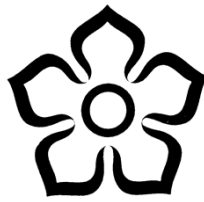


Wednesday, 22 February 2017





Leicester  
City Council

At a meeting of the LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL held at the Town Hall on Wednesday, 22 FEBRUARY 2017 on the rise of the meeting that commences at 5pm, for the business hereunder mentioned.

=====

**BUSINESS**

=====

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

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2016 are available to view at:

<http://www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk:8071/documents/g7529/Printed%20minutes%20Thursday%2024-Nov-2016%2017.00%20Council.pdf?T=1>

Copies are also available from Democratic Support on (0116) 454 6350 or [Committees@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:Committees@leicester.gov.uk)

4. **STATEMENTS BY THE CITY MAYOR/EXECUTIVE**
5. **PETITIONS**

Presented by Members of the Public  
Presented by Councillors

Petitions to be debated

5.1 Rushey Mead Library and Neighbourhood Centre

6. **QUESTIONS**
  - From Members of the Public
  - From Councillors

7. **MATTERS RESERVED TO COUNCIL**

7.1 Treasury Strategy 2017/18

8. **REPORTS OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

8.1 Scrutiny Annual Report 2015 - 2016

9. **EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES**

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

10. **NOTICES OF MOTION**

11. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

**Fire & Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

- The Council Chamber Fire Exits are the two entrances either side of the top bench or under the balcony in the far left corner of the room.
- In the event of an emergency alarm sounding make your way to Town Hall Square and assemble on the far side of the fountain.
- Anyone who is unable to evacuate using stairs should speak to any of the Town Hall staff at the beginning of the meeting who will offer advice on evacuation arrangements.
- From the public gallery, exit via the way you came in, or via the Chamber as directed by Town Hall staff.

**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](http://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:**

STEPHEN CORRALL, LORD MAYOR  
CHAIRMAN

SIR PETER SOULSBY – CITY MAYOR

Abbey Ward

HARSHAD DAHYABHAI BHAVSAR  
ANNETTE BYRNE  
VIJAY SINGH RIYAIT

North Evington Ward

LUIS FONSECA  
ABDUL RAZAK OSMAN

Aylestone Ward

ADAM CLARKE  
NIGEL CARL PORTER

Rushey Mead Ward

RITA PATEL  
ROSS WILLMOTT

Beaumont Leys Ward

SUE WADDINGTON  
PAUL THOMAS WESTLEY

Saffron Ward

ELLY CUTKELVIN  
WILLIAM SHELTON

Belgrave Ward

MANJULA SOOD  
JOHN THOMAS

Spinney Hills Ward

SHOFIQL ISLAM CHOWDHURY  
MUSTAFA MALIK

Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields

KULWINDER SINGH JOHAL

Stoneygate Ward

LUCY CHAPLIN  
KIRK MASTER  
AMINUR THALUKDAR

Castle Ward

PATRICK JOSEPH KITTERICK  
LYNN SENIOR

Thurncourt Ward

TERESA ALDRED  
PAUL NEWCOMBE

Evington Ward

DEEPAK BAJAJ  
RATILAL BHAGWAN GOVIND  
SUE HUNTER

Troon Ward

DIANE CANK  
BALJIT SINGH

Eyres Monsell Ward

VIRGINIA CLEAVER  
RORY PALMER

Westcotes Ward

ANDY CONNELLY  
SARAH RUSSELL

Fosse Ward

DAWN ALFONSO  
TED CASSIDY

Western Ward

GEORGE COLE  
MALCOLM UNSWORTH

Humberstone and Hamilton Ward

RASHMI JOSHI  
GURINDER SINGH SANDHU

Wycliffe Ward

HANIF AQBANY

Knighton Ward

ROSS GRANT  
INDERJIT SINGH GUGNANI  
DR LYNN MOORE

## **LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Lord Mayor noted that he had no further announcements.

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

No declarations were made.

## **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

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

31. That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 24 November 2016, a copy having been circulated to each Member of the Council, be taken as read and that they be approved as a correct record.

## **STATEMENTS BY THE CITY MAYOR/EXECUTIVE**

None.

## **PETITIONS**

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

Miss Vicky Roe to present a petition with 94 valid signatures in the following terms:-

“We request that Leicester City Council:

1. strictly enforce their powers of regulation over landlords;
2. insist that out of area owners/property developers list their main residence on any planning application submitted to the Council;
3. seriously consider extending their powers of regulation over landlords, to the benefit of tenants and the increase of the Council's revenues.”

### **PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Thalukdar presented a petition with 1,464 signatures in the following terms:

“Due to the recent funding cuts of £30,000 a year from Leicester City Council for Shama Women’s Centre and lack of other funds we will not be able to continue to provide our services to thousands of women from March 2017. We want the Council to reinstate our funding of £30,000 a year from 1 April 2017.”

Under Council Procedure Rule 13a the aforementioned petitions will be referred to the Monitoring Officer for consideration and action as appropriate.

### **PETITIONS TO BE DEBATED**



At the request of the Lord Mayor the Head of Law and the Deputy Monitoring Officer addressed Council and noted that under the terms of the Council's Petitions Scheme each petitioner had been invited to speak on their petition for a maximum of five minutes. This would be followed by a debate on the issues raised by the petition for a maximum of 15 minutes. Following the debate under the Constitution the Council could take the action the petition requests in so far as it has the power to do so; recommend a decision maker to not take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate; recommend that further investigation into the matter be commissioned or note the petition. Attention was further drawn to the legal implications on page 2 of the report which referred to the executive decision which had been taken in relation to the Transforming Neighbourhoods Strategy.

A petition had been received from Ms Jo Popat which had been verified as having the required number of verified signatures to trigger a debate and had been submitted in the following terms. The petition was presented by Ms Popat, Jayshri Solanki, Lily Paulson, Rikesh Gandesha and Dixit Chauhan. Following a request from the petitioners the Lord Mayor allowed one further minute to finish the statement.

"We the undersigned petition the City Mayor, Peter Soulsby of Leicester City Council to ensure that both the Rushey Mead Library and the Rushey Mead Recreation Centre remain open and continue to provide services for all of the community of Rushey Mead. These two premises provide much needed essential space and services for local people. It is a lifeline for many people, including women, disabled people, single mothers, elderly people, young children and families.

