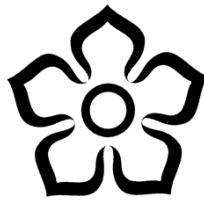


Thursday, 8 October 2015



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, 8 OCTOBER 2015 duly convened for the business hereunder mentioned.

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BUSINESS

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1. **LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th June 2015 are available to view at:
<http://www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk:8071/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=81&MId=6886&Ver=4>

Copies are also available from Democratic Support on 0116 454 6352 / committees@leicester.gov.uk

4. **PETITIONS**

- Presented by Members of the Public
- Presented by Councillors

5. **QUESTIONS**

- From Members of the Public
- From Councillors

6. **MATTERS RESERVED TO FULL COUNCIL**

- 6.1 Independent Remuneration Panel Process
- 6.2 Leicester Youth Justice Plan 2015-16
- 6.3 Call-In – Highfields Community Association

7. **REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

- 7.1 Scrutiny Annual Report

8. **EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES** - To note any changes to the Executive. To vary the composition and fill any vacancies of any Committee of Council.

9. NOTICES OF MOTION

Preamble

In July 2015, the Government announced its intention to change legislation affecting trade unions including measures relating to industrial action ballots; the organisation of industrial action and trade union subscription payment arrangements (known as check off).

Motion

Leicester City Council believes:

1. That the right to join a trade union and to participate in lawful industrial action is a fundamental right which should be respected in a free and democratic society.
2. The Government's proposals in the trade Union Bill will undermine constructive employment relations and that effective industrial relations are achieved by meaningful engagement and not additional legal restrictions on trade union activity.
3. Effective workplace representation ensures access to justice and has benefits across employing organisations and that trade unions are an integral part of a modern workplace.
4. The Government's Trade Union Bill is a politically-motivated attack on trade unions and could have negative consequences for wider society.

Leicester City Council resolves to:

1. Write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills stating the Council's opposition to their Trade Union Bill and to participate in any consultations to this effect.
2. To continue to recognise the important role played by the council's recognised trade unions in representing their members.

10. 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.

If you intend to film or make an audio recording of a meeting you are asked to notify the relevant Democratic Support Officer in advance of the meeting to ensure that participants can be notified in advance and consideration given to practicalities such as allocating appropriate space in the public gallery etc.

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:

TED CASSIDY, 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

HEMANT RAE BHATIA
SUE WADDINGTON
PAUL THOMAS WESTLEY

Belgrave Ward

MANJULA SOOD
JOHN THOMAS

Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields

STEVE CORRALL
ELAINE HALFORD
KULWINDER SINGH JOHAL

Castle Ward

DEBORAH ANNE SANGSTER
LYNN SENIOR

Evington Ward

DEEPAK BAJAJ
RATILAL BHAGWAN GOVIND
SUE HUNTER

Eyres Monsell Ward

VIRGINIA CLEAVER
RORY PALMER

North Evington Ward

LUIS FONSECA
JEAN KHOTE
ABDUL RAZAK OSMAN

Rushey Mead Ward

PIARA SINGH CLAIR
RITA PATEL
ROSS WILLMOTT

Saffron Ward

ELLY CUTKELVIN
WILLIAM SHELTON

Spinney Hills Ward

SHOFIQL ISLAM CHOWDHURY
MUSTAFA MALIK

Stoneygate Ward

LUCY CHAPLIN
KIRK MASTER
AMINUR THALUKDAR

Thurncourt Ward

TERESA ALDRED
PAUL NEWCOMBE

Troon Ward

DIANE CANK
BALJIT SINGH

Westcotes Ward

ANDY CONNELLY
SARAH RUSSELL

Fosse Ward

DAWN ALFONSO

Humberstone and Hamilton Ward

VI DEMPSTER
RASHMI JOSHI
GURINDER SINGH SANDHU

Knighton Ward

ROSS GRANT
INDERJIT SINGH GUGNANI
DR LYNN MOORE

Western Ward

DR SUSAN BARTON
GEORGE COLE
MALCOLM UNSWORTH

Wycliffe Ward

HANIF AQBANY
MOHAMMED DAWOOD

LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

MARK GROUP

In the light of the recently reported issues regarding the Mark Group the Lord Mayor asked the City Mayor to make a brief statement to Council.

The City Mayor reported with regret that the Mark Group which had a national and international reputation and an excellent record of high quality training and apprenticeships had gone into administration and noted that in response to the news the Council was working with partners including Job Centre Plus and through the Apprentice Hub to seek to find alternatives for the many staff and apprentices. The City Mayor also noted the impact of the change in government policy on the Mark Group and the support the local MP Liz Kendle was giving in raising the matter in Parliament and that he would also be writing to government to make them aware of the negative impacts of the decisions on efforts to combat climate change and on many people in Leicester.

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

The Lord Mayor noted that he had written to Her Majesty the Queen congratulating her on becoming the longest serving monarch on 9 September 2015 and noting the honour the City felt to be the first place visited on the Diamond Jubilee Tour in 2012. The Lord Mayor read out the letter sent and the reply received from Her Majesty's Chief Clerk in which the Queens pleasure in being reminded of her visit to the City was noted together with her thanks for the kind thoughts and best wishes to the Lord Mayor and all concerned.

HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT

In advance of Remembrance Sunday next month the Lord Mayor reminded Members of the centenary of the Battle of Hohenzollern Redoubt in the First World War with October 13, 1915, the bloodiest day of the War for local soldiers. Over the course of a few hours 3,700 men from the 46th (North Midland) Division were killed or wounded with by the end of the day every officer from the 4th and 5th Battalion Leicesters killed or wounded.

The Lord Mayor noted that Flags would be flown at half-mast at Leicester Town Hall, City Hall and at Newarke Houses Museum. Leicester Cathedral, County Hall and Rutland County Council's offices will also fly flags at half-mast, with businesses across the city and county invited to do the same.

LORD MAYOR'S APPEAL

The Lord Mayor noted that his theme for the year was the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people and stated that he was supporting the two main charities working in this field, The Spark Arts for Children and Place2Be.

For over 14 years The Spark Arts for Children had been committed to offering accessible, high quality and inspirational arts experiences to children from 0-13 years from all backgrounds and their families. The aim of the work with the charity was to inspire, build confidence, self-esteem and resilience of participating children through performance poet Joe Coelho who will work with young people to create and perform their own poems and write a new poem for Leicester.

