



Leicester
City Council

At a meeting of the LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL held at the Town Hall at FIVE O'CLOCK in the afternoon on Wednesday, 25 FEBRUARY 2015 duly convened for the business hereunder mentioned.

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BUSINESS

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1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

2. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of 22 January 2015 are available to view at <http://www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk:8071/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=81&MId=6579&Ver=4> Copies are also available from Democratic Support on 0116 454 6352 / committees@leicester.gov.uk

3. **PETITIONS**

- Presented by Members of the Public
- Presented by Councillors

4. **QUESTIONS**

- From Members of the Public
- From Councillors

5. **MATTERS RESERVED TO FULL COUNCIL**

5.1 Leicester City Council Pay Policy Statement 2015/16

6. **EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES**

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

7. **NOTICES OF MOTION**

8. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

Filming and Recording the Meeting

The Council is committed to transparency and supports efforts to record and share reports of proceedings of public meetings through a variety of means, including

social media. In accordance with government regulations and the Council's policy, persons and press attending any meeting of the Council open to the public (except Licensing Sub Committees and where the public have been formally excluded) are allowed to record and/or report all or part of that meeting. Details of the Council's policy are available at www.leicester.gov.uk or from Democratic Support.

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The aim of the Regulations and of the Council's policy is to encourage public interest and engagement so in recording or reporting on proceedings members of the public are asked:

- ✓ to respect the right of others to view and hear debates without interruption;
- ✓ to ensure that the sound on any device is fully muted and intrusive lighting avoided;
- ✓ where filming, to only focus on those people actively participating in the meeting;
- ✓ where filming, to (via the Chair of the meeting) ensure that those present are aware that they may be filmed and respect any requests to not be filmed.

PRESENT:

JOHN THOMAS, LORD MAYOR
CHAIRMAN

SIR PETER SOULSBY – CITY MAYOR

Abbey Ward

HARSHAD DAHYABHAI BHAVSAR
ANNETTE BYRNE
VIJAY SINGH RIYAIT

Aylestone Ward

ADAM CLARKE
NIGEL CARL PORTER

Beaumont Leys Ward

VIOLET GEDDES GRAHAM DEMPSTER
PAUL THOMAS WESTLEY

Belgrave Ward

RASHMIKANT JOSHI

Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields

WAYNE JAN NAYLOR

Castle Ward

NEIL CLAYTON
PATRICK JOSEPH KITTERICK
LYNN SENIOR

Charnwood Ward

PAUL DARREN NEWCOMBE
ABDUL RAZAK OSMAN

Coleman Ward

MIAN MOHAMMED MAYAT
DEBORAH SANGSTER

Freemen Ward

WILLIAM HENRY SHELTON

Humberstone and Hamilton Ward

RITA PATEL
BARBARA ANNE POTTER
GURINDER SINGH SANDHU

Knighton Ward

ROSS GRANT
INDERJIT SINGH GUGNANI
DR LYNN MOORE

Latimer Ward

MANJULA PAUL SOOD

New Parks Ward

DAWN ALFONSO
STEPHEN PETER CORRALL
MALCOLM WILLIAM UNSWORTH

Rushey Mead Ward

PIARA SINGH CLAIR
ROSS WILLMOTT

Spinney Hills Ward

HANIF AQBANY
SHOFIQL ISLAM CHOWDHURY
MOHAMMED DAWOOD

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

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Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Lord Mayor noted that due to the late hour there would not be time for the City Mayor to give the presentation concerning 'Connecting Leicester' which had been indicated on the agenda. However Mr Mark Radyski was invited to address the Chamber in relation to concerning his members of Council concerning a petition submitted in the following terms: "We the undersigned petition the Council to review and resolve the Traffic Chaos/Congestion caused by the various improvements made to our city centre and surrounding area roads".

Following his address the City Mayor responded to the points raised.

The Lord Mayor and Council thanked Ella Connelly for her work prior in organising a bake sale to aid Comic Relief prior to the start of the earlier meeting which had raised £121.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Lord Mayor invited the Monitoring Officer to brief Council in respect of declarations regarding item 5.1 on the agenda 'Pay Policy Statement 2015/16'.

The Monitoring Officer reminded Council that the report did not set the pay of the Council officers referred to within it and that it only comments on the scale of pay to the most senior officers and the ratio of pay between the most highly paid staff and the median pay of the wider workforce. 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 as Council was only being asked to approve a statement providing commentary on pay it was unlikely that a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) or Prejudicial Other Disclosable Interest (ODI) would be triggered as pay and policy is not affected by the report. However the Monitoring Officer reminded Members that was just his advice and the judgement was for each individual Member to make. If a DPI or Prejudicial ODI was declared the Member would need to leave the room.

Councillor Senior declared an interest in item 5.1 on the agenda as a close acquaintance was mentioned in the report. and stated that she would leave the room for the duration of this item.

Councillor Westley declared an Other Disclosable Interest' in item 3 on the agenda as he lived in the street which was referred to in the petition he was to present.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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

34. That the minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 22 January 2015, a copy having been sent to each Member of the Council, be taken as read and that they be approved as a correct record.

PETITIONS

PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Councillor Westley presented a petition in the following terms:

“We the undersigned call on the City Council Highways Department and Buswell Lodge School to take measures to stop parking and irresponsible driving on pavements and on the street of Beauville Drive; to protect local residents and school children from the risk of being hurt or fatally injured.”

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

QUESTIONS

Lord Mayor: Question 1, Councillor Aqbany.

Councillor Aqbany: Thank you Lord Mayor. “Resulting from the Government’s enhanced discount for ‘Right to Buy’ of Council accommodation, do we know how many properties have been disposed and how much income has come into the City Council?”

Lord Mayor: Councillor Connelly.

Councillor Connelly: Thank you Lord Mayor. Thank you Councillor Aqbany for the question. The maximum Right to Buy discount increased in April 2012 from £34,000 to £75,000. It rose again in April 2014 to £77,000 in line with inflation. Between April 2012 and December 2014 the Council, under the Right to Buy scheme, sold 456 homes generating total useable capital receipt to the Council of £8.3m. Of this £6.7m must be used to finance one-for-one replacement social housing, either new build by the Council or grants to the housing associations. However, the cost of building a new property is on average £120,000 and sale of our Right to Buy receipts contributes somewhere between £20,000-£30,000 towards that cost, and we as an authority have to make up the difference. The remaining £1.6m is available to the corporate capital programme and we use it towards funding the disabled facilities grant scheme.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Aqbany have you got a supplementary?

Councillor Aqbany: No, Lord Mayor no I think a thorough answer has been given. Thanks.

Lord Mayor: Thank you very much. Question 2, Councillor Aqbany.

Councillor Aqbany: Thank you Lord Mayor. “Do we know how many premises the Council has disposed of for £1 and also by tender or auction and how much has been raised by this?”

Councillor Connelly: Thank you my Lord Mayor and thank you to Councillor Aqbany for the question. To date in 2014/15 the Council has completed the sale of 4 properties for £1, these being 58 Earl Howe Street to the Pakistani Youth and Community Association; two sites for affordable housing at Benbow Rise and

Hamlin Road; and a site for supported living development at Manor Farm. Sales totalling £3,264,500 were achieved at auction in November. These properties being 72 Belgrave Road, Nuffield House, Elizabeth House and the Douglas Bader Centre. We have also completed the sale of Cooper House and Abbey House with deferred capital receipts.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Aqbany have you got a supplementary?

Councillor Aqbany: No, I am happy with the response.

Lord Mayor: Thank you very much Councillor Aqbany. Councillor Chaplin.