There are no other Council Community facilities in the area and so we demand that there are no cuts to the provision and that both of the buildings remain open and continue the service provision."

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

32. That the petition be noted.

The meeting adjourned at 6.30pm and reconvened at 6.44pm.

## **QUESTIONS**

### **Questions from Members of the Public**

None.

### **Questions from Councillors**

**Lord Mayor:** Questions from Councillors, Councillor Cole please.

**Councillor Cole:** Thank you Lord Mayor. "Does the City Mayor think that Leicester City Council should have a referendum on increasing Council Tax to meet the rising costs of social care in the city?"

**Lord Mayor:** Deputy City Mayor please.

**Deputy City Mayor:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. In a word no, we do not think that, we explored the inadequacies, the unfairness of relying on Council Tax as a solution to the adult social care funding crisis, we do not accept that premise. Moreover I do not believe the people of Leicester would thank us for taking what would be a £600,000 gamble if we were to hold a referendum. That would be the cost of running a referendum and rebilling households in the City should that referendum be lost, which I believe it would be.

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

**Councillor Cole:** Can I just thank the Deputy City Mayor for his answer and say it is probably unfortunate that we have no Conservative MPs in the city because it does seem that other Councils have used that as a ploy for getting more money out of the government for adult social care.

**Lord Mayor:** Councillor Cole can I remind Members it is not a statement but it should be a question relating to the original answer given. Thank you Councillor Cole. You don't want to respond do you?

**Deputy City Mayor:** Just briefly Lord Mayor. Just for clarity we do not believe that Conservative MPs in the city would necessarily be a helpful thing.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Deputy City Mayor. Councillor Cole, question 2 please.

**Councillor Cole:** Thank you Lord Mayor. "Can I just ask the City Mayor how many Directors does Leicester City Council have working in it, and how many of them are from the BME community?"

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Cole. City Mayor please.

**City Mayor:** Thank you my Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Cole for the question. Councillor Cole will be aware that we do as an organisation monitor very carefully the composition of our workforce, and I am pleased to say that in general terms our workforce is much more representative of the community it serves today than was the case some time ago. However, it is the case that it is more representative in the lower parts of the organisation than it is right at the top of the organisation, and that is a phenomenon that we see in other places as well. But I am pleased to say that we have made some considerable progress in the higher levels of the organisation and we have 3 Strategic Directors and 13 Directors in post in total. And of those 2 have declared that they are of black and minority ethnic communities. I am told that Directors declaring BME constitute 12½% of the staff group at that level which of course is some progress, but it does indicate that there is more that we need to do particularly to encourage our own staff to apply for senior positions we do have a lot to do in terms of encouraging them and indeed in doing what is sometimes described as 'growing our own'.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you City Mayor. Councillor Cole do you have a supplementary question please?

**Councillor Cole:** Can I just thank the City Mayor for his answer and can I just say to the City Mayor it is important that in a diverse city such as Leicester that we don't appear to have a glass ceiling for senior workers at Director level here at the Council, and can I ask the City Mayor, therefore, that if he were to make it a priority to address the imbalance that clearly is perceived from the outside.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Cole. City Mayor.

**City Mayor:** Yes I do and I take that point entirely and I was told myself about the dangers of us having a glass ceiling beyond which employees may aspire, but beyond which, they cannot reach in terms of employment. I don't believe that is the case and it is really for that reason that I stress the importance of us, as I described it, as 'growing our own' and making sure that people who come up through the organisation do not come against a glass ceiling beyond which they can't progress. I think we have been increasingly successful in doing that but it is indeed a work in progress.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you City Mayor. Question 3, Councillor Cole.

**Councillor Cole:** Thank you again Lord Mayor. "Given the tide of racist mood coming across from the Atlantic out of the Trump Administration and from mainland Europe towards the UK and of course from the Brexit result last year, does the City Mayor think we should be directing extra resources to the city community cohesion programme to ensure that continuation of harmony amongst our richly diverse city?"

**Lord Mayor.** City Mayor please.

**City Mayor:** Thank you my Lord Mayor and again my thanks to Councillor Cole for raising this very important issue. I think this city has a proud history of communities coming together in difficult times and we have talked in earlier debates about just how difficult times these are for us as a city, but of course we are intensely aware of events obviously following Brexit and following the election in the United States of how difficult things are on a wider perspective. I say we have a proud history but we can't be complacent about that and we do need to continue to work with partners, with communities and with other agencies, and I would again want to commit myself this evening to ensuring that we do just that. I think the Council could often be a lead partner in that work and I think it is important that we continue to take that leadership role very seriously as an organisation and as individuals. I think it is important, reflecting on some of the issues that Councillor Cole raised in his questions, that we do continue to monitor our services, but also to monitor what is happening out in the wider community, and to be aware that our role is first of all to know what is happening in the wider community, the stress and tensions that are out there and, where we are able, to seek to lead and to intervene in dealing with those issues that inevitably occur in any city, and that we can't pretend on occasions do not exist here in our city as well. I do look forward to discussing with Councillor Cole ways in which we can be involved in initiatives and events in the future to ensure that we continue the work that I think we have been so successful with in the past.

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

**Councillor Cole:** Can I just thank the City Mayor for his offer one which I will take up and can I just stress to the City Mayor that in terms of our city, harmony is incredibly important and as we go forward with Brexit it is likely that the issue of racism is going to get more and more...

**Lord Mayor:** Councillor Cole can you form a question please.

**Councillor Cole:** ... and can I therefore ask the City Mayor to not take his eye off

the ball where this is concerned because of the absolute importance to our city.

**Lord Mayor:** City Mayor.

**City Mayor:** Yes my Lord Mayor I think, you know, we are a city who are often quite rightly proud of what we managed to do as a city with the many communities that reflect our important contribution to everything that makes our city great. But of course we cannot afford to be complacent and we cannot afford to believe that there will not be challenges ahead and that we must be prepared to face up to them and to provide leadership and example to the wider community. I am very grateful for the question and it is always timely to be reminded that community cohesion has to remain a very high priority for us.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you City Mayor. Question 4, Councillor Riyait please.