Place2Be were new to Leicester and provided emotional and therapeutic support in primary and secondary schools, helping children to cope with wide-ranging and

complex social issues that often lie behind challenging behaviour and educational underperformance - including bullying, bereavement, domestic violence, family breakdown, neglect and trauma. Place2Be's work was proven to help troubled children become happier, better behaved and more effective learners. In turn, teachers were more able to focus on teaching, and parents felt better supported and able to engage with school life. All of which helped children to grow up with prospects rather than problems.

The Lord Mayor stated that a number of fundraising events had now been arranged with details available on the Council's website. The events included a coffee morning arranged by Councillors Byrne and Alfonso to be held at the Tudor Centre on the 10 October which Members were encouraged to attend.

The Lord Mayor additionally noted that Ella Connelly had organised a cake sale on behalf of the Appeal before this meeting. At the invitation of the Lord Mayor, Ella informed Council that £102.50 had been raised. The Lord Mayor led the Council in thanking Ella for her hard work in aid of the appeal.

The Lord Mayor asked Council and the people of Leicester for continued support for the Appeal to make a difference to the lives of children and young people.

CHANGE IN BUSINESS

The Lord Mayor noted that item 6.3 on the agenda, 'Call in of Executive Decision – Highfields Community Association' would not now be considered at the meeting following withdrawal of the call in'.

EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Lord Mayor referred Members to the details of the Fire & Emergency Evacuation Procedure given on the script and in notices in the Chamber. Members were asked to refer any questions or queries to the Town Hall staff present at the meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Shelton declared an Other Disclosable Interest in relation to item 9 on the agenda 'Notices of Motion' as a trade union member for 52 years.

At the request of the Lord Mayor the Monitoring Officer gave advice in relation to the declarations of interests in relation to the Notice of Motion at item 9 on the agenda and stated that as it currently stood the Motion did not propose a change to Council policy and that where Members had declared that they were trade union members on their declaration of interests no further declaration of the interest at this meeting was required unless they specifically wished to do so.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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

11. That the minutes of the meetings of Council held on 18 June 2015, copies having been circulated to each Member of the Council, be taken as read and that they be approved as a correct record.

PETITIONS

Councillor Waddington presented a petition with 386 signatures in the

following terms:

“We, the undersigned are residents of Leicester City, and the residents of Pitches Close and surrounding areas. We are requesting from Leicester City Council the creation of a new and safe natural play area for Castle Hill Country Park. Unlike other parts of the City, the area of Pitches Close / Bluegates Road is lacking any play provisions for children and young persons despite there being a large number of families within the area.

26 years ago there was a play area on the perimeter of Pitches Close, but this was vandalised. However, nothing was ever replaced.

Castle Hill Country Park is the largest of Leicester’s Parks and at present lacks any provisions for play. Parks have identified a potential space on the perimeter of Pitches Close / Stoneywell Road.

The creation of the play area would greatly improve community cohesion, restore pride within the area, aiding physical and emotional wellbeing, be beneficial to local schools, inform children of nature and help to discourage street football and anti-social behaviour.

We believe children are being deprived of the freedom to enjoy natural, safe and physical play. Please don’t deprive these children and families anymore who mainly suffer from social deprivation, unemployment, crime and poverty within the ward of Beaumont Leys.”

Councillor Bajaj presented a petition with 11 signatures in the following terms:

“We the residents of Grocot Road, Hextall Road and Blundell Road in Evington are concerned about the state of pavements which are badly cracked, broken and loose and pose a serious health and safety hazard causing trips and falls especially to the elderly, a lot walking on the road to avoid the pavements; a hazard in itself.”

Councillor Bajaj presented a petition with 58 signatures in the following terms:

“We the undersigned would like the Leicester City Council to take action regarding speeding traffic on Davenport Road. We would like to see a 20 mph speed limit imposed and speed cushions.”

Councillor Bajaj presented a petition with 19 signatures in the following terms:

“We the residents in Evington are concerned regarding where cars pull out onto ‘The Common’ from Evington Park car park. Both pedestrians and bikers alike are having to stop abruptly to avoid collision. Cars on ‘The Common’ are having to stop as cars pulling out of the car park don’t always stop to look.”

Councillor Porter presented a petition with 176 signatures in the following terms:

“We the undersigned do not support the City Council’s proposals to install speed humps and speed ramps on Middleton Street. We support traffic calming but object to the proposed speed humps and speed ramps.”

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

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None.

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Lord Mayor: Questions from Councillors. The first one is Councillor Bajaj.

Councillor Bajaj: “What plan does the City Mayor have to keep the City roads well maintained before the winter kicks in”?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. The highway maintenance programme is planned to protect our highway assets throughout the year but of course in particular in preparation for winter. The programme covers over 500 miles of roads and includes patching and surface dressing, joint sealing of the footways with a slurry mix, carriageway resurfacing, white line maintenance. So in addition to the planned maintenance work highways inspections are carried out. We do it on a minimum of a six month cyclic basis and any defects are repaired as part of that, including because there was quite some focus on this just a few years ago, I am told some 5800 potholes in carriageways and 9165 in footways over the last 12 months. So a very extensive programme and a particular focus on making sure we are ready for the winter ahead.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Bajaj have you a supplementary question?

Councillor Bajaj: No my Lord Mayor. If I can move on to my second question. “What actions have been taken to raise awareness of air pollution to stop it getting worse and to reduce it in Leicester”?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Clarke.

Councillor Clarke: Thank you my Lord Mayor. In terms of raising awareness my Lord Mayor I am pleased that the drafting of the air quality action plan process has

received a lot of media attention locally. The draft air quality action plan will help us achieve our EU targets by 2020 and that is not just us as a local authority, that is DEFRA the government office that monitors our performance. So improving air quality is obviously an important part of improving the health, particularly through respiratory illness, of residents of the City, and myself and Councillor Osman have been obviously working very hard to deliver an appropriate air quality action plan together. Key actions in the plan for your information my Lord Mayor include the Connecting Leicester and Cycle Action Plan, measures to introduce a low emissions zone in the City for buses; using our planning powers particularly to encourage cycling, walking and the use of public transport. We also have an ambitious bid going to the Office for Low Emission Vehicles which will greatly improve our electric vehicle infrastructure in the City. Part of this bid would include an awareness raising campaign that you have talked of in your question Councillor Bajaj which will be targeted at existing and prospective low emission vehicle owners and obviously we hope that the government will look favourably on our bid because we think we deserve the investment in our City.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Bajaj have you a supplementary question?