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I would like to ask the Assistant Mayor for Adult Social Care - "Through the consultation process to review funding for the Adhar project, which supports young carers and their parents, what measures were taken to properly consult with the young carers, some of whom are as young as eight years old"?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Patel.

Councillor Patel: Thank you my Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Chaplin for that question. The original historic contract with Adhar project was for the provision of support for a range of adult mental health service users and their carers. During the history of this contract the project has worked with young carers and we value all of the work they have done, including with young carers. As part of the review of preventative services I understand that we undertook consultation with a range of service users where significant change was likely as a result of the proposals. I also understand from a technical perspective as an adult service, we have addressed that, as the focus was on support to adult mental health users and significant change was not made to these services. However, we accept that valuing and speaking to young people is really important and we will be doing this, as there is an additional element of funding specifically for carers, which has not been awarded which affords the Council the opportunity to speak to young carers and take into consideration their views for future provision.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Patel. Councillor Chaplin have you a supplementary?

Councillor Chaplin: I do my Lord Mayor and thank you, and thank you Councillor Patel for the honest and open answer because there were concerns that the cultural and faith importance to the young carers particularly and their parents had not been taken into account. Will you give assurances perhaps that you will be working with Councillor Dempster in Children's Services to ensure that the children in particular are listened to, because obviously they were a particular part of the service that is run there. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Patel.

Councillor Patel: Councillor Dempster and I have already in the past talked about support for children who are carers and of course we will work across departments. Also you may be pleased to know that I am visiting Adhar project and have been invited to a number of their events and they are very successful and actually you know the young carers wrote to me about a year ago so we really value that work and certainly I will work with Councillor Dempster across departments. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Patel. Councillor Grant.

Councillor Grant: Thank you Lord Mayor. “How long will officers need to look over the data from the experimental lane closures on Welford Road; will it conveniently delay the decision until after the election?”

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I am advised by the officers that there is a significant amount of data collected and quite a lot of number crunching to be done following it, but like Councillor Grant I am very keen that this should be brought into the public domain at the earliest possible time and certainly if at all possible I would like it to happen before the election, because I am aware that if we decide not to go ahead with it there will be a number of people who will be well pleased by that announcement and if we decide to go ahead with it there will probably be just about an equal number of people pleased to go ahead with it. So I am encouraging officers to get on with it, but I cannot give an absolute guarantee that the details we have got will be capable of being analysed or processed by that time.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Councillor Grant have you got a supplementary?

Councillor Grant: Yes Lord Mayor and I am actually going to change it because of the news that we heard from the petitioner earlier. I welcome the eagerness of the City Mayor to release data. Will he also release quickly the air quality data which apparently is also conveniently only going to be available after the election?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I think the programme for the release of the air quality data is something that was fixed some time ago and it is done on an annual basis as I understand it and I am hearing some assent from the Deputy Mayor who I think actually will be handling this. If it is possible to bring it forward I am pleased to do that but I suspect that it is something that is collected on a once a year basis and released at a particular time every year.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Question 5, Councillor Grant.

Councillor Grant: “How does Leicester compare in terms of ranking to other local authorities in England on the proportion of money held back from schools spent centrally?”

Lord Mayor: Councillor Dempster.

Councillor Dempster: Thank you Lord Mayor. The national average of money that is held centrally by local authorities is 3.49% and ours is 4.1% and I have been very careful in the words I use and what I am saying is centrally held, not held back. That is really important because in actual fact in line with the strong partnership that there is between our schools and between the schools and the local authority, it is our schools that actually say they want to pool this amount of money and give it back to the local authority, so that they can then by pooling the money they can then fund some very important initiatives. So for example the very successful initiative Whatever it Takes that addresses reading, another one is all the project work we do around Closing the Gap, and I think that we should be really proud of

the fact that our schools want to support each other and that is why they pool the money so that they get best value, that they can learn from each other, that they can support each other, and remember when they are pooling that money and giving that to the local authority that is not for us to make the decisions we simply hold the money for them and Schools Forum decide how that money is spent. I am more than happy to give Councillor Grant a more detailed briefing note about Schools Forum and how it actually functions.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Dempster. Councillor Grant have you got a supplementary?

Councillor Grant: I will take Councillor Dempster up on the offer of a briefing, Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you very much. Question 6, Councillor Potter.

Councillor Potter: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I just wanted to say my Lord Mayor before I start there seem to be 14 questions listed here from me but they are normally split between me and my colleague, but it's the way they got put through the administration this time it looks as though I have actually listed all the questions. But I just wanted to give you the reassurance my Lord Mayor that the questions that we are received and do read out they are actually from the public and not from ourselves so I will continue to go ahead with the questions that have already been listed this time. "If the City Mayor knows who has proposed buying the land of the former New Walk Centre site, why is he holding back the information for a further three weeks?"

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor the New Walk Centre site is very, very important to this city. It is a unique opportunity that has been created there by the demolition last weekend of the former Council offices and it is vital important that we get the development there that is right for the city and that brings the biggest and most significant economic benefit to the city and indeed jobs in the city. We are actually in the final stages of a competitive procurement process for selecting a development partner for the site. We started actually with 11 potential developers and it is down to 3. We have now got a timetable for the final evaluation of the completion by mid-March, with the expectation that we will have an announcement towards the end of March, when the legal process is concluded. But, and this is a big but, because of the importance of this site I am determined that we get it right, rather than that we do it quickly, and of course it is tempting on the back of the demolition to try and say well this is immediately what we are going to do with it. I want to get this right and it is for that reason that we have selected the approach that we have which enables us to have control of the development of the site rather than just as might normally be the case relying on our planning controls. We have ourselves commissioned the demolition of the building, we are ourselves retaining the ownership of the site and will continue to retain that ownership until we are convinced that we have got the best possible deal for Leicester and that very important site. What I did not want to happen was the Council to pass it over to a developer only for it to sit with hoardings around the side of it for a number of years and remain undeveloped – it is far too important for that. For that reason, it may be March, I hope it will be March, but it will be as long as it takes to get it right.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Councillor Potter have you got a supplementary?

Councillor Potter: No thank you my Lord Mayor. Rather than a question, just an observation. OK then I will rephrase it yes I have got a question and the question would be I hope that consideration will be given to the person that is buying it. Sir Peter does not have the authority to give out planning consent and it would have to go through the planning authority of this city of course.

City Mayor: If I can answer that question Lord Mayor in the affirmative. It is of course the case that any proposal for the site will have to go through the normal planning process and would be subject to scrutiny by Members of the Council. But I was stressing in the initial response that for this site it is too important for that to be our only control. We are actually the owners of the site and that gives us extra control beyond the planning process that any developer will have to go through in the normal manner.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Question 8.

Councillor Potter: That is question 7 my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Sorry question 7, yes.

Councillor Potter: “How many complaints in the last year has the City Mayor received regarding the horrendous traffic congestions in the city?” And let’s hope he can be very honest when he answers the question.

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: I can and I would always seek to be open and honest in this chamber. In fact given the scale of you know what has been suggested to us is the outrage with regard to traffic congestion in the city, in fact the numbers of complaints that I have received is remarkably low. I have in the current year received 2 complaints about Belgrave flyover, 3 about the A426, 2 about Welford Place/Newarke Street, none about 20 mile per hour zones and 6 about general congestion. That makes a total of 13. That, last year in the whole of 2014, was 22 on the Belgrave flyover, 6 on the A426, 4 on Welford Place, 1 on 20 mile per hour zones and 15 on general traffic congestion. While of course I take all of those seriously it does not sound like outrage as to horrendous traffic congestion.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Councillor Potter have you a supplementary?