**Councillor Riyait:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. "Having received indications from the Council that they have reached a provisional agreement with Bloor Homes on the Oakwood Road play area adoption, the precise timescale and communication to local residents has not been agreed. Can I please have a firm timescale for when the play area will reopen and when residents will actually be told what is happening?" Thank you.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Riyait. City Mayor please.

**City Mayor:** My Lord Mayor I am aware of the assiduous work that Councillor Riyait has done to bring this issue, this very long running issue, to a satisfactory conclusion. The fact is that the area talked about was constructed by Bloor Homes as part of their development of the former Marconi site, and it has never been adopted due to a wide range of issues associated with vandalism, the quality of the work that was done by them with the original installation. I am informed that Bloor have accepted that remedial works to the play area need to be carried out at their cost before the Council can actually carry out the adoption, and they have provisionally agreed to pay a capital sum of £19,200 to the Council to fund the remedial works to allow the play area to be reopened and used by the local community. I am intensely aware that in the question, quite understandably, Councillor Riyait is asking about the timetable for taking this forward and it is very frustrating. We are currently drafting agreements to establish the terms of the land transfer and the capital sum payment and I am determined that should be done as quickly as possible, certainly in so far as it is within our control. The process has been delayed while we have been awaiting information from Bloor; specifically a copy of the relevant land registry plans to confirm the area for adoption. But it is now the expectation, and I would like to be able to say there is a firm timetable, but I think we have just got to be realistic that it is not entirely within our control. The expectation is that this should be completed within 8 weeks, and that the date for commencement of the remedial works is the week commencing Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April. I will continue to monitor progress on this, I will continue to ensure that Councillor Riyait and his colleagues are kept informed of it. I hope that it will be the case that the anticipated date for completion and the subsequent reopening of the play area is the week commencing 15<sup>th</sup> May this year, and I very much hope that that will be achieved and would look forward with Councillor Riyait to actually visiting it and actually seeing it being brought back into use as it ought to have been right from the start and enjoyed by the community in his Ward.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you City Mayor. Councillor Riyait do you have you a supplementary?

**Councillor Riyait:** Yes can I thank the City Mayor for his reply on that and also the work that Councillor Clair has done. Given we have some good news on that, would it be possible to have some form of communication to residents given that Bloor have obviously shirked their responsibilities in having any sort of communication with local residents. If anything can be done prior to the opening that would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Riyait. City Mayor.

**City Mayor:** Yes, thank you Lord Mayor. I have actually asked for a leaflet to be drafted and that is underway and I will ensure that the officers involved consult with the Abbey Ward Councillors to make sure that it is actually reflecting what they believe needs to be said to the local community that of course they represent. I think the intention is to distribute it to the relevant households within the immediate vicinity of the play area so that they know what is going on. I will seek to ensure that officers do understand the need to keep Councillor Riyait and the other Ward Councillors fully involved.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you City Mayor. Question 5, Councillor Singh please.

**Councillor Singh:** Thank you Lord Mayor. "In a recent endorsement to the children's heart centre at Leicester Glenfield Hospital Heart Centre in their report published on January 26<sup>th</sup> the inspectors from the Care Quality Commission said "we rated the effectiveness of the children and young people's services as outstanding". Would the Deputy Mayor as Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board like to comment on the future possibility of a successful outcome to the current battle to save the Leicester Glenfield Hospital's heart speciality services?"

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Singh. Councillor Palmer.

**Deputy City Mayor:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. What I would say is that we in this Council all hope of a successful outcome and will do what we can to secure a successful outcome. We now face a long consultation phase through until June. The Council will make a very detailed response to that consultation setting out all the arguments, all the evidence in favour of continuing children's heart surgery at Glenfield, identifying the flaws in the methodology and the recommendations brought forward by NHS England and we will continue to work with all those in Leicester from across the broader region as well who continue to campaign on this, a campaign that has brought the city together, has reached across different political traditions, across the trade union movement, into communities, across patients and staff at the Unit. That campaign must continue now all the way through until June, it has this local authority's full support, and will continue to do so and we will do all we can working with others, working with partners to try to secure that outcome that we all want which is the continuation of children's heart surgery here in Leicester at Glenfield.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Deputy City Mayor. Councillor Singh do have you a supplementary question please?

**Councillor Singh:** Yes my Lord Mayor yes I do. Can I personally congratulate the Deputy Mayor on the lead that he has taken with regard to this issue particularly in the media and on behalf of the Council and urge him that to work collaboratively with the region as well as local partners, which I am sure he is doing, but to continue to campaign and to challenge the government with regards to this decision

that has been taken and we all hope that he will be successful in that.

**Lord Mayor:** I think there is a question in there for you.

**Deputy City Mayor:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. Whilst I am grateful, I really don't necessarily want congratulating, I want us to save children's heart surgery at Glenfield and that will require a continued collaborative effort, a big campaign and some very, very robust detailed responses to the NHS England consultation and the continuation of a political campaign right through till June. I will play my part but I know Members across this Chamber and people right across our communities will continue to do their bit as well.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Deputy City Mayor. Question 6, Councillor Kitterick please.

**Councillor Kitterick:** Lord Mayor. "How many Hobbits live in the City of Leicester?"

**Lord Mayor:** City Mayor please.

**City Mayor:** My Lord Mayor I regret that in a major omission in their statistics the Office for National Statistics do not include that question in the census. I regret it is also difficult to use other mechanisms for identifying the numbers of Hobbits in the city since uncharacteristically those Hobbits that do live in the city wear shoes. As Councillor Kitterick will know the surest way of identifying a Hobbit is by the hairy feet. This does make it rather difficult to provide him with a definitive answer to his question. I do trust though that he will perhaps join me in making representations through our Members of Parliament to the government that they do oblige the Office of National Statistics to include this question in future censuses since I am sure he would agree with me it would be a mistake to assume that all those who are of short stature in the city are therefore Hobbits. Incidentally my Lord Mayor I suspect there is a serious supplementary question coming.

**Lord Mayor:** I am pretty sure there is. Councillor Kitterick your supplementary please?

**Councillor Kitterick:** Thank you very much. I must give credit to my comrade Councillor Andy Connelly finding the analogy. Actually Hobbit houses, anybody who has seen the rendering of them, are quite nice houses which are designed to fit the compatibility of Hobbits. Unfortunately there are too many flats in this city which are emerging which more have the dynamic of Welford Road prison. It is a case of, I recently had the displeasure of staying in an Ibis budget hotel, and before anybody starts any rumours there wasn't enough room in there to get up to any no good stuff, so I spent a night, actually whilst it was a good joke to go in there and look at the proportions the frightening thing is that I could leave in the morning. In many of these flats that are emerging in the city increasingly people are having to stay for months if not years in this accommodation.