Councillor Bajaj: No my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Bajaj item 3.

Councillor Bajaj: “The private facility management service, G4S, now operate the caretaking role in several of Leicester’s secondary school premises. Much waste is generated in these schools from a range of sources and the collection of this is the responsibility of G4S. I would like to know about the commitment G4S has to recycling as part of the waste management service. Could G4S submit information about this and inform the Council which materials are currently recycled from the schools, what percentage of the total waste collected is recycled and what targets for recycling have been set for the next few years”?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Clarke.

Councillor Clarke: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I am pleased to say we have recently been in touch with G4S. Probably worth saying many of us might have got our own thoughts about private organisations within our schools and our hospitals as well, but my experience of going into schools and working with people who actually work for those organisations they do work very hard and deliver the best service they can, and G4S are committed to minimising waste sent to landfill and they aim to reuse all waste I am told. Waste is separated into dry mixed recycling, food and general waste and around a third of the total waste volume is recycled via segregation and made into products to be used again. The remaining two thirds are converted into fuel at an energy recovery facility. As I say G4S is an organisation that do work in our schools, they work in two secondary schools in your Ward Councillor Bajaj. All three secondary schools in your Ward are also signed up to our eco schools programme and I would encourage you to ask them to push for

their green flag award working with G4S and the rest of the staff working in those schools because that eco schools programme will support G4S, the pupils, the students and the rest of the staff to greatly improve their environmental credentials. Thank you my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Clarke. Councillor Cleaver.

Councillor Cleaver: Thank you my Lord Mayor. City Mayor, “I understand that Arriva are currently reviewing bus services in South Leicester. The 87 route is a vital service for Eyres Monsell and Aylestone. Will the City Mayor support the local campaign we have launched calling on Arriva to continue to run this very important service”?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I am very pleased indeed to support the campaign launched by the local Councillors in Eyres Monsell in support of the 87 bus service. This is an important bus service for the local community and I hope that Arriva will recognise this in their current review of services. I know that Councillors Cleaver, Palmer and Clarke, of course this service also runs through Aylestone, are campaigning tirelessly with the local community to defend this service. I would just add to that that this situation again reinforces the very clear need for local authorities like Leicester to have much greater powers to oversee public transport so that the needs of local communities and local people come first.

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

Councillor Cleaver: No.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Dr. Moore.

Councillor Dr. Moore: Thank you my Lord Mayor. “I’m informed by a constituent who was formerly employed by the City Council that performance data in relation to development of black and Asian members of the workforce was collected while he worked for the Council. He understands that performance indicators were discussed at the Directors’ Board. Can the City Mayor confirm that such discussions took place, and whether the data collected has been acted on to further this particular aspect of workforce development and, if so, has any further data been collected and what does it indicate”? Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Sood.

Councillor Sood: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Thank you Councillor Moore for this question. Without further detail it is a little bit difficult to be very clear about the programme which your constituent is referring to. However, I believe that the reference is being made to a programme the Council ran some years ago called

'Reach Higher'. This programme was designed to help black and minority ethnic members of staff reach more senior positions within the organisation. Whilst the Council no longer runs this specific programme, the development of members of staff who have protected characteristics is a central feature of the Council's equalities and employment action plan which contains detailed actions around ensuring recruitment processes are accessible to staff providing training and development for staff and ensuring that we monitor the take up of learning and development of ethnic minority staff. In addition, the Council produces an annual workforce profile report and collates and analyses a range of data around our workforce including the profile of black and minority ethnic staff and then this report is used by the HR service to look at specific equality based interventions as needed. A Scrutiny Task Group my Lord Mayor was established earlier this year to look at equalities issues and a work programme was developed which continues to be overseen by Overview Select Committee.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Sood. Councillor Dr. Moore. have you a supplementary?

Councillor Dr. Moore: No my Lord Mayor thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Grant.

Councillor Grant: Thank you Lord Mayor. "Is it still the view of the City Mayor that the role of Police Crime Commissioner is a useful comparator for the purposes of remuneration"?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I don't actually recall ever having made any suggestion that it was a useful comparator but perhaps Councillor Grant can remind me afterwards whether I did so. But I have to say I am not certain what the remuneration of the Police and Crime Commissioner is, but that is perhaps hardly surprising since I have struggled for some time to understand actually what the person in that role does.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Grant a supplementary?

Councillor Grant: Yes Lord Mayor. I will assist the City Mayor by copying and sending him his submission to the last Independent Remuneration Panel, but at the time he did say that it was a useful comparator though he felt that the Police Crime Commissioner ran a simpler organisation than Leicester City Council. But wouldn't it be the case that that is balanced up by the fact that we have recently reviewed and argued that he has 54 Councillors and a large Cabinet assisting him in his duties in running Leicester City Council and therefore it probably does remain a useful comparator?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I think experience would suggest to us that the current incumbent has been reluctant to take any responsibility for running any organisation at all. Indeed whenever any difficult issues have arisen during his tenure of that office he has claimed that it was an operational matter and said it was for the Chief Constable to comment.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Councillor Grant question 7.

Councillor Grant: Thank you Lord Mayor. "How many schools closed in 2013/14 due to industrial action? How many days of teaching were lost to children in Leicester in that school year due to industrial action? How many schools closed with less than 50% of their teaching staff participating in industrial action? And how many schools closed with less than 25% of their teaching staff participating in industrial action"?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Russell.

Councillor Russell: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Noting the somewhat unusual convention of having a large number of questions within one question, but I will do my best to answer them with the information we have. There were three strike days affecting schools in the academic year 2013/14. The Council does not hold data for the number of schools closed in October 2013 as data was not centrally managed at this point. However, in March 2014 I can report that 36 schools closed fully and 48 partially closed, and in July 2014 36 closed fully and 28 closed partially. The strike in July 2014 included support staff as well as teachers. We don't hold reliable data on the number of schools which closed with less than 50% and less than 25% of teachers participating in industrial action as it is up to schools which data they choose to supply us with. Thank you my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Grant have you a supplementary?