Councillor Potter: I do my Lord Mayor. It seems that myself and my colleagues this side of the chambers obviously get a lot more complaints about the congestion in the city than the Elected Mayor himself. But nevertheless he has given us his views and I am sure everyone is aware of reading the Leicester Mercury, the Leicester Mercury actually get more complaints than the City Mayor has admitted to this evening. Thank you my Lord Mayor. Question number 8 ...

Lord Mayor: Wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute it’s the City Mayor can we give him a change as well, it is a democracy here.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor if I might answer that question. I would be delighted to receive copies of all of the complaints that Councillor Potter claims that she has received to see how many there are and to answer them appropriately. I suspect they are few and I suspect they have already been answered by me, either this evening or on previous occasions.

Lord Mayor: Question 8.

Councillor Potter: ... and no they haven't. Question 8. "How many Council tenants have been served notices of eviction through late payments of rent/bedroom tax since the full Council figures in 2015?" Well I can ask the question again because the question has been raised. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Connelly.

Councillor Connelly: Thank you my Lord Mayor. The answer is very simple. None. We do not evict tenants for late payment of rent.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Potter have you a supplementary?

Councillor Potter: I certainly do my Lord Mayor because there is an evictee over in the area that I represent for late payment of rent. So it is not quite correct and I would like Councillor Connelly to recheck his figures because there is definitely a constituent within my Ward that is facing eviction through the courts for late payment of rent. And on a Thursday and a Friday in the Crown Courts my Lord Mayor there are lots of Council tenants for late payments of rents. Every Thursday and Friday afternoon all your tenants within the city are being taken to the Leicester Crown Court to have their cases heard behind doors.

Lord Mayor: Is that your question finished or is that a monologue? Councillor Connelly.

Councillor Connelly: Again I will respond to the question. It clearly says about late payments of rent. We do not evict anybody for late payment of rent. What we do do is that sometimes we take tenants to court for significant non-payment of rent which is obviously clearly different to late payment of rent.

Lord Mayor: Question 9, Councillor Potter.

Councillor Potter: "How many Council tenants have been given extra court costs on top of the late payments of rent covering years 2014/2015 up to today's date?"

Lord Mayor: Councillor Connelly.

Councillor Connelly: Again, I will answer the question as written. We do not take anybody to court for late payment of rent, so there is no extra court costs.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Potter, have you a supplementary?

Councillor Potter: Can the Cabinet for Housing confirm to me that if a city tenant, Council tenant was to go to court for housing arrears, OK, it is a question of the word. It is one word that you want to play around with in a different way it has been asked, but that is OK. My Lord Mayor the question I am trying to ascertain is how many Council tenants, whether it be late payments, non-payments, or whatever payments, how many Council tenants are facing eviction through Leicester City Council's housing department to today's date, bearing in mind I actually go to the court every week myself remember.

Lord Mayor: We have read the story.

Councillor Potter: And I speak to the tenants.

Lord Mayor: How could I possibly comment. You are entitled to one question out of that, so Councillor Connelly will you try out of the those three areas, would you select one that you can try and answer the question that Councillor Potter is trying to get at.

Councillor Connelly: Again I can only answer, I can only answer to the question on the paper and the paper clearly says 'late' it does not say 'arrears' it says 'late'. However, in respect of the costs if we take somebody to court, there is a cost of £250 that the tenant is expected to pay, and quite rightly so because otherwise what would be disgraceful if we went to the tenants who paid their rent and said actually you are going to have to subsidise those who don't pay their rent because you are going to have to pay for their court costs. I think quite rightly the 21,000 tenants that we have who regularly pay their rent on time in the full amount would be outraged at the thought that they would have to subsidise people who, for whatever reason, have not been able to pay their rent.

Lord Mayor: Right. Question 10, Councillor Potter.

Councillor Potter: Thank you my Lord Mayor. "Could the Assistant Mayor for Education give her thoughts on sex education for students under the age of 5?"

Lord Mayor: Councillor Dempster.

Councillor Dempster: OK. Can I just thank Councillor Potter for this question because I think there is lot of misunderstanding about sex education in our schools. I want to just point out that recommendations by the House of Commons Education Committee, the Children's Commissioner and OFSTED all agree that high quality, age appropriate relationship and sex education plays an important part in safeguarding. So when we are talking particularly about 5 year olds we are talking about helping those young people to stay safe and that is incredibly important. In this city we already refer to relationships and sex education. Now I think that is really important because the key issue is actually about relationships, it is about what feels safe, about what is you know a good relationship, a healthy relationship, so as children get older you would talk about domestic violence for example. So lots and lots of issues and I think that we are actually getting that balance right and I do have confidence in our schools that they are working with parents and carers that they are engaging our young people in a way that is age-appropriate to keep them safe.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Dempster. Councillor Potter have you a supplementary?

Councillor Potter: I just want to say thank you very much to Councillor Dempster for the polite, respectful response and I am sure the citizens that have requested that question will appreciate the answer. Thank you. May I stay standing my Lord Mayor?

Lord Mayor: Question 11, Councillor Potter.

Councillor Potter: "What action, if any, are the Council putting in place with regards to sex education lessons within the city?"

Lord Mayor: Councillor Dempster.

Councillor Dempster: Thank you. Again you know I would want to reiterate, I think that this is an issue that you know feelings can run high, people sometimes misunderstand. I think it is really important that I reiterate about our focus being on relationships, and sex education is only one part of that. We actually still have two very experienced qualified teachers who are based centrally but who work with all our schools to help them in delivering the curriculum in an appropriate manner, give them a toolkit and then we will actually work through that toolkit with staff in our schools. We also have in recent years, we have had a number of specific time limited programmes, one of those was engaging with parents and I think that is quite important. You can't do all of the whole thing about relationships and sex education just in schools, there is also obviously a very big role for parents. So it is important that we have programmes to engage parents so that they can feel more comfortable and confident when they are addressing these issues with young people. So again I do think that because of the resources that we are providing centrally and the specific programmes that we have, the way that we are engaging with schools, I feel confident that we are getting it right, but that is not to say that people won't still have concerns and I do think that where people have concerns it is really important that in the first instance they go in and they talk to the school, their child's tutor, the young person's tutor at school. That would be the first step if they have got concerns.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Dempster. Councillor Potter have you a supplementary?

Councillor Potter: Just to ask Councillor Dempster as to whether the same policies and considerations are given to the academies within the school? Are they being co-operative and in line with all the other schools within the city, because it is causing a bit of a problem with other issues as you know.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Dempster.

Councillor Dempster: Thank you for that and I think it is fair to say that some schools are more engaged than others. I don't actually have that precise information, thank you for raising that because that is something that I will look into and I will get back to you on that one.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Dempster. Question 12, Councillor Potter.

Councillor Potter: Thank you my Lord Mayor. "How many residents in the city have been sent warnings of late payment notices regarding 2014/2015 council tax bills?"

Lord Mayor: Councillor Russell.

Councillor Russell: Thank you my Lord Mayor. This year 44,156 householders have had reminder notices sent to them.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Potter have you got a supplementary?

Councillor Potter: I haven't my Lord Mayor. Thank you Sarah for the response.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Question 13, Councillor Potter.

Councillor Potter: Thank you my Lord Mayor. "How many residents have been

served with extra court costs added to their accounts relating to council tax covering year 2014/15?"

Lord Mayor: Councillor Russell.

