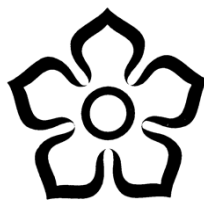


Thursday, 6 July 2017



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, 6 JULY 2017 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 ordinary meeting held on 16 March 2017 and the Annual Meeting on 11 May 2017 are available to view at:

16 March 2017:

<http://www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk:8071/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=81&MId=7518&Ver=4>

11 May 2017:

<http://www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk:8071/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=81&MId=7519&Ver=4>

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

4. STATEMENTS BY THE CITY MAYOR / EXECUTIVE

5. PETITIONS

- Presented by Members of the Public
- Presented by Councillors

6. QUESTIONS

- From Members of the Public
- From Councillors

7. MATTERS RESERVED TO FULL COUNCIL

7.1 Replacement Local Plan

7.2 Leicester City Draft Youth Justice Plan 2017-18

7.3 Member Allowances Scheme 2017/18 – Confirmation of Scheme

8. **REPORTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

8.1 Standards 'Arrangements' – Revisions

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 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:

RASHMI JOSHI, LORD MAYOR
CHAIRMAN

SIR PETER SOULSBY – CITY MAYOR

Abbey Ward

HARSHAD DAHYABHAI BHAVSAR
VIJAY SINGH RIYAIT

North Evington Ward

JEAN KHOTE
ABDUL RAZAK OSMAN

Aylestone Ward

ADAM CLARKE
NIGEL CARL PORTER

Rushey Mead Ward

PIARA SINGH CLAIR
RITA PATEL
ROSS WILLMOTT

Beaumont Leys Ward

HEMANT RAE BHATIA
SUE WADDINGTON

Saffron Ward

ELLY CUTKELVIN
WILLIAM SHELTON

Belgrave Ward

MANJULA SOOD
JOHN THOMAS

Spinney Hills Ward

SHOFIQUUL ISLAM CHOWDHURY
MUSTAFA MALIK

Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields

ELAINE HALFORD

Stoneygate Ward

LUCY CHAPLIN
AMINUR THALUKDAR

Castle Ward

PATRICK JOSEPH KITTERICK
DEBORAH ANNE SANGSTER
DANNY MYERS

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

DR SUSAN BARTON
GEORGE COLE
MALCOLM UNSWORTH

Humberstone and Hamilton Ward

GURINDER SINGH SANDHU

Knighton Ward

ROSS GRANT
INDERJIT SINGH GUGNANI
DR LYNN MOORE

LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Councillor

The Lord Mayor informed Council that following a by-election held in the Castle Ward on 8 June 2017 Mr Danny Myers had been duly elected and had signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The City Mayor introduced Councillor Myers to Council.

ICC Women's World Cup

The Lord Mayor drew Council's attention to the on-going ICC Women's World Cup and the major role played by the City. 7 Matches were being hosted at Grace Road with the City pleased to welcome cricket teams from across the world.

Andrew Metcalfe

The Lord Mayor noted the sad loss of former Councillor Andrew Metcalfe who passed away on 2 July. The Lord Mayor led Members in a minutes silence to remember his life and work.

Fire & Emergency Evacuation Procedure

The Lord Mayor requested all present to note the evacuation procedures detailed on the Agenda for the meeting and asked anyone with any queries to speak to a member of the Town Hall staff.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

At the request of the Lord Mayor the Head of Law and Deputy Monitoring Officer addressed Council and confirmed as the recommendations within item 7.1 on the agenda regarding the Local Plan were solely in relation to the consultation there was no requirement on Members to make any declarations in relation to the content or proposals within the plan.

No declarations were made.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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

8. That the minutes of the ordinary meeting of Council held on 16th March 2017 and the Annual meeting on 11th May 2017, a copy of each 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

Lord Mayor invited the City Mayor and Councillor Connolly to make statements to Council.

The City Mayor informed Council that Councillor Palmer, the Deputy City Mayor

would be stepping down in October in order to take up a role as Member of the European Parliament. The City Mayor noted that Councillor Palmer had represented the Eyres Monsell ward since 2007 and had additionally served as a Cabinet Member and since 2011 as the City's first Deputy City Mayor driving forward many key issues for the benefit of constituents and the wider City. The City Mayor thanked Councillor Palmer for his support, passion and work personally for him when he was an MP for the City and his support as Deputy City Mayor and on behalf of the City Council for the contribution he has and would continue to make and wished him well in the EU parliament and future political career.