Lord Mayor: ....formal question please Councillor Kitterick.

**Councillor Kitterick:** It is called a preamble Lord Mayor. The City Mayor launched the Quality of Leicester which is a fantastic document that shows the quality of the city. For some of the older pieces of Quality of Leicester I think those designers would be surprised that we were giving planning permission to flats and buildings of such poor quality space. Can I, therefore, ask the Lord Mayor when is there an

indicative timetable bringing in a space standards policy so that the people who live in the flats of this city can enjoy some of that Quality of Leicester.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Kitterick. I don't know the answer.

**City Mayor:** Yes, as anticipated Councillor Kitterick raises a very serious point and I was anticipating that that was the point he was going to raise. The fact is that the government's national space standards are not ones that we are able to apply unless they have been examined at a local plan inquiry and then included in the local plans. And of course we are in the process of moving towards that; and I think it is our intention that will be something that is achieved within the next 2 years. However, in the meantime we are not able to apply those standards, and what is worse, the government continues to move the goalposts as we have seen in the recent Housing White Paper only just published. They are now proposing to review the national space standards even before they have been widely implemented. The White Paper says, and I quote it, "that the government is concerned that one size fits all approach may not reflect the needs and aspirations of a wider range of households." Well actually one size fits all is perhaps an inappropriate way of describing this because actually what they are allowing is inadequate sizes for individuals and for households in ways that actually undermine the legitimate concerns of local planning authorities to ensure that what is built in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are houses that are of the sort of standards that we grew accustomed to in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and I think that, you know, it is of course possible to make a joke of this, as we have done, but actually beneath it is something that is very serious in terms of what people are being expected to live in as a result of the inadequate powers that we have to ensure that homes are built to a proper standard and to an adequate size.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you City Mayor. Question 7 Councillor Willmott please.

**Councillor Willmott:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. "I would like to ask Councillor Kirk Master to tell us when the plans were drawn up that show how Rushey Mead library is to be accommodated into the Rushey Mead recreation centre?" Thank you.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Willmott. Councillor Master.

**Councillor Master:** Thank you Lord Mayor. There are no formal plans of the reconfiguration of the Rushey Mead centre as yet. Existing plans of the building were annotated on a conceptual basis following the consultation meetings. However, as previously discussed on numerous occasions further stakeholder engagement will be required to developing the project plans to be agreed and we will work this up in a presentation going forward.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Master. Councillor Willmott your supplementary?

**Councillor Willmott:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. I find that rather surprising if you will bear with me my Lord Mayor given what Councillor Master said in the debate on the petition where he gave every assurance that he was confident that the library could be easily accommodated in the recreation centre, yet now he tells Council there are no plans. So how on earth can he give Council such an assurance?

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Willmott. Councillor Master.

**Councillor Master:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. I never said there were no plans I said there were no formal plans at this stage to present to the community. What I did say and I will repeat again because it seems you have difficulty with information, I am happy to work with the community groups and the stakeholders of both centres to make sure the relevant plans are drawn up going forward.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Master. Councillor Willmott question 8 please.

**Councillor Willmott:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. I understand that Councillor Clair is not here but somebody else is going to answer this question which is to ask him to explain why the number of events planned for this year at Belgrave Hall is only half the number for last year? I will be withdrawing question 9 my Lord Mayor because Councillor Clair is not here. I thought I had already that but...

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you for that Councillor Willmott. Councillor Osman please.

**Councillor Osman:** Thank you my Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Willmott for raising the question. Last year's events we had 26, this year planned are 15. Every year we trial new events in order to diversify and maximise visitors, as well as refreshing existing ones to maintain interest. This year's programme will focus on fewer and also larger events rather than the smaller ones and these include our successful autistic guardian's musical showcasing the best East Midlands talent all day Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> August and our busy food and garden weekend in September. A heritage open day event that same month and several theatre performances. Whilst there are fewer planned this year the total and the quality are actually still compares favourably with our other sites that may also have events that are held there. Over and above that we do encourage private hire and also the Belgrave Hall to be used for other events and activities.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Osman. Councillor Willmott do you have a supplementary at all please?

**Councillor Willmott:** Yes my Lord Mayor, thank you. I would like to thank Councillor Osman for his answer and I appreciate he is covering for Councillor Clair but I wonder if he could give Council an assurance and indeed the people of Belgrave that this is not a slow attempt to close Belgrave Hall. There is a great deal of fear in the community that given it was closed as a museum two or three years ago that now this closure of the number of events is part of a slow decline. I would like to know if Councillor Osman could give us an assurance that Belgrave Hall will remain open for the foreseeable future for events.

**Lord Mayor:** Councillor Osman.

**Councillor Osman:** I mean there are no plans for change at present, but the Council's current financial situation, as Councillor Willmott will appreciate, everything is obviously kept under regular review and I do understand that we expect to report on Belgrave Hall and Gardens progress later this year to the Heritage and Culture, Leisure and Sports Scrutiny Committee where more detailed performance information will be provided and I am sure you can have an input on that Councillor Willmott.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Osman. Question 9 has been withdrawn. Question 10, Councillor Chaplin please.

**Councillor Chaplin:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. "When will the consultation on



the new Local Plan take place and how far advanced is the communication planning on this citywide consultation?”

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

**City Mayor:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. As I indicated in my response to the question earlier from Councillor Kitterick, the work on the Local Plan is being undertaken at considerable pace now because I shared the impatience that Members have to get it in place. The next consultation stage for the new Local Plan will provide an opportunity for everyone to shape our thinking, including of course Members of the Council, particularly on the balance between housing, employment and growth pressures and the need to protect and enhance the environment of the city. We are developing something that is described as the emerging options for strategic policy, site allocations and a set of draft management policies. But to give a direct answer to the timetable for that; there will be an early opportunity for all Members to engage in discussions on the early emerging options prior to seeking Council approval for the consultation which will be this spring. We are talking over the next few months, and it is certainly in broad terms our intention that once Members are content that it does provide an adequate basis for consultation, such consultation will take place during the summer.