Councillor Grant: Well can I just clarify in asking the total number of school days lost to pupils; so the number of schools lost basically times their pupils.

Lord Mayor: I'll let you off with that statement. I don't think it is a question.

Councillor Grant: It clearly is.

Councillor Russell: I haven't got the list of schools and the numbers on roll on those particular days. If Councillor Grant wishes to have that information then I am sure if we have it we can supply it to him.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Singh question 8.

Councillor Singh: Thank you Lord Mayor. "Would the City Mayor inform this Council how advanced are the plans for a Combined Authority and what are the

details of the intended areas of collaboration”?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you Lord Mayor. Along with the County and the District Councils we are currently consulting on the proposals to establish a Combined Authority for Leicester and Leicestershire. Consultation commenced on the 21st September and will close on the 20th of this month. The results of the consultation and the proposal will be considered by full Council before any decision is made whether or not to submit a form of proposal to the government. Just to remind Members that all of the participants and potential participants of this Combined Authority have made it very clear there is no intention of us actually acceding any of our decision making powers to the Combined Authority. It is a question of seeking to ensure that the government give some reality to its commitment to devolve new powers down to a local level. And with that in mind it is intended that the Combined Authority will enable the nine local authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire to work together on three main areas: strategic land use planning, strategic transport and economic development. And it is particularly in the context of that latter one that I am very keen that we should have within the purview of the Combined Authority responsibility for the development of skills particularly for young people in our communities because I am intensely aware that the present arrangements are not ones that necessarily reflect our understanding and local employers’ understanding of the needs at a local level.

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

Councillor Singh: No Lord Mayor. Thank you my Lord Mayor. “In view of the ongoing public engagement about the imminent rationalisation proposals of the Fire and Rescue Service, what concerns does the City Mayor have regarding the consequences for the provision of fire services to the City constituents”?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. As I think Members will be very well aware because there has been a lot of coverage of this not just recently but over the last few years, the Fire Authority the combined fire authority that covers Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland is facing a major financial crisis entirely as a result of the withdrawal of government funding and that is inevitably leading the Fire Authority to have to contemplate very difficult prospects indeed. Those options that are favoured and been put forward by the Chief Fire Officer are currently out for consultation and I know that Members as individuals will wish to respond but also it is intended I know that there should be an opportunity formally for the Council to consider the proposals through the Overview and Scrutiny Commission. And that I hope will give them an opportunity and other Members who wish to engage an opportunity, to examine the proposals being put forward and to decide for themselves whether they are ones that have an acceptable level of risk and indeed

whether they are the best ones that can be produced to deal with what is an inescapable financial challenge. I like many others do have of course considerable concerns about the impact of the changes that are proposed and the consequences of those changes on Leicester and its people and will listen with interest to what is said by the Scrutiny Commission when they have the opportunity to have the Chief Fire Officer and I believe also the Fire Brigade Union service in front of them and will want like them to hear the answers that are given and to examine the credibility of the responses.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Have you a supplementary Councillor Singh?

Councillor Singh: I just want to say Lord Mayor I am obliged for the City Mayor's comments and views in the answer. I don't have a supplementary shall I go on to my next question. Thank you. "Would the Assistant Mayor for Children Young People and Schools inform the Council how many applications for school places went to appeal and what percentage were successful"?

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Russell.

Councillor Russell: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Since the beginning of January 2015 up until the 7th October Legal Services had processed a total of 1619 school appeal cases. Of these 1386 have been heard and dealt with and out of the appeals that have been heard so far 17%, 241 were successful.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Singh have you a supplementary?

Councillor Singh: I do indeed Lord Mayor. This is probably the single most traumatic event for parents to go through the application for their children. I would urge the Assistant Mayor to revisit this whole area for possible revision or to ensure that the allocation process continues to perform. Not only is it accountable to the public and the parents' expectation but also to concerns of Elected Members. It is simply an area which is really fraught with this trauma and therefore I have brought this up year after year. There is a percentage of 17% and whilst I hear what is being said, it does have consequences for down the line.

Lord Mayor: If that is a question are you able to answer that Councillor Russell.

Councillor Russell: Absolutely my Lord Mayor. I am sure I can find an answer to that statement that was made. School place planning is a very complicated area. I sadly don't believe it is the most traumatic thing that parents can go through in respect of children. Sadly there are many, many more much more tragic and difficult things that parents go through with their children that our services support families with on a day to day basis. Having said that I understand it can be a difficult period for people and can make them very anxious and we are doing whatever we can to ensure there are sufficient school places in the locations and at the schools that parents want to choose for their children. Having said that there is always going to be people who, for whatever reason, do not get the school place

that they request. Some parents make choices that are very difficult to enable us to follow through and give them when they may be don't leave anywhere near the school or have any connection to it other than that. Our team follow the national and local published admissions code to ensure that everybody is treated in a fair and transparent manner in the allocation of school places and they do an incredibly good job at a very, very difficult time particularly with those applications that come in outside of the normal process round. They have processed and found school places for nearly 2000 children just since the start of September which I think is an absolute tribute to the work that they do, and I think it is very difficult but I would urge Councillors to support constituents to access the Choice Advice Service to minimise any distress they may find from this process. Thank you my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Russell. Councillor Chaplin question 11.

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. "Which locations are being considered as the replacement for the Anchor Centre"?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Osman.

Councillor Osman: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I can report that we have been actively working to find suitable alternative locations for the Anchor Centre. Members will be aware that this service is very, very important to the honourable group of people that we serve with long term alcohol problems, and is a very effective service that has been run for this group to try and reduce and control their drinking problems and to be able to support their welfare. This service also makes sure that potential for disruptions to local communities is controlled and any location for this service must meet the needs of this group and also be sensitive to local communities. Having said that, we have shortlisted a number of properties which we have actively looked at, but I am unable to confirm the exact location of any property at this stage due to commercial sensitivities. Having said that we have gone out with the group themselves to look at some properties and we are still considering a property in any location. Before we do that we will be consulting with the relevant Ward Members if anything is wrong, plus take into consideration planning issues.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Osman. Have you a supplementary Councillor Chaplin?