Councillor Connelly gave an update to Council on fire safety at Council owned tower blocks and confirmed that none had cladding or a gas supply and no complaints had been received from residents and tenants, tenant groups, housing associations or ward Councillors in relation to fire safety. Refurbishment works had upgraded fire safety measures but in the light of the Grenfell Tower disaster sprinkler systems would be fitted to all Council tower blocks when refurbished or would be retro fitted. Weekly fire inspections were carried out and working with the Fire and Rescue services tenants and residents work had been undertaken to reassure tenants of measures in place. A fire audit had taken place which had supported the Council's approach and any recommendations would be implemented together with any future recommendations arising from the Grenfell Tower public inquiry. A report on fire safety was due to be considered at the Housing Scrutiny Committee in the coming week and a briefing for all Members had been arranged with the Chief Fire Officer.

PETITIONS

PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Lord Mayor stated that no petitions from members of the public had been received for presentation at the meeting.

PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Councillor Waddington presented a petition with 148 signatures in the following terms:

"We, residents of Beaumont Leys, call upon Leicester City Council to take all action possible, including legal action if necessary to require Sanctuary Housing to deal with the problems caused by John Calvert Court. John Calvert Court is owned by Sanctuary Housing but has been left empty for many years. It is a magnet for serious anti-social behaviour and is blighting our neighbourhood. The building or the site should be used for suitable housing and not left to be vandalised. Sanctuary Housing have irresponsibly neglected to take action to sort it out so we request that the City Council does so, as soon as possible."

Councillor Clair presented a petition with 125 signatures in the following terms:

"The members of Rushey Fields Residents Association would like to have six flood lights in Rushey Fields Recreation Ground, two lights in the tennis court, two lights in the cricket ground area, one in the community garden area and one near the outside gym, similar to flood lights in the bowling ground area of the park."

Councillor Chaplin presented a petition with 29 signatures in the following terms:

"We ask the Council to help in removing problems arising from unmanaged overgrowth adjacent to properties in Waldale Drive. Residents value the work staff do, but acknowledge that with cuts to services due to lack of central funding, the pest control and related services seem very stretched and residents facing major infestations need properly allocated time and support from staff. This service is very

important to the health and wellbeing of residents.”

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

QUESTIONS

Lord Mayor: Questions from members of the public. May I invite Mrs. Groom to present her question please.

Mrs. Groom: Will Leicester City Council call upon the government to make fair transitional state pension arrangements for all women born on or after the 6th April 1951 who have unfairly borne the burden of the increase to the state pension age with lack of appropriate notification, so that women do not live in hardship due to pension changes they were not told about until it was too late to make alternative arrangements?”

Lord Mayor: Thank you Mrs. Groom. Councillor Waddington please.

Councillor Waddington: Thank you my Lord Mayor and thank you Mrs. Groom, thank you Pauline for the question. On the 30th March 2017 the City Mayor and I wrote to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to add our support to that of many other local authorities and the Leicester South MP, Jon Ashworth, for the WASPI campaign. The WASPI campaign, or Women Against State Pension Inequality campaign is one that I know you, Pauline, are working very hard for. In our letter we requested that the government reconsider the state pension arrangement for women born in the 1950s. Many women in this age group were taken by surprise when their pension age was suddenly increased giving them insufficient notice to make proper financial arrangements for their retirement. The decision which was made by the Coalition government in 2011 to increase the state retirement age faster than had been envisaged did not give the women the 15 years notice of the changes which had been the norm, and this has created an unfair situation with many of these women finding that their retirement plans have been shattered and their expected income reduced. We asked in our letter that the Conservative government look again at the situation and rectify it. We received a reply from the Minister for Pensions, Richard Harrington, MP, in April 2017 stating that, and I quote “there are no plans to make further transitional arrangements for this group”. Since then as you Pauline and all of us are aware the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, and our local MPs have added their support to the WASPI campaign and promised justice for the women who have been affected by the changes. Although I don’t envisage any change coming from the present government, indeed I understand that at a debate in Parliament on this yesterday, the government made it clear they were not going to make any changes and instead suggested that women in this age group take up apprenticeships. Yes, well, however, we can and do expect a future Labour government to address this unfairness, and I and my Labour colleagues will be working hard for that change of government in order to benefit the WASPI women and the many other groups who have suffered inequality and injustice under both the Coalition and Tory governments.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Waddington. Mrs. Groom do you have a supplementary question?

Mrs. Groom: No thank you. I would just like to thank Councillor Waddington for her continued support and the MPs that are supporting us. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you so much. Thank you. The next item is questions from Councillors. Can I request that where any Members have questions for tonight's meeting that they bear in mind the requirements of the Constitution that questions should be asked and answered without discussion and that supplementary questions must be a question for the purposes of clarifying the reply and not a statement. Please note that I will be seeking to curtail any Member that does not comply with this requirement. May I invite Councillor Cutkelvin with your first question. Thank you.