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

**Councillor Chaplin:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. Do forgive me I am not feeling particularly well. I am going to try and ask my supplementary as quickly as I can. So given that we have got an emerging programme coming up and things are going to start happening in the spring, will we have assurances that all Council departments are going to be actively involved in developing the new Local Plan. I am not just talking about planning and licencing given that currently planning and licencing approve applications for takeaways, HMOs tiny bedsits, hobbit homes and flats which have impacts already on already stretched services. So things like police service for anti-social behaviour, street cleaning, the homeless etc. Obviously residents in St. James Road have asked that we use our powers against vandals as well. So will all those things be taken into account in the consultation process?

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Chaplin, City Mayor.

**City Mayor:** Yes I can give Councillor Chaplin an assurance that they will. As I said in my initial reply in amongst the main themes of the emerging Local Plan is the balance between a range of competing uses within the city and that is competing uses for land, housing, employment, growth and other competing demands for a very scarce resource. But it is also about competing uses for existing land and buildings; particularly in areas such as the one that Councillor Chaplin has referred to, where there are already considerable pressures and we do need to adopt policies and processes and plans that enable us to meet those balances in ways that reflect the concerns that she expresses on behalf of the local community. I can assure her that there will be wide consultation within the offices of the Council, between the Members of the Council and then with the wider public.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you City Mayor. Councillor Chaplin, question 11 please.

**Councillor Chaplin:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. “Can the Executive confirm that the City Council funding for the Shama Women’s Centre will continue?”

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you. Councillor Waddington.

**Councillor Waddington:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. Thank you Councillor Chaplin for the question and thank you Councillor Thalukdar for presenting the petition on behalf of Shama. The short answer to the question is that this is still work in progress, but I will give a little bit more background to this. Shama has been receiving a grant from the City Council's adult education budget of £30,000 in the past few years. The city's adult education service is funded directly by the schools funding agency and we were informed last year that the funding that the schools funding agency was providing to the Council was to be cut and also the rules were to be changed and that the Council could no longer use the skills funding agency grant to provide support for outside organisations. So those organisations, including Shama, were informed of this change and were aware that this was coming. Now we understand that Shama is currently having some funding problems and is seeking support from the City Council to help them in the short term to fill a funding gap. So last week Councillor Osman who has responsibility for partnerships in the Executive and myself visited Shama so that we could discuss the budget situation both now and for the next financial year. We wanted to understand what was happening and I also want to assure you all that we do really value and appreciate the work that Shama do for women in the community and we are very sympathetic to their situation. We would really like to see them in a sustainable financial position both now and in the future so that they did not have these rather regular financial crises where they are unable to fulfil their obligations. So with that in mind, we are arranging, hopefully with Shama's agreement, that they will receive a visit from the Council's service analysis team to look carefully at their budget, both this year and next year, to try and build in some sustainable developments for the future and also to enable us to be clear about any short term funding that might be required to bridge the gap and when that has been done, which we hope will take place in the next week or two, a report will be presented to Councillor Osman and myself and the City Mayor so that we can consider the matter further. Thank you.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Waddington. Councillor Chaplin do you have a supplementary question please?

**Councillor Chaplin:** I do. I am just really delighted to hear that progress is happening and that the Council is going to be working in partnership with the organisation. I know that Councillor Thalukdar, one of my co-Councillors met with the Women's Centre and they are keen to work with the Council and look at sustainability issues. However, going forward, I know Councillor Porter mentioned it earlier about how we can find money quickly for other organisations, what I would ask that given that we know that women are going to be disproportionately affected by the government cuts of local services, is there not a way that we can prioritise some groups like the Women's Centre because of the work they do to support women.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Chaplin. Councillor Waddington.

**Councillor Waddington:** Well as I have explained we can't unfortunately prioritise any groups in the adult education budget because we are not allowed now to provide grants, although we can within our programme of adult education classes prioritise the most vulnerable groups who are receiving the resources for adult learning, and that we are in the process of doing for our adult education plan for 2017/18. I think Councillor Chaplin is asking about outside organisations that external organisations. I can only really answer in respect of the steps we are

taking to help Shama look at their future so that we can provide advice, where appropriate, and consider if there are any short term needs that the Council might be able to help them with. Thank you.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Waddington. Question 12, Councillor Chaplin.

**Councillor Chaplin:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. We are nearly through. "What are the arrangements for accessing services for the homeless when help is needed outside office hours?"

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you. Councillor Connelly please.

**Councillor Connelly:** My thanks to Councillor Chaplin for her question. An out of hours service is in operation after the close of normal business at weekends and bank holidays which is managed through the Dawn Centre. Advice and information and the telephone number, which is 0116 2211407, is available on the Council's website. This number is managed 24 hours a day and, furthermore, individuals can self-refer to the out of hours service at the Dawn Centre often until 11 o'clock each night.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Connelly. Councillor Chaplin do you have a supplementary please?

**Councillor Chaplin:** Yes I do. The other night when I left a meeting here at the Council I met a young chap whose name was Carl and he was homeless and he said that for the last three nights he had not been able to get access to the Dawn Centre or any further help from the Dawn Centre for self-referral or anything and he was, therefore, out in the rain. Furthermore, he actually cuts himself so that he can go to the hospital and have somewhere warm to go. So what I would like ask is do we have statistics for how many people are turned away from the Dawn Centre when it is full and is there not a way that we can look at using maybe some commercial buildings or one of the empty buildings that we have in the city. We do it at Christmas can't we do it a bit further around the autumn and winter where there is just somewhere that is inside that is going to be a bit more sheltered so that people don't have to self-harm in order to go somewhere inside.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Chaplin. Councillor Connelly.