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor I do. I am delighted to hear that there has been some active working on this and obviously from the Health Scrutiny meetings that we have had about this that seems to be the situation that has happened for several weeks. Obviously the consultation is important. I would urge that there is an early announcement but when will exactly the announcement be made and when will the Ward Councillors involved and the other parties involved including the vulnerable users of the centre actually get some more detail on this. I think the uncertainty is not helping.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Osman.

Councillor Osman: I fully appreciate the uncertainty and we have back up plans to be able to remediate the situation. I can't give an exact date at this stage although we are seriously considering alternative options.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Osman. Councillor Chaplin question 12.

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. So related to the previous questions, "Will the Assistant Mayor guarantee that the replacement for the Anchor Centre will be open in time to ensure that there is no gap in the service offered"?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Osman.

Councillor Osman: Yes I can give that reassurance to Councillor Chaplin to be able to say that if they are to be able to stay at their current location to have that work carried out in the interim transitional period there would be no service provision that would be lost.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Osman. Councillor Chaplin 13?

Councillor Chaplin: Sorry but I would like to ask a supplementary.

Lord Mayor: Do you have a supplementary question?

Councillor Chaplin: Yes I do and I am sorry to be a bit pedantic about this but the crucial thing is about we are coming up the winter period and for the current location for the Anchor Centre if the temperature drops below I think it is 14 degrees centigrade they are not able to open. So as well as finding a permanent solution which obviously you have given an indication about previously, what provision would you put in place over Christmas to ensure that if they are in their current location they would be able to continue to open to ensure no gap in service?

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Chaplin. Councillor Osman.

Councillor Osman: Yes the current location needs the heating, water and the boiler system to be repaired and we have looked at that situation to try and bring that up to standard to try and accommodate the current provision to continue at the Anchor Centre at this stage.

Lord Mayor: Question 13 – Councillor Chaplin.

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you. You can tell I'm on to the health thing here with the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny my Lord Mayor. So question number 13 to ask the Deputy Mayor "What is the cost of the local consultation on Better Care Together"?

Lord Mayor: Deputy City Mayor.

Deputy City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I understand on Councillor Chaplin's part that this is possibly a case of if at first you don't succeed, ask again. I firmly believe that when there is a programme such as Better Care Together of its magnitude attempting somehow to bring four proposals which will meet the extraordinarily vast funding gap facing local health economy over the next few years which amounts to some £400m, two things are pretty fundamental in underpinning that work. One is transparency and the second is effective and robust scrutiny of proposals and decisions that come forward. So on that basis I am informed that the consultation budget as opposed to cost to date is £400,000.

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

Councillor Chaplin: I do my Lord Mayor. First of all I would like to thank the Deputy City Mayor for being so candid about that where we failed in scrutiny with other partners in Better Care Together and on that note obviously we will be scrutinising that figure in due course but will the Deputy Mayor give an assurance that through the Health and Wellbeing Board and his lead on that, he will be urging partners involved in Better Care Together to be more candid and open with the scrutiny process in the future where we ask questions? It would be helpful if that could be something that could be taken forward at that level.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Deputy City Mayor.

Deputy City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I think that is a very important, well made point and one I certainly would agree with. I have sought when Better Care Together aspects of that programme have been discussed at Health and Wellbeing Board over the past couple of years to make those discussions as open as possible, but I believe there is still some way to go and I think with the active input of the Health Scrutiny Committee here and at the County Council and possibly collaboratively together, we can see that effective scrutiny that is needed and should be expected as part of a programme such as this, realised. And I think through that as well as us as politicians having an opportunity to have our voices heard and to probe and challenge some of the proposals it is fundamentally also important we find ways for the voice of patients and their representative groups to be heard as part of that work as well. So I am sure through working collaboratively through the Health and Wellbeing Board but also Scrutiny arrangements as well that we can make sure that happens.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Deputy City Mayor. Councillor Chaplin question 14.

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. This is obviously my last question this evening. "Could the Deputy Mayor tell the Council his views on the virtual bed policy under Better Care Together"?

Lord Mayor: Deputy City Mayor.

Deputy City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I think my view of the virtual bed policy, I think first a superficial point perhaps, I think it would probably be better if it was called something that people might understand and relate to. Virtual bed sounds as if they are something magical, mysterious and perhaps invisible almost when actually they are very real beds. They are in fact hospital beds which are hospital beds in people's homes to allow people to receive care and support in their own home and to avoid a hospital stay. So I think a starting point might be for us to call them something more sensible and reflective of what they actually are. So I think they are an interesting and potentially very beneficial development, although what I will say, and this broad direction of travel in health and care in moving more services into the community to people's homes, is in principle the right thing to do. But it only works if the services out there in the community, support people properly in their own homes and that is the condition I apply to the proposals of this sort that are emerging from Better Care Together. So, on the one hand the service has moved from the acute sector into communities. That should only happen when services are in place, in the communities to support people properly and not put them at risk and to make sure they get the right treatment, the right care, the right support and that is the judgment that I look at the virtual beds, care home beds, whatever we are going to call them. I think they are a potentially very interesting beneficial development providing the right services are available in the community to make them safe and beneficial for patients and families.

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

Councillor Chaplin: I do thank you very much my Lord Mayor. It is heartening to hear the Deputy City Mayor's comments in terms of the virtual bed policy. I could not agree more about what it is called. I think it is enlightening perhaps for people to understand that under Better Care Together the communication on it is talking about there will be more beds available. There may be fewer beds available in a hospital setting but there may be more beds available taking into account other settings which do include, as I understand it, beds in people's homes. They may or may not be actual hospital beds; they may be people's ordinary beds. Either way what is the Deputy Mayor doing in terms of looking at this perhaps with the Housing Department for the City Council as well and the Health and Wellbeing Board about making sure that where housing is not appropriate to accommodate this kind of provision in the City, perhaps through overcrowding, and I make this point from an issue that has arisen from a constituent of mine who is on the housing list and waiting to be rehoused, but has a family member who is having an operation and there is not really suitable accommodation at home for that family member who happens to be a child actually, it is not just for adults it is for children, to recuperate and have that home care that is proposed as a part of the plans in Better Care Together. So the question succinctly is what is being discussed in terms of the housing provision and making sure that Leicester people are protected and not forced to have to have home care in a virtual bed, virtual hospital bed in a house

where housing is not appropriate for that because of overcrowding or poor structure or whatever?

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Chaplin. Deputy City Mayor.