Councillor Cutkelvin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. "Will the City Mayor join members of the Health Scrutiny Commission in publicly condemning NHS England's consultation into congenital heart disease services which includes proposals to close the Glenfield Heart Unit as inequitable and unfair?"

Lord Mayor: Deputy City Mayor please.

Deputy City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Just indulge me for a second, can I just take this opportunity to thank the City Mayor for those warm words earlier. I genuinely was not expecting that and I am fairly sure I have not felt as awkward and as nervous in this building since my wedding day here a couple of years ago, so thank you for those words they are appreciated. It is almost a year ago to the day that this Council passed a motion, an urgent motion if Members recall, condemning the NHS England proposals in relation to children's congenital heart surgery. Since then this Council has taken every opportunity to continue to amplify its opposition to those proposals, we have responded to the consultation, we have marched, we have spoken out, we have sought to lobby NHS England, we have lobbied Ministers. Sadly those proposals remain on the table. I want to again, I think on behalf of all of us, unequivocally state our continued opposition to those proposals which are based on a flawed methodology, on so called evidence that does not stack up and which will do real damage if taken forward, not just to the children's heart unit at Glenfield Hospital, but wider children's medicine services in the City as well. This question has been asked by Councillor Cutkelvin, the current Chair of Health Scrutiny. I just want to acknowledge the important work that the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee has recently done. They have recently concluded their work, made their representations to NHS England and placed on record and on notice the fact that a formal referral will be made to the Secretary of State if these proposals are not reconsidered or taken off the table and they were right to do that again on behalf of the whole Council I think.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Palmer. Councillor Cutkelvin do you

have a supplementary question?

Councillor Cutkelvin: Yes, thank you my Lord Mayor. At our last Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Joint meeting on this matter, the representative from NHS England refused to engage in any dialogues with either members of the public or members of the committee. In a separate letter to NHS England I have asked for the full disclosure of precisely who will be making the decision, when the decision will be announced and if the full report will be made public. Will the Deputy Mayor join me again in pushing for this information to be provided immediately so patients, families and surgeons can at least be temporarily appeased.

Lord Mayor: Deputy City Mayor please.

Deputy City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I would absolutely agree with what Councillor Cutkelvin has just said and what the Scrutiny Committee concluded. One of the things we said a year ago was what this process needed was transparency, was honesty and openness on behalf of NHS England, and we have seen precious, precious little, if any, of that throughout. There has been a continued battle to seek information, to seek clarity, to understand who was making what decisions when, and on what basis. It has been a process that has not shone a good light on NHS England. I think the final thing I would say on this is that throughout this very difficult year the staff who work in the congenital heart unit have continued to do the most phenomenal and tremendous and special work every single day when having this huge cloud of uncertainty hanging over them. We all owe them a debt of gratitude and our thanks on behalf of the patients and the wider population of the city.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Palmer for your response. Question number 2, Councillor Kitterick please.

Councillor Kitterick: Can I ask Councillor Connelly "What timetable is there for the fitting of sprinkler systems to the six tower blocks currently owned and operated by Leicester City Council?"

Lord Mayor: Councillor Connelly.

Councillor Connelly: Thank you Lord Mayor. Just to quash any rumour, Councillor Kitterick's says in his question they are currently owned - I can confirm they will continue to be owned by the authority. We have no plans otherwise to dispose of our six tower blocks. We have only just recently made the decision to fit sprinkler systems and at the moment we don't have a timescale. However, we will clearly be looking to install the sprinkler systems as quickly as possible. Officers are now looking at the different types of systems available to ensure that what we specify to what we specify is the correct system for each particular block. We believe we will need different systems, with one system for Clipstone, Framland, Gordon and Maxfield House; a different system for Goscote House and finally a different system for St. Leonard's Court. Whilst we have made the decision to fit

sprinklers we need to be mindful that it is highly likely that new guidance and regulations may well be proposed by the government on the fitting of sprinkler systems in high rise buildings and we need to make sure that any work we do meets these requirements. We obviously also will be working closely with the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, our own building control teams and we will need to consult with local residents and Ward Councillors before we commence any work on installing the sprinkler systems. I will say from personal experience I have had a number of phone calls, more than I wished to have received, and a number of emails from sprinkler systems companies offering their services and telling me that their sprinkler systems are the best on the market. So I have no doubt that is part of the process we will need to go through. But I do give a commitment to this Chamber we will be looking to fit sprinkler systems as quickly as we possibly can and as soon as we do have a timescale I am obviously quite happy to provide that timescale to all Councillors.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Connelly. Councillor Kitterick a supplementary question?