**Councillor Connelly:** In response to the issue that Councillor Chaplin has raised I clearly can't respond to this particular incident but I am quite happy to go away and investigate because quite often Councillors, members of the public contact me or officers reporting people who are rough sleeping and officers and members of the outreach team go out, speak to those individuals and in many instances those individuals are known to us and either refusing to access our services which unfortunately quite often happens or may well have been banned from the Dawn Centre because of their unacceptable behaviour. We certainly would not be of the view that we should open any empty property within the city for homeless people in the way that Councillor Chaplin is understandably suggesting, because clearly there are issues about health and safety and staffing that because the fact is we have not turned anybody away who needs a bed at the Dawn Centre for longer than I care to remember. We have sufficient beds in our hostels. We are not complacent about this, I get a weekly report in respect of the number of beds that have been used and also the number of rough sleepers we have identified. I can confirm last week that nobody got turned away from the Dawn Centre because we did not have a bed. Nobody was turned away the week before. Nobody was turned away the week

before. Last week the outreach team identified 11 people rough sleeping, 2 of those have been banned from the Dawn Centre until they are prepared to give the commitment that their behaviour will improve because they were a risk to other residents and our staff. 1 was not considered suitable because of a risk that had not been assessed. He had previously been released from prison and we had not had the assurances about his behaviour. Five of those 11 were refusing all our offers of assistance and that unfortunately continues to be a problem and we had 3 people from abroad who did not qualify for assistance because they were neither in work or receiving job seekers allowance. As I say we are not complacent about the issue of rough sleeping. I am pleased to say we have been successful in obtaining funding to continue the no second night out initiative with the voluntary sector - the funding was due cease in April. We have been successful in our bid and we are also looking to increase the outreach team by a further 2 from April and to work in the evenings from 2 o'clock to 10 o'clock. So as I say if Councillors, members of the public are aware of people rough sleeping, I would be more than happy if they want to contact me and I will ensure that the outreach team go out and try and assist those individuals to find them accommodation; but we are definitely not turning anyone away because we have not got beds in any of our hostels.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Connelly. Question 13, Councillor Chaplin.

**Councillor Chaplin:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. "Has the impact on educational attainment been considered when proposals for closure or co-location of local libraries were drawn up, and have schools been consulted?"

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Chaplin. Councillor Russell please.

**Councillor Russell:** Thank you my Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Chaplin for the question. The aim of the transforming neighbourhood services project is to reduce bills and running costs whilst ensuring that services can continue, and under the project no library service has been closed. However, some services have been co-located to make better use of buildings that we have retained. Support for children's learning including appropriate book stock, access to book stock, access to computers and WIFI and ongoing study support sessions have been prioritised as a key part of the service alongside great services, such as toddler time, which are really well attended throughout the city. Local schools are routinely contacted at the outset of the TNS consultation process and in addition focus groups are held with young people using our youth centres and with representatives from the Young People's Council. As a result we have seen strong engagements from schools during recent TNS consultations including representations from Head Teachers and large numbers of responses from school children and parents. It would be very difficult to draw a direct line between educational attainment and a specific community library. I am sure all Councillors will be aware that most of our schools have fantastic school libraries, as well as the opportunity to access local libraries, and it is about those services working in harmony together alongside supporting reading in the home that can help improve educational attainment. So it is not a very direct link but we obviously want our library services to continue in our communities.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Russell. Councillor Chaplin a supplementary question at all?

**Councillor Chaplin:** Thank you. I am glad to hear that the schools are consulted. But even though Stoneygate Ward does not actually have a library of its own, many of the pupils who attend schools in Evington or in other parts of the city do use other

libraries, so Evington, Highfields and Knighton. Often what happens is that they use their local libraries, not just in the evenings but at weekends, to do their homework because their homes are overcrowded and it is not a suitable home environment to do home reading or sustained study. So what I would ask is that we make sure that the children, even if there is not a library in the Ward, make sure that we do look at the attainment or actually what can be done in order to make sure that children have weekend access to school libraries or community facilities, because for some people it is the only place where they can study because the housing they live in is not adequate.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Chaplin. Can I remind Members to keep their mobile phones on silent please. Councillor Russell.

**Councillor Russell:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. I think it is really important that children are able to access libraries a wide range of times. I am not sure the opportunity for them to access school libraries at weekends would be realistic with staffing and the various issues in terms of insurance that that would involve may prevent it, but our library services throughout the city are open on Saturday, we have got many libraries that are also open on Sunday and residents in Stoneygate are lucky enough to be able to have access to our fantastic central library as well, which has some wonderful spaces in it for young people to study, to be able to have the access to both the books and the space to be able to study as well as a range of other local libraries. We really do have a rich programme in our library service that supports our young people and their learning that links up with other community options to be able to encourage reading and supports that happening both in our public spaces but also in homes. Reading can happen anywhere, as can study, and there are many, many places that our young people access. It is really interesting that one of the biggest feedbacks we get from young people, one of the reasons that they use our libraries sadly is not always to study, it is because we provide the free WIFI, and that makes them a great space for people to socialise as well and I am really pleased that throughout the TNS programme that we continue that access to WIFI, that access to toddler time, the access to homework help have all continued to keep our library services and our library network really strong and supporting our young people.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Russell. Question 14, Councillor Willmott please.

**Councillor Willmott:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. "Could I Councillor Kirk Master in his proposals for Rushey Mead Library and Recreation Centre, the Zumba Woman's keep fit will apparently take place in the same room and at the same time as children doing their homework. Can he explain how this will work?"

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Willmott. Councillor Master please.

**Councillor Master:** Having understood that Councillor Willmott has been at Rushey Mead recreation centre quite a lot lately I am surprised he does not know the timetable and has identified himself that no Zumba has taken place in the recreation centre since March 2016. So in regards to do we have to look at the options of a library and a Zumba class at the same time? The simple answer is no because it does not happen.

**Lord Mayor:** Councillor Willmott a supplementary question?

**Councillor Willmott:** Well that it not quite true my Lord Mayor. The Zumba

classes have taken place, they take place when I do my surgeries on Saturday mornings when in fact, you know, people want to use the library and they may well be starting again I am sure, my Lord Mayor, and certainly they would not be compatible with that. Remember the timetabling arrangements are these two activities simply cannot take place in the same space and are mutually exclusive. Thank you my Lord Mayor.

**Lord Mayor:** Did you want to respond?

**Councillor Master:** Without repeating the same .... I would like a question that actually had a bit of substance to it in regards to giving an appropriate answer to the circumstances.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you we will move on. Question 15, Councillor Grant please.

**Councillor Grant:** Thank you Lord Mayor. "With school rolls increasing at many city schools and parking and traffic problems outside schools already of public and media concern, when will all schools have enforceable zig-zag markings?"