Councillor Russell: Thank you Lord Mayor. 16,306 households have required summonses for their Council tax this year. It is worth saying that even at the point when people get caught they are still offered the support to go through the potential of being able to have the Council tax discretionary relief grant. We will still at that very late stage continue to work with residents in the city to see whether there are particular circumstances that mean they are unable to pay, and we will continue to obviously work with residents whenever there is financial hardship. We do obviously have to attach the court costs on to it for similar reasons that Councillor Connelly gave that otherwise it goes on to those who choose to pay theirs on time. The other thing it is also worth noting though is that we have this year put in, or last year actually, put in additional measure working with the courts so that where it is for the much smaller amounts, particularly those who are paying Council tax for the first time, we negotiated a lower fee at court than is traditionally given.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Potter, have you got a supplementary?

Councillor Potter: I have my Lord Mayor. I have to say yes it is a question otherwise these attack me. I just wondered Sarah can I ask you, there is actually some assistance in the courts, there is a gentleman in there actually, he is a very, very nice gentleman. He assists everybody that wants some legal help and support and he is very, very assisting. Does he come from the courts or is he from Leicester City Council, and if he does come from the courts, do we have an officer in place like that to actually help and to support them when they are in court because a lot of these people, some of these people that myself and colleagues have seen this side are actually very young parents and they have actually got young children too and would like to find a way of preventing it from getting to that stage, because £250 on top of someone late rent or late poll tax, council tax, is obviously because they are struggling already. So by putting another £250 you are actually sending them further into debt.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Russell.

Councillor Russell: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Obviously we would rather nobody ended up going to court because they were not paying their Council tax. Because of that we include in every single piece of mailing that we sent out in every contact with our residents, we ensure that we have the numbers, the addresses so that people can get in touch and that we have a consistent reminder on every piece of information that goes out that if people are struggling to pay their bills to get in touch with us because we can help. And yes I am fairly certain that the individual you refer to is one of our members of staff, we have had something in place over the last two years in particular to look to support residents wherever possible and that is the point I was saying, Lord Mayor, about making sure that even when they get to the court stage, that if we have any additional financial assistance that they could apply for that for whatever reason they have chosen not to apply for before, we will still help them even at that late stage. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Russell. Councillor Potter have you a supplementary.

Councillor Potter: No I have already had one thank you, and thank you very much

for your response.

Lord Mayor: Question 15, Councillor, 14 – sorry.

Councillor Porter: “How much money has been collected from street fines relating to unpaid parking fees or disrupted it should be disrupted cases shouldn't it? Disputed cases yes I do apologise. Is that for you Sarah sorry, covering year 2014/2015?” Sorry.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Russell.

Councillor Russell: Thank you my Lord Mayor. We have not collected any unpaid fines because they would then be paid, but having said that and in terms of disputed cases then if they are at the point of going to the Ombudsman the amount gets held until such time as those cases are paid. What I can tell you though is that the total parking fines incurred over the last year has been £1.44m and total fines paid so far has been £871,000. We have had to write off some due to being unable to trace people and many others are still being followed up. It is also worth saying, and this is for the benefit of Members generally my Lord Mayor, that it may take up to 2 years for us to be able to get those fines back, partly because car ownership changes and there is sometimes disputes about whose fine it is. So ensuring that everything is done properly can take some time sadly.

Lord Mayor: right, Councillor Potter, your supplementary?

Councillor Potter: I don't have one my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: We will go then to question 15, Councillor Potter.

Councillor Potter: Thank you my Lord Mayor. “During the last year Older Person's Month where older persons were offered a 'special afternoon tea' at the Richard III Centre yet there was no concession on the entry fee, why was this the case?”

Lord Mayor: Councillor Patel.

Councillor Patel: My Lord Mayor. Thank you Councillor Potter for that question. The King Richard III Visitor Centre which was set up by the Council is now run by a not for profit trust. The trust was pleased to take part in the Older Person's Month's events and I understand that the normal senior citizens concession rate entry fee is £7.00 and it was applied to anyone taking up the offer. The special offer element for Older Person's Month was a pot of tea and a scone for only £1.50 in the Visitor Centre Café. The offer was promoted by the Council as a weekday afternoon tea for older people from Leicester, and the eligibility criteria was the production of a Leicester City Council older person's bus pass.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Patel. Councillor Potter have you a supplementary?

Councillor Potter: No, no supplementary. The person will have heard your response anyway Councillor Patel. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Question 16, Councillor Potter.

Councillor Potter: “What is the total cost of the re-internment of Richard III

including policing and video screens?”

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. The re-internment of Richard III is obviously a once in a lifetime opportunity for this city and it will put us once again at the centre of international media attention. I think at the last count we had 92 media and broadcast companies from around the world coming to Leicester and I would expect that number will grow as it gets closer. Clearly with that amount of media attention and the eyes of the world on us we are, I think, it would be foolish not to do it properly, not to do it well and we will do it properly and we will do it well. The approach to it is one of partnership between ourselves, the County Council who have been very supportive and obviously have got quite a lot of things happening out in the County as well, Leicester University and the Diocese and Leicester Cathedral, and we have had very good support from the other agencies, particularly the police who have been very supportive in the preparations and will undoubtedly have incurred costs themselves. So far the only costs that have really been quantified are those for Leicester Cathedral because obviously they need to do it for their fund raising appeal. They have put a £2m price tag on their involvement. Clearly at the end of this there will need to be a full and final reckoning of the cost associated with it, but it is too early really to put a figure on that. But when there is a full and final reckoning I am determined that that should be put in the public domain so that people can see as I am sure they will want to see, that they have actually got good value for their money.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Councillor Potter your supplementary?

Councillor Potter: No thank you my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Question 17, Councillor Potter.

Councillor Potter: Thank you my Lord Mayor. “Why have the previous two Bus Panel meetings been cancelled when there were items that could have been discussed?”

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor there have been frequent Bus Panel meetings over the last few years. I find them incredibly useful and I think so do the participants. The last meeting was actually on the 30th October and I think it was felt that after that very productive meeting on that occasion it was possible to have a bit of a gap before we have the next one, and I did not really just want to bring Panel members along just for the sake of half an hour of updates. It really needs a bit more substance than that. I have ensured that Panel members have been briefed on progress on ongoing bus related projects since the end of October on a fairly frequent basis. The next meeting is actually planned for the 14th April and at that meeting the Panel will be updated on some of the key issues for bus users, obviously the progress we are making with the Haymarket Bus Station and some of the final proposals for the A50 major highway scheme and obviously consultation, we referred to it earlier on, on the Air Quality Action Plan because clearly quality of public transport and dealing with the quality of air in the city is a vital one for them as it is for us.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Potter your supplementary?

Councillor Potter: No I am just grateful that the City Mayor said that the next meeting is the 14th April. I am sure I will inform the members so that they can attend if they have got some questions outstanding.

Lord Mayor: Question 18, Councillor Potter.

Councillor Potter: Thank you my Lord Mayor. "Why was the shop mobility temporary base not opened and checked sooner than it was? On opening there was an inadequate disability toilet facilities."

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I am informed that in fact the shop mobility temporary base was opened according to the programme that had been previously announced. Apparently initially the base was to be served by mains water supplied by Severn Trent. However, it seems they were unable to make a connection due to the presence of a high voltage electricity cable. So as an alternative the base is now served using on-site water tanks. I am very grateful to all of those who were involved in actually making those arrangements under what was inevitably quite a lot of pressure at very short notice.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Councillor Potter have you a supplementary?

Councillor Potter: No my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Question 19, Councillor Potter.

Councillor Potter: Thank you my Lord Mayor. "Why were the Haymarket Bus Station demolition leaflets not available on buses prior to the 1st January? The late distribution has caused problems for many of us who in some cases are still are not 100% sure where the buses leave from?"