Councillor Kitterick: Thank you very much Lord Mayor. Would Councillor Connelly share my concern that if there is no timetable that Members in this chamber will be aware that sometimes when the Council as Housing Authority do give a timetable it is not stuck to and can I ask Councillor Connelly will he put utmost pressure on so we don't have a situation like we have with St. Leonard's Court where we are told with the lifts there is an engineering solution, that there is the money but the lifts still don't appear. Would Councillor Connelly be happy to give an update on the development of the timetable at the next Council meeting when I ask him about progress on that matter?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Connelly.

Councillor Connelly: I am assuming Councillor Kitterick, well firstly obviously my relationship with Councillor Kitterick is getting very close because I asked officers to provide a supplementary response to a supplementary question about St. Leonard's Court lift.

Can you give us the answer...

Councillor Connelly: I can indeed I'm not going to keep you in suspense. We unfortunately still don't have a timescale for the installation of the lift. The latest problem is the building was originally designed and constructed so that a second lift could be installed but it was never fitted; I say never fitted so far, we will get a lift fitted. But instead a cupboard area was formed on each of the landings to occupy the space where the second lift should have been installed. Over the years some tenants have bought their flats and this cupboard has been included in their lease and this has prevented us from installing the lift. We are now in the process of buying back this part of the lease so that we can then install the lift. We hope this will be concluded swiftly and installation of the lift will start this financial year. I am obviously

more than happy to keep Councillor Kitterick up to date in respect of any timescales. I will keep the bottle of champagne on ice for the day when the lift is installed.... It already is I can assure you. So as I say I understand Councillor Kitterick's frustrations. I am frustrated as well about the installation of the lift. I can assure him that the money is still in the budget for it and as soon as we resolve hopefully what will be the last problem with the installation of the lift, the lift will be installed in this financial year.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Connelly. Question number 3, Councillor Kitterick.

Councillor Kitterick: Lord Mayor. "How will the public be fully consulted on the plans floated by Steve Lunn of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service in the media on Friday 30th June 2017 for reconfiguring Leicester's fire station provision?"

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor no proposals have been considered by the Combined Fire Authority for the reconfiguration of the provision in the city or for that fire station in particular, and I know of none being scheduled for any future discussion. If there were proposals to have significant configuration particularly if there were any proposals that even considered the closure of the Central Fire Station I can assure Councillor Kitterick and Members of the Council that our representatives and myself included, would be bitterly opposed to such proposals. If we needed any further reminder of the importance of having adequate and immediate fire appliances and skilled crews in the city centre, one only has to look at the experience of the Grenfell Tower to know that they need to be on hand, they need to be available, and frankly they need to be in the Central Fire Station.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Any supplementary question?

Councillor Kitterick: Thank you Lord Mayor. I am not sure whether to be pleased or not that the City Mayor shares my confusion at Steve Lunn's comments as they came out of the blue and certainly will he not agree with me that Mansfield Street, unless we are planning to put it on the pay and display parking space, does not appear to have room for any fire engines at the moment and would he also share my concerns that the Ariel ladder platform which is the highest reaching platform that we have and is currently located at Lancaster Road, in the light of Grenfell Tower if we were going to fight hard to keep our Central Fire Station before those efforts would be timed by many, many times if any proposal should come forward which do not guarantee the safety of city centre residents.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: Yes I agree entirely with Councillor Kitterick and I think the importance obviously of having fire appliances in general in the city centre and the Central Fire Station is important, but particularly having the Ariel

ladder available in the city centre is, to use the colloquial expression, a no-brainer. I think that if there are to be discussions about the reconfiguration of police and fire presence in the city centre, and I think there have been some discussions about this in the past, the availability of space in the Central Fire Station does offer opportunities actually for movement in the other direction for perhaps back office staff and the police or from some others to use that space in a way that is appropriate and makes better use of the space. But as far as I am aware, Chair, as I said in my initial response there have been no proposals certainly from the Fire authority nor are there likely to be in the foreseeable future.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Question number 4, Councillor Kitterick.

Councillor Kitterick: Thank you very much Lord Mayor. Can I ask the City Mayor “Has there been an increase in the number of bailiffs sent to residents on behalf of the City Council in the last 12 months for which figures have been kept. If so what are the relevant figures?”

Lord Mayor. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. As Members will not be surprised that the numbers of use of bailiffs, which are very much the last resort, does vary from year to year, but in 2015/16 there were 6,902 such referrals and 2016/17 - 7,652. I did a quick bit of arithmetic on that, it is about an increase of about 10% which is very much in line with what has been seen in similar councils. But I did ask what the current situation was as well and so far this year the number of referrals for non-payment of council tax is 992, which compares with 1,565 in the same period last year, and this is very much a reflection of the fact that officers are seeking to use every possible way of contacting people in advance of what as I said was the last resort of using bailiffs, increasingly using methods of communication that are perhaps new to us but known to others who have to chase debts, using text messages and things of that sort to remind people before you actually get to the point of having a bailiff knocking on your door.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. A supplementary question Councillor Kitterick?