**Lord Mayor:** Councillor Master please.

**Councillor Master:** Nice to have a question from a different Ross without Rushey Mead in it. On the school run parking action plan, which obviously my colleague is aware of, we are looking at zig-zag markings across all of our city schools, all 117 city schools at this moment in time. What we are looking at doing to enable us to enforce outside of schools and make sure that the parking is appropriate and the signage is appropriate, we are looking at a range of TRO (Traffic Regulation Orders) that will be implemented across all the schools. Obviously to get around 117 schools will take some time and we have done 55 up to this point and the first TRO has gone in to make sure that we can action those as soon as possible. The second wave will be done imminently and I am hoping the third part will be done before the summer of this year.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Master. Councillor Grant a supplementary please?

**Councillor Grant:** Yes. Can Councillor Master ensure that existing markings be renewed where they are worn to give a strong deterrent effect and also to allow us to make strong enforcement by either our own officers or by police when all of the TROs are adequately in place.

**Lord Mayor:** Councillor Master.

**Councillor Master:** Absolutely. Thank you Lord Mayor. The road markings programme is part of this as well so we will be addressing wherever there is slight road markings or new road markings are needed to ensure that they are up to speed in regards to the TRO regulations. In regard to enforcement we are looking at recruiting more enforcement officers, we are working with our police neighbourhood teams as well to make sure that we can get some action days done where we can go and speak to drivers who are driving inappropriately and parking inappropriately and putting our young people at risk. So they are part of the school action plan. If there is any particularly schools that my colleague is aware of that he wants to draw my attention to I am happy to have that discussion as well.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Master. Councillor Grant, question 16 please.

**Councillor Grant:** “How much does the Council spend annually on creating, hosting and maintaining websites?”

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you. Deputy City Mayor.

**Deputy City Mayor:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. I am afraid that this is one of those occasions where a straightforward question does not necessarily get a straightforward answer; given that the Council currently manages or hosts over 50 websites and portals, many of those being components of much bigger systems, payment systems, permit systems, social care systems, which all sit within and across the Council’s main website. So there are various caveats to these numbers. Development costs for new sites in the current financial year amount to approximately £260,000. Annual maintenance costs, and again the caveat being that maintenance costs vary year on year depending on whether new sites have been procured or old sites are taken off line. We estimate that cost to be in the region of £300,000 and additionally an estimate of staff time, the web team in IT plus a proportion of the digital media team’s time in the Communications Team would amount to around £150,000.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Deputy City Mayor. Councillor Grant a supplementary question?

**Councillor Grant:** In respect of the development of the new site, the £260,000, could the Deputy Mayor tell us how many sites that related to and in general how is the cost of our sites assessed in terms of its effectiveness and value?

**Lord Mayor:** Deputy City Mayor.

**Deputy City Mayor:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. I can’t provide that precise breakdown for new sites now but I will certainly arrange for that to be sent to Councillor Grant following the meeting. I think in terms of the effectiveness of our size, it is important that we recognise, and again I will send Councillor Grant the full list of the 50 or so sites so he can analyse and scrutinise it himself as well, several of these are what you would describe as business critical parts of our infrastructure, social care, records systems, the library system, payment systems so I guess our measure of quality against those is are we providing services that are safe from an information governance point of view, are they doing the job that our staff and the public need them to do? Clearly there then is a broader question about the effectiveness of the more public facing elements of our on–line presence, the main Leicester.gov.uk webpage, the Visit Leicester site, and our judgement of success will be clearly visitor numbers, would be repeat visitors, would be looking at the drop off rates when people come and try and do a particular transaction, is there a high dropout rate because they can’t complete the particular transaction or business that they want to complete because our systems are not responsive or intuitive enough. So this is ongoing work which the ICT team are involved in, the Communications Team are involved in. I think we have made some important progress in the past few years in making sure our web presence is effective, is modern, is fit for purpose, but again we are not complacent and we recognise that in 2017 local government transitioning to 21<sup>st</sup> century is not quite complete.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Deputy City Mayor. Question 17, Councillor Grant.

**Councillor Grant:** “How long has the Council been without an up to date five year local housing plan and apologies for the error in submitting this, and how long will it

take the Council to adopt an up to date plan?"

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Grant. City Mayor please.

**City Mayor:** My Lord Mayor I talked earlier in response to other questions about the process of preparing the local plan and the time that that takes and the fact that recent government announcements have made it even more complicated than it was already. But I have talked about the consultation in response to the question from Councillor Chaplin, of which this will be a part. Just perhaps reflecting in the response to this question, that the acknowledgement that the city does not have within its very tightly defined boundaries sufficient land to meet the housing needs of the conurbation is not a new one. While it may have been made explicitly last year it is one that has been talked about for a very long period of time. The fact is that the city's administrative boundaries are ones that were defined very largely in the 1930s and since that time, of course, the city has grown dramatically within the boundaries but it has also grown through the boundaries and a lot of the housing needs for the city that is Leicester is actually beyond the administrative boundaries of the City Council; which does mean that we have to work very closely with the County Council and surrounding Districts to draw up what is called a housing HEDNA – a Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment and that has been a very constructive process working with them, and there is a recognition by the County and by surrounding Districts that much of the needs for economic development and for housing for the city will be beyond the very tightly defined administrative boundaries. That is a process that they need for part of their local plan development as much as we need it for ours. We are working very collaboratively on that but it is work in progress and it is frustrating that we are not there yet; but I can say that the timetable I talked about earlier in response to Councillor Chaplin is one that will enable other Members to engage in the process as we develop it.

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

**Councillor Grant:** It is interesting Lord Mayor that there seems to have been a theme from a number of Members today on planning. The absence of such a plan seems to be put forward as a reason Members should approve almost all housing applications irrespective of their standards or their impact. I would welcome Members being offered wider advice in respect of the impact of developments, particularly on crime and anti-social behaviour, particularly after last night when I described the officer view as being from cloud cuckoo land. The reference to natural surveillance presumably came from an officer who recently watched James Stewart in Alfred Hitchcock's Rear Window. Can he ask the Police Crime Commissioner's Office to provide a briefing on this, particularly available to Members of Planning, so Members are better informed of how to assess the impact of developments on local areas.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Grant. City Mayor Please.