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor. The reason for actually making them available on the 1st January and not before is very simple it is called Christmas and it seemed I think very sensible to distribute the information immediately after Christmas rather than before it for obvious reasons and to do it in good time because the closure of the old bus station was on the 11th January so you are talking about 10 days. That is the sort of time that people need to make any necessary arrangements to be sure that the majority of those who are going to be affected by the arrangements will have been travelling on the bus during that period and will have access to the information they need.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Councillor Potter have you a supplementary?

Councillor Potter: No my Lord Mayor. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Question 20, Councillor Grant.

Councillor Grant: "How many claims did the Council receive for compensation relating to Jubilee Square? How many were dealt with internally and how many referred to insurers? How many have been settled and at what cost?"

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I am informed that the Council only received three claims for slips and trips on Jubilee Square. All three claims have been dealt with in-house, only claims estimated above a certain value are referred to our insurers to deal with and these obviously weren't amongst those. Three claims were investigated and have been repudiated and so there is no liability attaching to the Council.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Grant do you have a supplementary?

Councillor Grant: Yes. Can the City Mayor answer, I should have been clearer in the original question but I was asking in relation to commercial losses.

Lord Mayor: City Mayor, if you can answer that.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I am informed that there was a claim from a business due to alleged loss of trade during the works. This claim was referred to our insurers due to the amount being claimed. It obviously was above the threshold. This claim was investigated and liability was subsequently repudiated.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Question 21, Councillor Grant.

Councillor Grant: "What standards does the City Mayor expect from Councillors and people standing to be Councillors?"

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor high standards but not superhuman standards and I think when all parties I am sure when looking for potential candidates will look for people who will likely be effective representatives for their constituents, but will want a variety of people. Some will be excellent Ward Councillors, some will make a more strategic contribution and many will make both, and those are, I would guess the sort of criteria that my party will use and that other parties will use when looking for the sorts of people that they want to represent them as parties but more significantly the people of the city.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Councillor Grant have you a supplementary?

Councillor Grant: Yes Lord Mayor. Will he do everything possible to ensure people with a history of supporting prejudicial views or organisations that hold such views do not stand for Council, likewise those people who have a history of breaking the trust of the public or taking advantage of the public do not stand?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor in my own party, and I guess it is very similar in the parties of the Members opposite there, those who have substantial parties behind them, that they will have actually a centralised process for selecting candidates and that is quite right that they should do that because that enables those parties not just to get somebody who toes the party line as it were but also somebody who is appropriate for the particular part of the city that they have been chosen to represent. I guess that is the same in Councillor Grant's party as it is in mine. Indeed, I mean I guess that was how Councillor Porter came to be selected as a Conservative candidate in the first place.

Lord Mayor: Question 22, Councillor Grant.

Councillor Grant: “In what way does the City Mayor think Councillors add value under the mayoral system”?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor as in the conventional system of governance individual Councillors can be Members of the Executive, there are such sitting next to me here and we have heard them contribute to the debate this evening and answer questions this evening, playing their part as Members of the Executive. Other Members will play an important part in the scrutiny process and certainly the scrutiny process I think over the last few years has become increasingly effective in holding the Executive to account. And of course Councillors are also vitally important as representatives in their Ward, as champions of the issues that matter to the people who elected them. And as I was saying earlier on when I answered the balance of the roles that Members undertake varies very significantly and so it should. That is the strength of having a number of Councillors, in our case 50 odd Councillors as we will have after the election, all playing an important part in the governance of the city but also in the representation of the people.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Grant have you a supplementary?

Councillor Grant: Yes Lord Mayor. Isn't it obscene that while savings are faced across the Council that the cost of Councillors themselves is not reduced? Councillors have significantly less responsibility under the mayoral system. Isn't it right that we should be seeking savings in this area particularly from special responsibility allowances?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Actually, Lord Mayor, the statutory responsibility of Members is very similar in the mayoral system of governance to the one of a Leader and Cabinet system and I would expect Councillor Grant to have been sort of fairly familiar with that. The fact is that the Boundary Commission recently reviewed the governance of the city and particularly the warding of the city and concluded very clearly that a city like Leicester needs broadly the number of Councillors it has at the moment because there is an important job to be done. And that important job as I have said is partly the governance of the city but also the representation of the people. And if the people are to be effectively represented they need to be represented in wards that are of an appropriate size to enable them to know who represents them, to know they can go to that person who represents them and for that person to have a manageable workload in actually putting forward the issues that actually matter to those people. And I believe we have got that balance right in Leicester and am very pleased indeed that at the election people will have an opportunity not just to vote for a Mayor with an Executive function but also that the people will hold that Mayor to account.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Question 23, Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: Thank you Lord Mayor. Before I put my question I would like the City Mayor to withdraw the insinuation that he made in answer to Councillor Grant's question earlier on. I don't know what on earth he was referring to, but the clear impression was that in some extent or what he was trying to refer to, I mean maybe he should clarify, but the impression I got was he was basically saying that I

had fallen below some standard expected of a Councillor. And if he wishes to repeat that or make those allegations again then I think he needs to produce his evidence here before I move on to my other question.

Lord Mayor: Well I would remind Members all of you that there is no parliamentary privilege here so if you feel that suing the City Mayor is appropriate please go ahead. Councillor Porter have you got a question or not.

Councillor Porter: No, no Lord Mayor you are making light. We are not supposed to make ...

Lord Mayor: I am not making light it is a statement of fact.

Councillor Porter: Well you are, it may well be a statement, we can all make statements of fact but he has made a statement of fact which has no truthful basis to it so I am asking him either to clarify or withdraw exactly what he said.

Lord Mayor: Well clearly an apology is not forthcoming, that is clear. Do you want to ask your question?

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor on a point of clarification I am perfectly prepared to clarify the remarks that I made, which was I stated the fact that Councillor Porter was selected in the first instance as a Conservative party candidate. I also stated the fact which is plainly obviously that Councillor Grant soon came to regret it.

Councillor Porter: Lord Mayor no, he did not say that. The insinuation he made was that I had, in some way, I had fallen below the standards that were expected of a Councillor and there is no evidence that can be supported by such an outrageous allegation that I have fallen below the standards expected of us Councillors.

Lord Mayor: I will give one last opportunity, do you wish to ask question 23 or shall we move to question 24?

Councillor Porter: Lord Mayor there is an important point at principle here. We are just before an election and I think it is only right that the Mayor either supports the allegation he has just made or he withdraws it.

Lord Mayor: The allegation, what the City Mayor has stated is what clearly happened. You were elected initially as a Conservative Councillor and then immediately you were de-selected you moved to the Liberal Party. That is what happened and that is another history lesson.

Councillor Porter: Lord Mayor no that is not accurate. No what actually happened Lord Mayor was there was a malicious and false allegation made about me that I had somehow put into the public domain information that was confidential. The truth of that matter is the document that I got from Leicester City Council was marked for publication and that is on the record. There was absolutely nothing wrong with what I did. There was a Standards investigation and I was found not to have breached the Code. So if the Mayor is still going to pursue this line of argument that somehow I have fallen below the standards expected of a Councillor then he needs to either withdraw it or produce the evidence that I have.

Lord Mayor: I have clearly stated that the Mayor is not willing to withdraw it and I will ask again, last chance, do it if you wish. Do you want to ask question 23 or not?

Councillor Porter: Well I think there seems to be clearly one rule for the City Mayor and one rule for everybody else. There is a clear procedure within this Council which the City Mayor feels that he can ride rough-shod over and if that is the case then the only position I will be forced to do is either to make a formal complaint about him or as you say try and find some other means of getting some redress. But before I move on to my questions I also note that two of the questions that I have submitted to the Council aren't actually on the paper.