Councillor Kitterick: Lord Mayor. If I may ask in the report that was reported in the Leicester Mercury that some of the increase in figures was attributed by revenue officers of the City Council to the increase in council tax. Therefore will the City Mayor be mindful in the consultation about proposals which could potentially see cuts to council tax support and hit those who are least able to pay, that we do not want to see a situation where at a time of cutting our own staff the only staff that we are increasing is bailiffs.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor. Of course as I have said in my initial response the use of bailiffs is very much a last resort, and I referred in my initial response to the extent to which we are seeking to avoid bailiffs and being very effective in doing so, and I repeat those figures we have seen in the first quarter a drop from over 1,500 to below 1,000 and that I think is an indication of the extent to which we are seeking to avoid the use of bailiffs in so far as we are able to do so.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Question number 5, Councillor Kitterick please.

Councillor Kitterick: Lord Mayor. "What is the maximum cash increase in their council tax bill a household currently in receipt of council tax support could face if council tax support is cut by 10% and general council tax is increased by an anticipated 4.99%?"

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I am advised that the theoretical maximum cash increase in the council tax bill is just under £5 a week. However, that is based on Band H households and of course the situation in fact is that there are currently no Band H households in receipt of council tax support as most council tax support recipients reside in Band B properties. So on that basis for most the overwhelming majority the likely increased contribution would be just under £3 a week. My Lord Mayor if I perhaps might go on because I think perhaps this is an opportunity rather than doing in the supplementary answer which I was minded to do is just to say a bit about the consultation on the council tax support scheme which Councillor Kitterick referred to. Because the figures that I have given there are of course based on the assumption that we might actually make a change in the level of council tax support, and of course we are in a period of consultation about that, but it is certainly not decided to do so, and I remarked on a previous occasion when Councillor Kitterick was undertaking a campaign to save Knighton Library that in politics some of the best campaigns are the ones against things you know are not going to happen. Because when you have a campaign against something you know is not going to happen you have plenty of chance to prepare for your victory. I would say this is another one such example because the short response to this, and I wouldn't normally want to pre-empt the outcome of consultation, but the short response to this is that changing the level of council tax support this year is something that is not going to happen, and you know while it is possible of course to have political campaigns about and ask questions in this chamber the fact is we are going through a period of consultation because we are spending over £20m a year in support of this scheme, and it is quite right and proper that we put to the people of Leicester what the alternatives are to spending that £20m a year, but it is certainly my view held very firmly that to increase the burden on some of the most vulnerable in our community at the present time is something that we should set our basis firmly against and I can give reassurance to Councillor Kitterick and to other Members of the Council that at this time and indeed in the foreseeable future I see no prospect

whatsoever of us wanting to adopt that approach to make changes to the scheme.

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

Councillor Kitterick: I would like to thank the City Mayor thoroughly for shooting whatever fox I had released. But it is just a case, I would ask the City Mayor perhaps to go back to the Chief Finance Officer and say that she appears to have colluded with me in demonstrating this because we have produced this report where we are consulting. So if we do consult then, as ever, and I can assure the City Mayor will continue to do so, we will respond to the consultations which threaten our communities, their services and their incomes as hard as possible. We will do it even if it is a waste of our time and we could have stayed home and had a cup of tea. We will continue to be out there on the streets, on doorsteps, in the Council Chamber and may I congratulate the City Mayor on setting his base firmly against any further cuts in council tax support which is to be warmly welcomed.

Lord Mayor: Thank you, Thank you. City Mayor.

City Mayor: I will respond to that. I mean I do maintain the fact that this is a scheme that because the government opted out supporting it has left Leicester City Council and other councils similarly up and down the land with an enormous bill and enormous dilemma to face in deciding to what extent we are able to meet the gap that the national scheme has left. That gap for us is some £20m and, you know, with that in mind I think it is right that we tell people the extent to which the government has abdicated its responsibility for actually meeting the costs of this scheme, transferred that expense not just to us but to the other people of Leicester and it is right that we should consult on that and let people know about that. We should also let them know about the impact that would be were we to change the scheme, and I would just say finally my Lord Mayor I think that is the first time in this chamber that I have heard Councillor Kitterick use a fox hunting metaphor and I hope that it not something that he will often feel the need to draw on in the future, but if I have indeed shot his fox well I am happy to have fired the bullet.

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

Councillor Kitterick: Lord Mayor I would point out that I was releasing the fox. "How many children live in households that would be affected by any cuts to council tax support? Does the Cabinet Member for Children's Services believe that cuts to the council tax support would increase child poverty in the city?"