Deputy City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I think ultimately the answer is to make sure we have enough quality housing of sufficient size to tackle overcrowding as a general issue. I think in the specifics of this point about making sure our homes are suitable for people in old age, with disability with different care needs. We obviously have an ongoing programme of adaptations work, through the disabled facilities grant programme. But I also think that whilst it is broadly a good and important thing to make it possible for as many people as possible to stay in their own homes when they need care in old age or for reasons of disability. We should also not overlook the fact that we are committed to making sure there is a good range of accommodation options for people as well. That is why we are committed to of course building new intermediate care units because it might not be always possible for people to come straight out of hospital or to avoid hospital altogether and go straight back to their own home. Whilst I am also determined that we continue to increase the number of extra care units in the City as well, so we have that broad range of accommodation options for people throughout their life. I think as we build new homes in the City I think there is an important point to do to make sure we sort of begin future proofing our housing as the population live longer. We have greater numbers of people in old age, we need to start sort of building and designing homes with an eye to that as well as just adapting when people reach old age. I think it is something we need to talk to home builders about and those charged with building new homes and that we begin to future proof homes that they suit people all the way through their life course, so we don't end up with a situation when a care need or old age suddenly arises we have to adapt and spend money at that point. We should be able to build in at design phase, measures to make homes as suitable as possible for people's full life course.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Deputy City Mayor. Councillor Newcombe question 15.

Councillor Newcombe: Thank you Lord Mayor. "Can you inform Council what the overall attendance figures were for the City, how do they compare with County schools and national statistics"?

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Russell.

Councillor Russell: Thank you my Lord Mayor. The most recent figures published are for the school year 2013/14. They show an overall attendance figure of 95.5% for schools in England, 95.6% for Leicester schools and 95.4% for City schools.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Russell. Have you a supplementary Councillor Newcombe?

Councillor Newcombe: Yes my Lord Mayor. I would like to know what further initiatives are planned if any to tackle and improve attendance figures further?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Russell.

Councillor Russell: Thank you my Lord Mayor. As the figures are broadly in line in fact very, very closely in line with both local, regional and national comparators there has already been significant impact on working schools across our City to support families to ensure they are bringing their children to school every day and that those children are able to get the best possible educational outcomes. We have a strong and dedicated Education Welfare Service that will support families where appropriate but will also take action where families are not supporting their children to attend school on a regular basis understating the educational impact that can have.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Russell. Councillor Newcombe question 16.

Councillor Newcombe: Thank you Lord Mayor. “What was the total for unauthorised absence in the City schools”?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Russell.

Councillor Russell: Thank you my Lord Mayor. The total unauthorised absences in City schools for 2014/15 was 1.6% across the school year and across our school population which equates to 125,577 days lost and that is across obviously a vast school population.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Russell. Have you a supplementary question Councillor Newcombe?

Councillor Newcombe: No my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Then on to number 17, question 17.

Councillor Newcombe: “How many fines were issued for taking children out of school during term time”?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Russell.

Councillor Russell: Thank you my Lord Mayor. During 2014/15 there were 3,207 penalty notices issued to the parents of 1,879 children because where there are two parents in a household the fine is automatically issued to both parents responsible for the children.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Russell. Councillor Newcombe do you have a supplementary question?

Councillor Newcombe: No my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Move then on to question 18 thank you.

Councillor Newcombe: “What is the Council doing regarding sugary drinks in our schools and leisure centres? Recently Jamie Oliver was trying to encourage the government to put a tax on these drinks which have links to obesity and tooth decay. I’ve written to my local MP regarding sugary drinks and ask the Council if it will promote more healthier options within our schools and leisure centres”?

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Osman.

Councillor Osman: I thank Councillor Newcombe for asking that question. I think Council will be aware that Leicester has one of the worst rates for tooth decay in children in the country and like Councils across the country it is working to reduce obesity in children. This includes reducing sugar levels with a key cause of obesity and our public health responsibilities give us more opportunity to do this ever more. Our ‘Healthy Smile’ programme works with parents and carers of young children in schools across to promote tooth brushing and I would like to add that we have put ourselves forward for a national award for this. We are actually promoting in our children’s centres ‘Eat better, Start better’ and national voluntary food and drink guidelines for early years settings and in our leisure centres we have closely worked with our public health team to try and reduce sugary drinks and ensure health food options are available and this is providing hot and cold meals that includes drinking water and milk, and this has been introduced both at cafeterias at the Braunstone and the Aylestone Leisure Centres.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Osman. Have you a supplementary question Councillor Newcombe?

Councillor Newcombe: Just a comment my Lord Mayor. I would like to thank Councillor Osman for his thorough reply and I am pleased to see that the Council is doing what it can to promote healthier options. As a child you don’t always realise the implications of sugary drinks and the effects that it can have on you later in life so I think it is really good that the work that we are doing is a step in the right direction. Thank you Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Just to remind Members this is for supplementary questions. Councillor Cole, question 20. Sorry can we go back Councillor Newcombe question 19 – my apologies.

Councillor Newcombe: Thank you Lord Mayor. “Can the Council look into bringing the highway intervention levels for uneven pavements in shopping areas on the outer estates to 20mm as it is in the City Centre, as those areas also have high footfall and should be repaired/ maintained as in the City Centre”?

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I am very grateful to Councillor Newcombe for raising this question because it has actually promoted some thinking about whether there are special circumstances in those heavily trafficked shopping areas in our outer areas. It is obviously important that we have safe and decent quality pavements and that we try and provide some uniform standards across them, as to what level of damage we ought to intervene. Currently we do as Councillor Newcombe has indicated, have a differentiation between the footway intervention levels around the City which are indeed at 25mm while in the City Centre they are 20mm. There is also some discrepancy in the frequency of inspections as well and again I think that his question has prompted some reconsideration of that. I am aware that we do need to strike a balance between the need to keep all of our pavements in an acceptable standard and also obviously the limited financial resources that we have got, in order to deal with them. But it does seem that this is an area that is in need of some review and I will indeed ask officers to reconsider our current standards in those heavily used outer shopping areas that in terms of the footfall have many similar features to parts of our City centre.

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

Councillor Newcombe: No my Lord Mayor. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Cole, question 20. Thank you.