Lord Mayor: I am afraid I am not aware of that, I cannot give you an answer to that. The first time I saw the order paper with the questions on was about 5 hours ago, 5 or 6 hours ago, in my Council briefing. So I am afraid I can't enlighten you there. Would you like to ask question 23 one of the questions that was on the agenda.

Councillor Porter: Lord Mayor, so can I still have an opportunity to ask those two questions?

Lord Mayor: No if they are not on the order paper you can't ask them. That is clear.

Councillor Porter: OK well I will go ahead and ask 23 then. The question is "How much..."

Lord Mayor: Councillor Porter will you please go ahead and ask the question. Can I please have a bit of order and give the man a chance to ask his questions now he is going to ask it. Alright. We've all had some fun now let's get on with it, it is getting late and people are getting tired.

Councillor Porter: "How much did the Market Corner scheme cost?"

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you Lord Mayor. The Market Corner scheme of course literally paved the way for the market hall and the significant costs involved with it was the clearance away of the stalls which enabled the market hall to take place and the developing of the ground and so on. That part of the scheme cost £391,024.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Porter have you got a supplementary?

Councillor Porter: Yes, so I take it from the Mayor that the figure that he has just given is an accurate figure so the figures that have been quoted on the press are incorrect I take it? Clearly he was the one who opened the scheme up, he said how fantastic it was going to be. I think that his number two after the scheme was opened up there were some critical comments about it and Sir Peter's number two said that he felt that it was too early that the proposal had not flopped. It clearly did flop and it is another example of why people in this city ...

Lord Mayor: Is this a supplementary – can you get to the supplementary please?

Councillor Porter: ... have not got any confidence in this Labour..

Lord Mayor: ..can you get to the supplementary instead of innuendos that you are passing. Put it in a question will you.

Councillor Porter: ...so would the City Mayor now accept that as Councillor

Palmer pointed out, this was actually a flop and it was a waste of a huge amount of tax payer's cash?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor. I certainly don't recall the Deputy Mayor saying that and I never said anything of the sort myself. As I have said the work on the Market Corner was really very fortuitous and I am very pleased that it was done. It was something I inherited as being done by one of my predecessors. But what it did was to demonstrate the potential of that side of the Corn Exchange and the work was not aborted because actually you know a significant portion of it was actually the clearance of that site, but it showed that there was a space there that could be used and could be used as creatively as we managed to do with the market hall. Frankly I think had it not been for the preliminary work of the Market Corner that potential would not have been spotted, realised or developed. We would not have the food hall, excellent food hall, the award winning food hall that we have there today. So you know rather than criticising that scheme I am very grateful for the fact that my predecessor actually had the foresight to recognise that something needed to be done on that corner and to open up the possibility of doing something as exciting as we have achieved there.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Porter have you a supplementary?

Councillor Porter: Yes, thank you Lord Mayor. It just goes to show how unimaginative this City Council must be if it has to take a spend of over £600,000 in order for them to realise that they have actually got a space there.

Lord Mayor: I will give you more room there, go on you can have another reply to that Peter if you wish.

City Mayor: I mean the fact is that the figures as I understand it are entirely accurate, that that scheme cost £391,000 and as I say precisely £24 and that seems to me in terms of the preliminary work for the subsequent development on that site to have been money very well spent.

Lord Mayor: Right, now we are into question 24 I think aren't we.

Councillor Porter: Yes you are right there.

Lord Mayor: Good. I am trying to concentrate and you are all having fun, like I am trying to concentrate on what is going on tonight.

Councillor Porter: I certainly didn't mind having an additional supplementary question thank you Lord Mayor. "How many additional visitors will come to Leicester as a result of the reburial of Richard III?"

City Mayor: I mean the short answer to that is a lot. I mean what we do know already is that the visitor centre we created I think at the last count I was given had had over 30,000 visitors. But of course those are the paying visitors who are just going to that. There are plenty of other people who are just you know wanting to be around the city, will want to come during the period of the reinterment, want to come to Leicester subsequently. What matters is that we have both the visitor centre that provides us with something if they want to pay for entry but also that we have a city centre environment that makes them want to come and visit and recommend it to friends and frankly to spend their money here, and it is good for the economy that

we are going to have so many visitors. I think only time will tell quite how many there are, but the recent figures done by LeicesterShire Promotions suggest that the multiplier effect of having these visitors in Leicester is very substantial indeed for the economy and we are talking about millions of pounds a year.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Councillor Porter have you a supplementary?

Councillor Porter: Yes. Unfortunately on Radio 4 I have heard that people have raised concerns that the spectacle is going to be rather undignified, so my question to the City Mayor and to the Council is what procedures or what plans have they got in place to try and make sure that there is not going to be national criticism of it as being an undignified spectacle, and in terms of the millions of pounds that he says is going to be generated, could some of that money that is generated within the city be used to offset the extremely high cost it is to get into the Richard III visitor centre? If that could be reduced, may be by half for residents of Leicester who may be go along with their council tax, I think it would have a huge benefit to people who live in the city and also it would give a lot of support for what is actually taking place within the city because at the end of the day it is us people within the city that have paid for all of this.

Lord Mayor: Could the City Mayor ask if it could be cut in half without all the rhetoric that is what the question was.

City Mayor: OK yes but I will say that the actual reinterment is being done and it really is being done with dignity and honour and I have stressed that throughout all departments involved in it and I think Members will be impressed by the way in which all of the partners involved in it actually measure up to the challenge of the reburial of the remains of the last King of England to die in battle. That is a significant charge that we have been given in this generation and I am sure, I am confident that all of those involved will do it properly. Now with regard to the visitor centre, the actual charging for the visitor centre is not something I have any particular expertise on but is very comparable with other similar, in so far as there are similar attractions, but other visitor attractions the Space Centre is I think pitched about the same level. Obviously a lot of professional advice was taken as to you know how you pitch it but also how you make sure that it continues to generate an income so that it does not just last for 18 months because you have got to be able to refresh the visitor centre, you don't just do them once, you continue to refresh the exhibit there so that people won't just want to go once they will want to go back 18 months 2 years later and bring other friends to it as well because they will find something different there at that time. So it has got to have a sustainable future and actually doing it cut price, or cut price admission, really is I think something that would guarantee us to failure, we have got to make sure it continues to succeed in the future.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Question 25, Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: Yes. "Has the Haymarket Theatre lease been sold yet?"

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor no the answer is that it has not yet been sold although we are working with a preferred bidder and they have got some really exciting ideas for the way in which the future of that building can be but it is a problematic building for them as much as it is for us and I think they undoubtedly are determined to make it work and we are undoubtedly determined to help them.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Porter have you a supplementary?

Councillor Porter: Yes. Yes thank you Lord Mayor. What I struggle to understand and I think a lot of people in the city struggle to understand is that the City Mayor makes a decision to put something like this with all these liabilities on the market for half a million pounds, yet he sells land that is worth £1.5m for a £1. Now the land that he sold in Saffron that is worth £1.5m is currently being or proposed to be developed at 20 dwellings per hectare. Leicester City Council has a policy which says that minimum development sites for large developments should be 40 dwellings per hectare. So if the Council had half a brain what they would have done is develop the site at Saffron at 40 dwellings per hectare and then sold the remainder of the land for £750,000.

Lord Mayor: Is this a question, is it a question? Is the question has the City Council got half a brain? What is the question? Please get to it.

Councillor Porter:and so did I. I have already mentioned that. The question that I am trying to put to him is, why do we have a local authority which does not seem to understand the value of the property that it has got? Why is it putting property up for sale with loads of liabilities for half a million pounds and then selling land that is worth £1.5m for £1.