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Kitterick. Councillor Russell to respond.

Councillor Russell: Thank you my Lord Mayor. As there are currently

10,031 households that are of working age with children that receive some level of support through the council tax support scheme I am also very pleased that the City Mayor has set our course firmly against raising that levy. I am also though very pleased that as a Council we made a decision, unlike the vast majority of Councils who put in some level of council tax support, to also have a hardship fund. It is a discretionary relief fund as it is called for the Council, but what it does mean is even when families are faced with having to contribute towards their council tax some for the first time we have got a pot of money where if families are facing significant hardship we can put that support in. We are faced with, as is pointed out by the City Mayor, an incredibly difficult position by the national government in changing the council tax support scheme, and I am pleased that as a local authority, as a Labour authority we were able to put something in that meant that those families that were most vulnerable and were facing the highest levels of hardship that we did have a system to offer an extra level of support. Thank you my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Russell. Councillor Kitterick supplementary question please?

Councillor Kitterick: Yes I fully acknowledge that these cuts to council tax are part of a legacy of Eric Pickles who has gladly gone from any position of influence, but unfortunately his legacy remains. I fully appreciate the hardship fund and I know that Councillor Russell was key to putting those arrangements in place when the changes first took place, but just also Lord Mayor, just because people haven't got a lot of money it doesn't mean that they are not proud and hardship funds often people will not go to them because they feel they should make every effort to pay for their council tax bill, but that in paying those bills that sacrifices and small and large tragedies happen in families in order to make people pay their bills and so I welcome the hardship fund, I welcome the announcements that have been made today.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Russell.

Councillor Russell: Thank you my Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Kitterick for the supplementary not quite question. I think it is important to recognise the different burdens on families and particularly that element of people not always wanting to seek out additional funding. It is why when we have reviewed our early help services we have ensured there continues to be support for families in ensuring that they are accessing all the benefits that they are able to. It is also why we make sure that our early help systems right across the city work with families to spot early on whether there are any small signs that people are trying to make savings to make sure they don't have to ask for help, and you are right those can be often really small signs and it is part of our response as a Council in keeping children safe and supporting families to get involved at the earliest possible point to make sure that where we can offer help and support we do. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Russell. Question number 7, Councillor Kitterick.

Councillor Kitterick: My apologies once more Lord Mayor as I ask my last question. Councillor Porter is not here tonight so somebody has got to do these questions. It will be a case of “Can the Deputy City Mayor inform the Council whether Leicester City Council’s child poverty commission will be meeting to consider the proposal to cut council tax support by up to 10%?”

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Deputy City Mayor please.

Deputy City Mayor: Actually my Lord Mayor I think Councillor Kitterick does himself a huge disservice bracketing himself with Councillor Porter there. When the child poverty commission was convened in 2011 the welfare benefit proposals of the Coalition government of that time was something which were explored in detail, representations were made to government and the likely impact assessed. Now there are no plans for the commission itself to meet as part of this consultation, whether what I think the local authority should do and what we do do is to draw on the detailed work, the specialised work of organisations like the child poverty action group who have done some very detailed work looking at particularly the impact of council tax support schemes up and down the country and it is because of our understanding of that work and our concern about the potential impact on child poverty that the City Mayor has set out our position this evening, that these are not proposals, we would not want to change the council tax scheme in a way which would worsen the experiences of children or anyone else living in poverty in the city. Our efforts want to be focused on addressing the causes of that poverty.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Palmer. A supplementary question please.

Councillor Kitterick: May I take the opportunity to offer my commiserations to Councillor Palmer on his demotion from a City Councillor to a Member of the European Parliament. Can I just say as well I think it is a piece of work that the Deputy City Mayor did right at the start of his tenure in instigating the child poverty commission and I think that by bringing such expertise together it adds, and as the City Mayor said, there is a considerable amount of money that is spent in council tax support that actually the research from organisations such as the child poverty commission and the organisations involved, would he agree with me that it demonstrates that whilst it is a significant amount of money that cuts to it could have a devastating effect on children and families in Leicester.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Kitterick. Councillor Palmer please.

Deputy City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. In a word yes and clearly it remains to be seen whether there are any representatives in the European Parliament with levels of wit and humour as our friend Councillor Kitterick.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Question number 8, Councillor Cole please.

Councillor Cole: Thank you Lord Mayor. I do believe question 8 has been answered several times by the Cabinet Lead and I don't really want to waste time asking the question for him to repeat what he has already told us. What I would like to ask though, I will probably say is that there are a number of houses owned by the City Council which have been insulated in order to improve their heat retention and it has been insulated with a form of cladding which has I believe porcelain in it. Now the installation itself and the work done has definitely improved the aesthetics of the building. Can the Cabinet Lead confirm that the fire regulations etc have also been met and there are no surprises to come?