Councillor Cole: Thank you my Lord Mayor. "The Conservative Government is proposing to give Local Government the power to raise business tax and keep all of the funds they collect. In areas where there are City Mayors, the proposal is also that the Local Government can raise extra for local infrastructure. The question is does the City Mayor see this as beneficial to Local Government or is it a trap that should be avoided"?

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor.

City Mayor: Actually the short answer to Councillor Cole's question is that we don't yet know. It very much depends on the detail of the proposals and currently we have very little indeed. What we do know is that the government is not in fact giving local authorities the power to set business rates. What they are saying is that they will continue to set the rate that is chargeable but that authorities might be free to reduce the rates in some areas and in some circumstances and indeed they have said that where there is an Elected Mayor there will be some, and it is very limited, discretion in certain circumstances to charge a premium. But this will always be subject to a cap. My main concern actually is about the link between funding and needs because we have a fairly complex system with both business rates and with the revenue support more generally which recognises that, this is very obvious, up and down the country there are different levels of deprivation and different levels of

income likely to be raised locally whether it is from Council tax or from business rates. I think the very obvious example is to take that of Westminster where that particular area has in general a very significantly higher level of income than is the case in other parts of the country and, particularly, of course in our case to get a comparison in Leicester. If I just talk about our budget: In 2015/16 our income is £270m and of that £85m is coming from Council tax, and after you have taken out the other grant, about £100m is coming in rates. Now clearly that is not of itself enough to make the difference between the income from Council tax and our level of expenditure. Westminster has very similar, believe it or not, level of needs when they assess it, but has income from its rates, not of the £100m that we have but of £1.8b. Now quite clearly if that is to be transferred to local authorities in general it is not going to be transferred pro-rata to local authorities dependent on how much they raise in their area. I realise that the government is grossly unfair in many respects but I cannot believe for a minute that they intend to leave us with £100m and Westminster with £1.8b to spend for similar levels of need. There will need to be intervention. So in this I have no doubt at all that what really matters is the small print. We don't have that small print yet. So in response to Councillor Cole's question about whether this is a trap that can be avoided, I think the reality is that this is unavoidable but what it amounts to we certainly don't yet know.

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

Councillor Cole: Yes Lord Mayor. Thank you. Can I thank the City Mayor for his response. Perhaps my supplementary might be a difficult one to answer in the context of the line of travel of the City Mayor's response. Some commentators have said that part of the process of allowing local government to collect business tax is to set up a competition between the government for attracting businesses to the area and I just wondered whether the City Mayor finds that helpful or unhelpful in the context of Leicester's situation.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Cole. City Mayor.

City Mayor: I find it unlikely to be effective if that really is their intention. I have given an example of Westminster. I can give examples of Northern local authorities that are obviously far less well placed than we are to attract investment. There are towns and cities up and down the land some of whom will be well placed to attract investment, some of whom will be badly placed, some of whom with low levels of deprivation, some of them with high levels of deprivation and I have no doubt that whatever the government may say its intentions are, it is going to end up with a system that is as much centrally controlled and centrally determined as the present one is. As Members will have heard me say on many other occasions, we are by a long way the most centralised state anywhere in the democratic world and the disempowerment of local government because of its inability to raise its own resources locally is something that I think is a fundamental weakness in our democratic system.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Councillor Porter question 21.

Councillor Porter: Thank you Lord Mayor. Yes my question is “Do the Council want to see 9 Grace Road closed down”?

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Deputy City Mayor.

Deputy City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Let me start by saying this Council does not ever want to see the continuing provision of inadequate care to our citizens by any provider of services. Following significant safeguarding allegations, multi-agency investigations involving adult social care, police and the Care Quality Commission have been made. As a result the Council has confirmed to the provider of 9 Grace Road that we will terminate our contract for residential care services. We are currently working to support the individuals in the home to find alternative and appropriate accommodation. In light of the ongoing legal processes it would be inappropriate for me to make further comments on this at the current time.

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

Councillor Porter: No Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Can you move then to question 22 please.

Councillor Porter: Yes, thank you Lord Mayor. “Has the Council decided to withdraw support and funding for the over 50’s group”?

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Deputy City Mayor.

Deputy City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. It has always been the intention in regard to the Leicester 50 Plus Network, that Council support would be given to enable that body to develop to a point of being able to sustain and organise itself going forward, and we believe that point has been reached. Training has been provided to the 50 Plus Network on running management committees, managing different committee roles and financial management as well. The Council supports the network to hold their AGM earlier this year and we have also continued to provide a wide range of advice that will enable that forum to move forward, and I very much hope that it can move forward and continue to play the important role that it does alongside the Forum for Older People as well.

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

Councillor Porter: Yes I have. Yes, I’m not sure who Councillor Palmer has been talking to but this isn’t the understanding that I have at all. The members of the group feel that they are not in a position to move forward at the moment. They would like to continue with having the room hire from the City Council and also

having the officer support in terms of producing minutes and sending out letters. Their understanding is that their last meeting will be taking place on the 23rd November so is it possible that the Council could go back and talk to Nancy Bennett who is the current chair of the group and find out exactly what is going on because as Councillor Palmer says, it is a really important group, there is people from all across the City who are members of it, it is a very diverse group of people there. So I think as the Council set it up, they should go and do whatever they can to keep the group going. So hopefully something could be sorted out. Thank you Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Deputy City Mayor.

Deputy City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. They are not concerns that have been brought to my attention by the group itself or any member of it. I am not sure they are concerns have been raised for example through Adult Social Care Scrutiny either. I think it is important that the Council does help these networks, these groups become established, but also that we support them towards self-organisation and sufficiency as well. We spend a significant amount of money commissioning Voluntary Action Leicester for example by support to the voluntary and community groups as well. I am very happy to go and talk to the 50 Plus Network about their ongoing support arrangements but I say again these are not concerns that have been raised with me and I believe it is the case that the organisation will be able to continue to meet and operate beyond November on the basis that I have outlined.

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

Councillor Porter: Yes thank you Lord Mayor. Over the last few years we have often heard Sir Peter talking about his favoured bidders. So my question is "Can the Council explain how the favoured bidders process works"?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor to the best of my recollection I don't think I have ever talked about favoured bidders, certainly not my favoured bidders. In fact the Council does not have a favoured bidders process. Indeed more than that, the Council is not permitted to favour certain bidders under public procurement law. It must and does treat all bidders fairly.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Porter have you a supplementary question?