Lord Mayor: Get on with your question.

Councillor Porter: ..when that land is developed Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Will you get on with your question and cut the rhetoric.

Councillor Porter: I was trying to, you are interrupting me, you interrupted me so that is why I had to start again. Have you finished, so I can carry on if that is alright. What do you mean it is my last chance, it is not my last chance, I've got a few more questions yet. Right, the question is, does he actually know what he is doing when he is selling these pieces of land off? Why wasn't the land at Saffron sold at 40 dwellings per hectare, then you could have used the £750,000 to put even more houses on it? Why didn't that happen?

Lord Mayor: I'm just going to say this, that if I am going to continue to have this from Councillor Porter, he has got 4 questions left, if he wants to I will suspend the meeting now and come back and start the rest of the business that we have to discuss. The matter is entirely up to him.

Councillor Porter: Lord Mayor, in all due respect, in all due respect if you don't interrupt me I can finish my question otherwise I lose my train of thought.

Lord Mayor: You haven't asked a question yet as far as I am aware. City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you Lord Mayor. In so far as I can tease some sort of question out of that, and of course that was nothing at all to do with the original question, but the fact is that the Council has a lot of assets around the city and quite a lot of liabilities as well and the way in which we use those assets, I certainly take the view, ought to be in the interests of the city. Sometimes it is in the interests of the city to maximise the return we get for a bit of land by selling it to a developer. Councillor Connelly in his answer to the earlier question talked about the assets that we had sold off. We sold over £3m I think on one single occasion because there

our primary interest was getting the maximum capital receipt. With our other assets and the land at Saffron is such, we don't have the prospect of immediate capital receipt, but we do have the opportunity to get enormous benefit for the city. In that case ecologically friendly houses are likely to be let to people who are on the housing waiting list and in desperate need of housing. That is creative use of that asset. On other occasions we have got things that are nominally assets but are actually a bit of a liability and the Haymarket Theatre is one such. But we do have the opportunity to actually look at working with some very creative people to turn that liability into an asset for the city and that is precisely what we are doing with them. For some things it is about the price we can sell them for, for some things it is about what we can get there and for other things like this one it's about what we can do with it with creative people. We have got some very creative people working there and I am determined that we are going to give them every opportunity we can to use that creativity and to turn that liability into an asset for the city.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Question 26, Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: Right. "How much did the Lutterworth Road/Aylestone Road bus lane scheme cost?"

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you Lord Mayor. As Councillor Porter knows that scheme is a County Council led scheme. The final cost of the scheme is apparently £5.9m but the overwhelming, certainly the majority of that, came from the government under their Better Bus Area Fund for which we are very grateful. We don't get a lot out of this government but just now and again they do put some money behind something that is of benefit to the city as undoubtedly that scheme has been and will continue to be for many years to come.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Porter have you a supplementary?

Councillor Porter: Yes in reply to that. I don't, I really don't see that it has been a benefit at all to the city. Certainly the views of people within my Ward in Aylestone is that they are really, really suffering from the consequences of this scheme. So my question to the City Mayor is in light of the fact of the additional pollution and congestion that the bus lane schemes have caused, these 24/7 bus lanes, you know 24 hours and day, 7 days a week, bus lanes. In light of that could the Mayor or the City Council consider amending the hours that the scheme operates in order to relieve some the congestion and obviously improve the air quality in Aylestone so the bus lanes will operate in a similar way to other bus lanes within the city, for example Saffron Lane it is only peak period only inbound. I think Welford Road is peak period in-hound and out-bound. So obviously there will then be benefits for bus users in terms of getting improved journey times but there will also be benefits for local residents in that we would not be having to suffer with the disastrous consequences of this £5.9m scheme which operating 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you Lord Mayor. The scheme actually has been warmly welcomed by the bus operators and I think in welcoming it they do so on behalf of their passengers because if they can get their buses through there more easily, the passengers can get to their destinations more quickly and the city, we were talking earlier on about congestion, the city's roads overall flow more freely because there

are less cars on the road. That is all very much to be welcomed by the people of Aylestone as well as by the people of the rest of the city. And of course the County who as I say are the lead on this particular scheme, and us as their partners in it, want to continue to keep it under review but I see no reason at all to depart from the original intention.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Question 27, Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: Right, 27 is “How much will the proposed speed humps/speed cushions on Old Church Street in Aylestone cost?”

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: I am informed they will cost, and this is remarkably precise, £4,698.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Porter, have you a supplementary?

Councillor Porter: Yes, thank you Lord Mayor. Obviously I welcome the fact that we are now going to get a 20mph zone in Aylestone because this is something that I raised a petition for some time ago. But the issue really is in terms of the cost of these speed humps, the concern that has been raised locally is about the cost of the speed humps and also the impact that it will have on road safety as people have concerns, especially motorcyclists and cyclists, that speed humps and speed cushions actually present a danger to road users. My understanding is that this stretch of road was assessed for the speed limits.

Lord Mayor: Is that a question? Your understanding, is that the question? I am just trying to clarify we need a question to be answered that is why you are asking.

Councillor Porter: I think we have had this discussion before what I was trying...

Lord Mayor: Yes but we did not resolve it did we, because you are still going on the same way.

Councillor Porter: Rather than being interrupted once again.

Lord Mayor: Well will you get to the question now. Supplementary question.

Councillor Porter: Do you mind stopping pointing your finger at me.

Lord Mayor: Surely yes I don't need to do that.

Councillor Porter: Thank you very much.

Lord Mayor: You're welcome. Good.

Councillor Porter: The question is, can the City Mayor tell me what the criteria is for the installation of speed humps?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor there are indeed some objective criteria that the officers use when assessing whether speed humps are justified on a particular occasion. I would be happy to ensure that Councillor Porter has a briefing from those officers on the criteria. But I would say that in general speed humps and

other traffic calming measures are introduced very much in response to what local people are saying to the Council and local people were certainly saying to the Council and Councillor Clarke articulated it very powerfully on behalf of the people of Aylestone as he always does, they were saying very clearly to us that this was an area where traffic calming along with the 20mph restriction was something that would be welcomed and I think that the reduction in accidents in the area and the support from the public will prove that Councillor Clarke was right as he so often is.

Lord Mayor: Question 28, Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: "In Aylestone what is the highest level of bus lane contravention?"

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor the monitoring of bus lane contraventions has been undertaken along the whole length of the A426 corridor. Six sites apparently were surveyed, three of the six being in the Aylestone Ward. The highest level of contravention was on the inbound approach to Soar Valley Way. During the period that they monitored, of the 62,471 vehicles, 6,897 vehicles were contravening the bus lane, which amounts to about 11% of the total number of vehicles. I have actually discussed this with officers and there does come a point, there is no objective science in this actually, there does come a point where the number of contraventions do require enforcement. There is also though a level at which they are not significantly impeding the flow of the buses and they will continue to be monitoring this and we will ultimately have to make a judgment as to whether or not on all or parts of this route there is a case for camera enforcement. Something that the County Council I think are quite keen to explore in their parts of the route and obviously we will continue to work in concert with them to make sure we have got a common approach.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Councillor Porter have you got a supplementary?

Councillor Porter: Yes it is interesting he mentions about the fact that there is a certain level but he does not tell us what that is. It is unfortunate that he has not done that because it would be helpful for local residents to know. Because the area that he talks about between Soar Valley Way and Gilmorton. Have you finished? There is a question coming, the question is ...

Lord Mayor: Are you going to put the question?