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Connelly please.

Councillor Connelly: My thanks to Councillor Cole for his supplementary question. He could have let me answer the first one even if it means repeating myself. I am quite good at doing that. In respect of the external wall insulation we obviously have had an extensive programme of installing external wall insulation. It is extremely popular with our tenants and as Councillor Cole says it improves the look of the property and also dramatically reduces heating bills. I will ask officers again to enquire about the issue of the external wall insulation. I have been assured that there are no fire safety issues with the insulation and that it complies with all fire regulations, but I will get them to confirm that and obviously I will let Members be aware of the response.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Connelly. I believe that was part of your supplementary so are you OK with that or do I move on to question 9?

Councillor Cole: Can we move on to question 9.

Lord Mayor: OK that's fine. Question number 9, Councillor Cole please.

Councillor Cole: If I can just thank the Cabinet Lead for his answer to my supplementary Lord Mayor. "Given the recent spike in knife crime in the city and the police reporting that knife crimes are on the increase in the country, can the City Mayor say what the Council is doing to help combat the problem in the city?"

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Cole. Councillor Osman to reply please.

Councillor Osman: Yes thank you Councillor Cole. As Members will be aware there has been an increase in reporting of knife crime, not only locally but also nationally and it has been reported all over the media. Apart from Leicester there have been other locations that have been affected. The Council is taking this very seriously and is working in partnership with Leicestershire Police, the Fire and Ambulance Services and ourselves as we have put together a working party in relation to trying to tackle some of the issues. As Councillor Cole will be aware at the last Mayor Making meeting

as well we had one of the parents that were signing the petition to raise the issue with Parliament in terms of changing the law in knife crime and we were in support of that as well, and it's as a consequence of this work, not only the multi-agency working group which includes Council officers that deliver some of the issues working with the police to take this matter forward and we are also looking at a number of aspects of working with secondary schools and handing out some of the literature to try and reduce some of the crime knife issues as well.

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

Councillor Cole: Yes Lord Mayor. Can I thank the Cabinet Lead for his answer and can I say there was an interesting film shown at the Phoenix Theatre last Thursday in connection with knife crime which I think would be helpful for the Members here to see and I think if an opportunity does present itself that is something we should encourage. Can I also say Lord Mayor that one of the greatest priorities that we as Councillors have in our city is the security of our residents and....

Lord Mayor:could we have a question please.

Councillor Cole: ... and that security amongst young people is desperately important, and to that effect then Lord Mayor can I suggest that there is a piece of work that the Council itself can do in this regard to look into this matter further and can I also suggest that this piece of work might be carried out by the Children and Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission and would we get the support of the City Mayor and Cabinet lead if such as task force as set up.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Osman please.

Councillor Osman: Thank you. Yes I am more than happy to explore the possibility of the working piece of findings and work with Councillor Russell in relation to any important aspect of evidence that may be taken and pass that on to the working group, but more than happy to share that and collaborate our thinking on that.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Move on to question number 10, Councillor Willmott please.

Councillor Willmott: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I would like to put question 10 to the City Mayor about our emergency planning provisions. Obviously I do so in the context of the utter shambles at Kensington and Chelsea Tory run Council following the Grenfell fire catastrophe. Thank you my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor and in sharp contrast to Kensington and Chelsea I am able to reassure Councillor Willmott and other Members of the Council that the staffing budget for our emergency planning team has remained unchanged. The financial contribution we have made to the local resilience forum has also been maintained and we remain an active member of both the local authority resilience partnership and the multi-agency resilience forum and it does mean that we are able to have on call 24/7 a trained resilience officer who is able to call on the other resources of the Council to ensure that we respond quickly and appropriately in the event of any emergency in our city in whatever the form. We are also very active in leading and working with partners to develop and review plans, undertake training, support community engagement activity and we do recognise that this is a role that we as the City Council here in the city have to take working with those partners. I think we have, if anything, strengthened our arrangements in recent years. We have been able to put in place an on-call communications rota; we have developed the control room facilities that were a part of what was developed at City Hall when we moved over there, and I now I think they are very significantly better than the ones that we had to make do with just a few years ago, and it does mean that whatever sort of circumstances we are dealing with, whether it is counter-terrorism, identification in support of vulnerable persons or a major fire or similar incident in the city, we are, one hopes, able to respond appropriately and effectively. Of course the unexpected can occur and one can never be 100% certain that you are aware of or prepared for every eventuality. I do know though that as far as we are able to predict the sorts of eventualities that might occur in the city we are well resourced to deal with them and as well prepared as one can ever be. I must say in this context perhaps that it is worth reflecting on the extent to which other agencies have found their resources diminished, most particularly the Police. I did, in researching my response to this question, ask for the Police numbers and what has happened to them in the period from 2009 through to the present, and in 2009 there were 2,363 officers in the area of the constabulary. That has reduced to 1,794 in 2016. That is a matter of great concern to us because I think it does significantly affect their ability to respond to the uncertainties of the world in which we live and the things that might happen to the city. I do know this is a concern that is very acutely shared by the Police and Crime Commissioner and on which he has made a lot of representations. While I can, as I say, give I hope considerable reassurance about our situation I wish, and I know the Police and Crime Commissioner does as well, that we were able to say the same about their resources that we can about ours.

