.
4. Leicester City Council to join the national campaign "Still Human, Still Here" (a coalition of 60 organisations, including several city councils, the Church of England and Catholic Archbishop Conferences, Crisis, Oxfam, and the Red Cross, who are proposing practical solutions to ending the destitution of refused asylum seekers in the UK).
5. Leicester City Council to seek further support for this motion and action via the Local Government Association and by encouraging other Councils in the UK to join us on this issue.

### **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

As this was the last meeting before Annual Council the City Mayor thanked the Lord Mayor for the way he had conducted the business of the Council and for his patience, tact, impartiality and unfailing good humour in his Charing of Council meetings during his year in office. This was supported by all present.

The Lord Mayor declared the meeting closed at 7.30pm





**Recommendations**

3.1 The Council is asked to:

- (a) approve the capital programme described in this report and summarised at Appendix Two, subject to any amendments proposed by the Mayor;
- (b) reallocate the following resources from the previous programme, in order to use them (for the same overall purposes) in the new programme:-
  - New Primary Schools Places (£9.508m)
  - School Maintenance (£6.288m)
  - Adult Care Transformation (£4.231m);
- (c) for those schemes designated immediate starts, delegate authority to the lead director to commit expenditure, subject to the normal requirements of contract procedure rules and finance procedure rules;
- (d) delegate authority to the City Mayor to determine a plan of spending for each policy provision; and to commit expenditure up to the maximum available;
- (e) agree that any capital receipts arising from the sale of former elderly persons' homes or (if these become available) day centres be applied for the purposes of the corporate programme (to offset the significant cost of new investment in adult social care services);
- (f) for the purposes of finance procedure rules:
  - Determine that service resources shall consist of service revenue contributions; and government grants/third party contributions ringfenced for specific purposes;
  - Designate the highways maintenance programme as a programme area within which the director can re-allocate resources to meet operational requirements;
  - Designate the following schemes as a single programme area: transport programme management, road safety schemes, local contribution to major transport schemes, improving bus services, transport network improvements and level access at bus stops.
- (g) determine that the City Mayor may increase any scheme in the programme, or add a new scheme to the programme, subject to a maximum of £10m corporate resources.
- (h) for the avoidance of doubt, determine that the City Mayor may commit funds for the Haymarket Bus Station scheme, funds for which form part of policy provisions;

- (i) determine that the City Mayor may reduce or delete any capital programme provision, subject to a maximum of 20% of scheme value for “immediate starts”; and may transfer any “policy provision” to the “immediate starts” category;
- (j) delegate to directors, in consultation with the relevant assistant mayor, authority to incur expenditure in respect of policy provisions on design and other professional fees and preparatory studies, but not any other type of expenditure;
- (k) note the Housing Revenue Account capital programme, shown at Appendix Four, which was approved by the Council in February;
- (l) agree that the recommendations above shall (where the context permits) apply to the HRA programme, and that the HRA programme shall be divided into immediate starts, policy provisions and programme areas as shown at Appendix Four.