Councillor Porter: Lord Mayor the City Mayor needs to understand the junction I am talking about and basically I am just about to say between Soar Valley Way and Gilmorton Avenue which is the area that he is talking about, what I would like the City Mayor to do is to see if, no it is not in Glen Parva you don't even know where your ward is, that is in Aylestone. It is in Aylestone between Gilmorton Avenue and Soar Valley Way is in Aylestone Ward. I have been a Councillor in Aylestone Ward for over 10 years I know my Ward and that is in my Ward. I know the people in my Ward and the people in my Ward have complained about the particular junction where these contraventions are taking place. So my question to the City Mayor is can safety, road safety measures be put in place to make that junction safer?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor as I have said we aim together with our County colleagues will continue to keep the operation of this area under review. I do find it somewhat ironic that on the one hand Councillor Porter is asking us to relax the bus lanes in the area and now he is asking us to enforce the bus lanes in that area. There is a certain degree shall I say of inconsistency in his approach to this issue. But having said that my Lord Mayor if I can just return to the point he was making really about the point at which contraventions actually impede the flow of buses, and as he is himself pointing out when talking about this particular stretch it does depend very much on the circumstances as to what level of contravention actually makes a difference to bus movement through the area. It depends on the number of buses, depends on the length of the contravention and it depends of course on the proportion of vehicles and numbers of cars doing it. We will continue to keep it under review and I will undertake to look at the one that he has mentioned this evening with our County colleagues and see whether there is a case for any further action there.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Porter have you a supplementary?

Councillor Porter: Yes thank you.

Lord Mayor: Oh was it, no we have done that sorry 29, sorry I have got 29 down. Question 29 Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: Am I not being allowed another supplementary? You have already given me one can't I have another one?

Lord Mayor: No get on with question 29 unless you want to go on to question 30.

Councillor Porter: Can you just stop threatening me, I was only trying to be listening to what you were saying and trying to make light of your mistake. But anyway I will move on to 29. "Are there any development plans for Franklyn Fields in Aylestone Ward, not Glen Parva?"

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I have been in a number of discussions with Councillor Porter where we have actually discussed the development plans for Franklyn Fields and he has made a very effective contribution to that along with Councillor Clarke on behalf of the people in the area and he is well aware, and has been throughout, that the site is being marketed jointly with the County Council. Negotiations have continued with the preferred bidder. I hope we are moving towards a conditional contract before too long, but obviously as always that will be subject to planning and opportunities for the local residents should they wish and representatives to make representations. I am hoping that might come about in the next few weeks but as I was saying in the context of another development earlier on these things can take longer than is anticipated but I do recognise that the development of Franklyn Fields will bring much needed housing to the city.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Councillor Porter have you a supplementary question?

Councillor Porter: Yes, thank you. Just one supplementary on this one Lord Mayor and that it there are development plans so are there, if he can just clarify, are discussions taking place within the Planning Department with this preferred developer at this stage?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor, I think it would be surprising if a potential developer of any type in the city did not have some discussions with our Planning Department before they actually signed up to the purchase of a site. Certainly one of this scale. The extent of those negotiations I would not expect to be party to. The planning processes of course are not ones that fall within the purview of the Executive, they are firmly ones that rest with the Council. I would expect also that they will be in discussions with our Property people since they are the ones that are actually handing the potential sale. I do know that there are discussions ongoing and I do hope that they can be brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

Lord Mayor: Question 30, Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: Interesting. Question 30. "Has there been any increase in bus passenger numbers since the 24/7 Lutterworth Road / Aylestone Road bus lane scheme opened?" Thank you.

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Can I say what a pleasure it is to be answering Councillor Porter's final question. My Lord Mayor the main operator on the A426 is Arriva. They come in obviously on the corridor from Blaby. They have reported a significant increase in passenger numbers but of course, given our relationship with the operators, we are not provided with the actual figures. They consider those figures to be commercially sensitive but they are nonetheless very positive about the effects of the corridor and very grateful for the fact it has been introduced for them but more significantly as I was saying earlier on for their passengers.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Councillor Porter have you a supplementary question?

Councillor Porter: Yes, Yes and this certainly won't be the last time I will be firing off questions in this Council chamber let me tell you that now. So certainly don't start to be so hasty about all of that. People have written me off in the past I think, four years ago they wrote me off but here I am and I will continue to be here so I think you will all be swallowing your words and eating humble pie. Anyway my supplementary to the City Mayor is, the supplementary to the City Mayor is, again it is really disappointing that he is unable to give any evidence that this £5.9m spend has resulted in all the benefits that he said would come with it. He said there would be a modal shift of people moving from their cars to buses but here we are tonight, a year on, more than 18 months on with no evidence to support his assertions.

Lord Mayor: Have you got a question?

Councillor Porter: In fact Lord Mayor I have spoken to bus users and they, even bus users who use this scheme every day, are very unhappy with it. They said they were promised new real time information ...

Lord Mayor: Do you want to ask a question?

Councillor Porter: ... promised new real time information.

Lord Mayor: Do you want to ask a question?

Councillor Porter: ... promised new buses but instead what they have got is a timetable card insert which is basically a piece of paper ...

Lord Mayor: Do you want to ask a question?

Councillor Porter: ... and new stickers on old buses, so what I want to know from the City Mayor is, when is he actually going to get his act together? He talks about joined up thinking in terms of transport policy but when is he going to get his act together and start to focus on what this city needs which is buses that are clean, that run along bus routes which operate and are convenient not just for the bus companies ...

Lord Mayor: Why doesn't your government give us the powers to do it?

Councillor Porter: ... but for local residents.

Lord Mayor: Why don't they?

Councillor Porter: I wasn't even listening to what you said, so there we are.

Lord Mayor: Lots of other people were, they certainly weren't listening to you.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I am in awe of Councillor Porter's confidence about the outcome of the election. I have always felt that it is a great mistake as a politician to take the electorate for granted. I certainly will be going in front of them as will my colleagues here asking for their support but not taking it for granted. My Lord Mayor as I have said the evidence of passenger numbers is something that the operators consider commercially sensitive. We can actually make judgments about some of the other things that they have done as to whether or not the scheme has been successful and what we have seen in that scheme are commercial decisions, as a result of the scheme commercial decisions by Arriva to extend services 84 and 85 to evenings and Sundays, so there are more buses at more times as a result of the scheme. We have also seen them providing improved vehicles. We have also seen them providing better marketing and better passenger information. That is all there as a result of this scheme and it is all to the benefit of bus users. But in addition to that we have also as a result of the bus lanes and the journey time improvements that have come from it, been able to change the Enderby Park and Ride Service so that it uses Soar Valley Way/ Lutterworth Road. And as a result of this scheme, a direct result of this scheme, that Park and Ride Scheme now serves the Royal Infirmary, DMU, Tigers, City Football club as it comes into the City Council. That is a real benefit for passengers but an enormous benefit for the city.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor that concludes the questions.

MATTERS RESERVED TO COUNCIL

PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2015/16

Having declared a Prejudicial Other Disclosable Interest Councillor Senior left the meeting for the duration of the item.

A report of the Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance was considered which gave details of the Pay Policy Statement. The publication of a Statement was required by the Localism Act 2011 and must be approved by full

Council by 1 April each year.

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

35. That Council approves the Pay Policy Statement for 2015/16.

EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES

None.

NOTICES OF MOTION

None received.

ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

The Lord Mayor noted that this was the last meeting before the forthcoming elections and wished good luck to all those Members seeking re-election.

The City Mayor and Council expressed their thanks to the Lord Mayor for his work in chairing Council meetings and for his work as first citizen in what had been a very successful Mayoral year.

The meeting closed at 9.19pm.