Councillor Porter: Yes just for clarification I think the City Mayor probably needs to go through the pages of the Leicester Mercury to find the references he has made about favoured bidders. But my question really relates to a recent report which talks about one party Councils. Although it does not mention Leicester City Council by name it is listed in the catalogue of councils which are dominated by one party and it states in the report that one party councils have a much higher risk of

corruption. The report also mentions about favoured bidders. So my question to the Council is what transparent measures are in place to prevent corruption in this Council?

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Porter. City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor what Councillor Porter implies there is actually very serious and if he does have any evidence at all of any impropriety in relation to this authority and the conduct of its business I would challenge him to go immediately and see the Monitoring Officer and to report it to him and I am sure he would be quite assiduous, I can see him nodding, in investigating and ensuring that, without fear or favour, it is investigated and appropriate action is taken. I repeat what I said in my initial reply my Lord Mayor. I am not aware of ever having spoken about the Council having favoured bidders in specific or in general and were we to have favoured bidders, we would undoubtedly be in breach of procurement law and it is something that I would most strongly deprecate and never tolerate.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Question 24 Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: Thank you Lord Mayor. My question is “Do the Council support proposals to close down the Central Fire Station”?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor, in response to an earlier question, I talked about the appalling financial situation that the Combined Fire Authority finds itself in as a result, not particularly in this case of the actions of the present government, but actually as a result of the actions of the previous government, which was of course a Coalition government, that Councillor Porter was in support of. My Lord Mayor what I very much favour is the Combined Fire Authority facing the reality of the big hole in its finances and consulting as it is doing, on a potential way forward in dealing with that crisis.

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

Councillor Porter: Yes I have Lord Mayor. I think it is odd that the Labour Council appears to have a very warped sense of priorities that it puts in place Tory inspired cuts ahead of public safety. I think the number one priority for any City, any Council, is to protect the members of the public and nobody knows what is around the corner. We have got highly trained professional fire fighters in Leicester City centre, they are not in Wigston, they are not in Oadby, they are right in the heart of the City. And as I say you cannot cut corners when it comes to public safety. So my question is why isn't the Labour Council actively campaigning against the closure which represents a real threat to public safety?

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Porter. City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor it is amazing how in a few months Councillor Porter can move his position. It was just a few months ago he was talking not about Tory inspired cuts, but about the brave decisions being taken by his Coalition friends and partners. My Lord Mayor, as I have indicated, the reality of the hole in the Fire Authority's budget is inescapable and while Councillor Porter might seek to have some campaign about this, no campaign, certainly with the present government or indeed with the government he supported, has been successful in filling that hole in the finances and we are aware that there are going to have to be some difficult decisions made. Whether the current proposals are the right ones to deal with that, the best ones, the safest ones to deal with that is why we are supporting a period of consultation so that it can be fully examined and explored not least by the Scrutiny process within this Authority as no doubt there will be by those in the other two Authorities, the County Council and Rutland County Council, who make up the Fire Authority. Only after there has been an exploration will it be possible for us to decide whether there are alternatives, how credible those alternatives are and whether they are safer than the ones that have been put forward by the Chief Fire Officer. But what I do support is a full public debate on the issue and I also support facing up to the reality of what this and the previous government have done to our Fire Authority.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor and can I thank Members for generally keeping to the process of question, answer, supplementary question, answer. Thank you.

MATTERS RESERVED TO COUNCIL

Independent Remuneration Panel Process

A report of the Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance was considered which sought approval to the commencement of a review of the Council's Scheme of Members Allowances by an independent panel as specified in legislation.

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

12. That Council:

- 1) approve the appointment and composition of an Independent

Remuneration Panel to consider Members Allowances in Leicester as detailed in the report;

- 2) approve the commencement of a review of the Council's Scheme of Members Allowances by the Independent Remuneration Panel as specified in legislation on the basis defined in the report and taking into account the current financial constraints facing the Council and;
- 3) note that consideration of the report of the Panel is a matter reserved to Council and that Council in setting a Scheme of Allowances at that point will have the choice to accept in full or in part or reject the findings of the Panel;

and additionally under Council Procedure Rule 15f the further two resolutions;

- 4) in order to ensure that the Panel represents the views of city residents more fully, 3 members of the public who meet the statutory conditions for membership of the panel be appointed by the Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance on the recommendation of the Chair of the Panel, following an open and formal public recruitment exercise; and
- 5) notes that the additional members of the Panel will be offered expenses in line with those detailed in the report and that the timescale for the delivery of the report to Council is likely to require amendment.

Leicester Youth Justice Plan 2015-16

A report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services was considered which gave details of the annual Youth Justice Plan for Leicester which had been developed following consultation with partners.

Moved by Councillor Russell, seconded by Councillor Moore and carried:-

13. That Council notes and adopts the Leicester City Youth Justice Plan for 2015/16.

Call-In of Executive Decision – Highfields Community Association

The Lord Mayor noted that this item would not now be considered following the withdrawal of the call-in.

REPORTS OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Scrutiny Annual Report

Councillor Dawood (Chair of Overview Select Committee 2014-15) submitted a report which gave details of the work of Scrutiny during 2014-15.

Moved by Councillor Dawood, seconded by Councillor Singh and carried:

14. That Council notes and endorses the work of Scrutiny during 2014-15.

EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES

None.

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

15. **Preamble**

In July 2015, the Government announced its intention to change legislation affecting trade unions including measures relating to industrial action ballots; the organisation of industrial action and trade union subscription payment arrangements (known as check off).

Motion

Leicester City Council believes:

1. That the right to join a trade union and to participate in lawful industrial action is a fundamental right which should be respected in a free and democratic society.
2. The Government's proposals in the trade Union Bill will undermine constructive employment relations and that effective industrial relations are achieved by meaningful engagement and not additional legal restrictions on trade union activity.
3. Effective workplace representation ensures access to justice and has benefits across employing organisations and that trade unions are an integral part of a modern workplace.
4. The Government's Trade Union Bill is a politically-motivated attack on trade unions and could have negative consequences for wider society.

Leicester City Council resolves to:

1. Write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills stating the Council's opposition to their Trade Union Bill and to participate in any consultations to this effect.
2. To continue to recognise the important role played by the council's recognised trade unions in representing their members.

ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

Close of Meeting

The Lord Mayor declared the meeting closed at 7.47 pm.