**City Mayor:** My Lord Mayor the long and the short answer to that is yes, I would be delighted to and I will talk with Councillor Grant later about precisely what he would wish. I do understand the frustration of those Members who serve on the Planning Committee. I would say again that we are moving as quickly as we can towards the development of a Local Plan. But that is something that is shared by the other district planning authorities as they are in our context throughout Leicestershire and indeed other similar cities up and down the land. You know, most are at a very



similar stage as we are and most of them have the same frustration in the interim period. But the Local Plan making process is a cumbersome and quite bureaucratic one, and that is not one of our making, but it is a necessity and we do, in the meantime, I think find ourselves in a situation as Councillor Grant and other Members have said, of finding ourselves, as a planning and development control authority, finding ourselves faced with decisions where we are often having little option. But in the absence of that plan to approve development that might otherwise we would want to resist.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you City Mayor. Question 18, Councillor Riyait.

**Councillor Riyait:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. “The government is trying to blame Councils for Teresa May reneging on the Dubs amendment to accept 3,000 unaccompanied child refugees. What capacity does Leicester have to support these child refugees?” Thank you.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you. Councillor Russell please.

**Councillor Russell:** Thank you my Lord Mayor and thank you to Councillor Riyait for putting the question forward. With time and appropriate funding, time to plan, time to ensure that placements are appropriate, that the right support is in place for young people, we have extensive capacity to be able to support. The challenge, and I think the decision taken seems to be based on the decision by the Home Office to, rather than to plan for the closure of the camp in Calais and use qualified social workers that were offered up by local authorities to work with young people in those camps over time to assess them, to make sure that they were aware of their needs, that they could plan ahead and send to appropriate local authorities who had placements. What instead happened was a decision to say to local authorities we need you to take 10, 20, 30, 50 children tomorrow and local authorities understandably at that point said that is not realistic. It is not realistic for us, but it is also not safe for those children. We have to make sure for any children that are in our care that the placements are appropriate and particularly for these children, many of whom have suffered extensive trauma that the right support mechanisms are in place around them. We have got the opportunities to do that, in fact we had plans in place that we were developing with local voluntary sector providers, who specialise in this, to make sure we did have sufficient capacity and I think it does the country a great disservice that we are not able to support these incredibly vulnerable children.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Russell. Councillor Riyait a supplementary question at all?

**Councillor Riyait:** Yes thank you for that Councillor Russell. I just want to be clear, did we take any unaccompanied children and if so how many did we take so far. Thank you.

**Lord Mayor:** Councillor Russell please.

**Councillor Russell:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. We currently have 17 unaccompanied asylum seeking children and 12 refugee children in the city. They are from a mix of what is called the national transfer scheme. For Member’s information, up until the middle of last, no about September time, the rule was that the point at which the child arrived they became the responsibility of that local authority. That meant that Kent, Northamptonshire and a couple of the London councils had the vast majority of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and had

the full responsibility for them wherever they were placed, even if they had to place them in Leicester, the cost and the support for those children still fell on those local councils. That was not sustainable or a helpful way of working with this so something called the national transfer scheme was developed which was, and I am quoting a Home Office official here, a voluntary scheme that we were mandated to take part in. Which was yes the way of these things. But as part of that we have begun the process of accepting children who had previously been placed in other areas before the Dubs amendment children had started to come over. The other group that we were particularly working with were those under what was called the Dublin 3 amendment which were those that had family members in the area and, again, the process for that as opposed to it being a very well planned out one was that we would get 48 hours notification with often little more than a name and a first line of an address and we would have to identify those families, make sure there was suitable accommodation, that they were able to support those children and then also make sure there was support going forward; because if it did not work we needed to make sure we could take care of that child and make sure their needs were met. So we have done everything we can and I am proud of what we have done. We want to do more as a local authority but it has to be properly supported by the government in a planned and appropriately funded manner.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Russell. The next question is from Councillor Connelly. Is he returning? OK thank you. Councillor Riyait, question 19.

**Councillor Riyait:** Thank you my Lord Mayor. "Following recent fires at the old Corah site and a number of arson incidents on the industrial estate off Parkland Drive, what is being done to protect empty buildings and to ensure that rough sleepers are not in danger if they are occupying these premises?" Thank you.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you Councillor Riyait. City Mayor please.

**City Mayor:** Can I thank Councillor Riyait for his concern about this issue and it is one that we have been discussing quite considerably recently. I mean as Councillor Riyait will be aware and it depends on how you define an individual premises, but there are across the city 100,000 – 200,000 seen as separate premises and at any one time some of them will be empty. But of course we have had some particular premises in the city that have been left empty for a considerable period of time and have been problematic. The legal situation is that land owners have a direct responsibility for protecting their property from damage and, under the Occupiers Liability Act of 1984, they have got a duty of care to make it secure and to ensure that they are safe for visitors; and that includes trespassers. So a land owner has to take responsibility in this context for people who might break in and perhaps rough sleep there, and cannot just say well it's not my problem. You know they weren't supposed to be there. The land owner does have a responsibility and can't get away from it. Now what the Council has is statutory responsibility to ensure that the land owner does not cause nuisance and does not do anything that is prejudicial to health or is dangerous, so we do have some enforcement powers and we do have a team – the building safety and protection team – that does respond to issues that arise with particular buildings, and we have engaged with some of the buildings that I know Councillor Riyait is concerned about. But of course you know just the scale of the city, there will be some landlords, some land owners who are less responsible than others and we do need, I think, as an authority, to be aware that some will be less responsible than others and that we need to use our powers to the maximum to ensure that, of course, we get property and land developed when it is lying empty; but in the meantime the land owners actually do meet their legal responsibility to keep them secure and to ensure that they are not vulnerable to

people getting in there as trespassers and, by getting in there as trespassers, becoming themselves vulnerable to accident and perhaps fire.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you City Mayor. Councillor Riyait a supplementary at all?

**Councillor Riyait:** No.

**Lord Mayor:** Thank you. That brings questions to an end.

### **MATTERS RESERVED TO COUNCIL**

#### **TREASURY STRATEGY 2017/18**

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

33. That Council approves the Treasury Strategy, which includes the annual investment strategy at Appendix B of the report to Council.

### **REPORTS OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

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

34. That Council notes the work of scrutiny during 2015 / 2016.

### **EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES**

None.

### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

None received.

### **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There being no urgent business identified the Lord Mayor declared the meeting closed at 7.55pm.