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

Councillor Willmott: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I would like to thank the City Mayor for his answer indeed the reassurances that he has given. I think it is very important. Under my watch as Leader I was involved in two fairly significant fires where we responded with our emergency plan. They were both on Sundays as well and people turned out and one was at St. John's Church as you may remember many years ago where it had to be evacuated

and people had to be found places to live and we did all that without any fuss whatsoever because we had planned for things we hoped never have to happen. I am concerned though with what Peter says about the police and it may be that we need to think about the other blue light services and so on as well in terms of their response and I think perhaps we should request, you know, that our Members of Parliament do some sort of analysis of this impact in reduction in numbers would have, you know in terms of what the availability is at any point in time and how they could be mobilised when in fact their numbers have been reduced because clearly that puts more pressure on the police. But I think we should take that up and lend our weight to the Police and Crime Commissioner in campaigning on an increase in Police numbers. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: City Mayor please.

City Mayor: I would agree entirely with Councillor Willmott and I think you know if there are more things that we can do with the Police and Crime Commissioner to get that message through at a national level because that is where the message needs to be, I would be very happy to go out and do that. I will of course and I do on a frequent basis, talk to the Police and Crime Commissioner about whether there are ways in which we can lend our voices even more effectively to the work that he is doing. It is perhaps worth saying, because Councillor Willmott did refer to the blue light services in general, that actually there was a time two years ago when I think we thought there was a very real prospect of the Fire Service seeing dramatic cuts. That is now on a much firmer basis and the sorts of cuts that were anticipated then have not proved necessary. It has been enormously helped, and I don't think she is with us this evening, by the services of our own Chief Finance Officer, Alison Greenhill, who has been acting as the Finance Officer for the Fire Authority and has helped them to get a much clearer understanding of what their financial situation is and get them on a much more stable footing. I am very grateful to her for having undertaken that work in addition to the work that she does for us which is obviously also invaluable, and I think it is the case now as Members will be aware that the Fire Service, the Fire and Rescue Service is recruiting new staff for the first time in a number of years, and I think that is encouraging at least as far as their contribution to the safety of the city is concerned, but I will as I said talk with the Police and Crime Commissioner about whether there are ways in which we can still put further pressure on central government to provide what is necessary for what is historically one of the least well-funded police services anywhere in the country.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Question 11, Councillor Willmott.

Councillor Willmott: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I would like to ask if "Please would the City Mayor confirm what he said at the OSC meeting two weeks ago that in fact underspends of, on and I think I need to correct myself, on average, around £6m per year for six years having looked at the webcast again are not in fact really one off savings but ongoing. At that point in my question my Lord Mayor I put a full stop because the City Mayor

did not say what I then say next and therefore represent some £35m worth of cuts that the Council did not need to make. I mean I want to be clear somebody has corrected the grammar of my question but I have attributed to the City Mayor something which I don't wish to attribute to him because he did not say that, but he did in my view articulate the first part of the question so I would like to know whether he agrees with me that these are £35m to cuts that we did not have to actually make. Thank you my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I knew what Councillor Willmott meant; I knew he was not attributing to me something I did not actually say. But the point is that these savings which as he said in very broad terms, these underspends which in very broad terms are about £6m a year have been something that have been a part of what we have managed to achieve over the last few years, and are the results of us pressing down on the spend of the Council even beyond the very significant cuts we are having to make in order to move towards, and we are not there yet, achieving the £150m per year reduction in our spending, cuts in our spending, that are required as a result of the savage cuts that the government is making to the grant that we get. I think you need to put the sorts of figures that we are talking about here in the context of that £150m and think what they represent in terms of percentage. They are a very small percentage and, and this is the significant element of them, they are one off and what we are having to find with those cuts are not one off savings but ongoing cuts and reductions in spend. Now what we have been able to do as a result of pressing down on this funding throughout the year is, and it has been reported on every occasion to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission who have very broadly and very warmly welcomed the approach we have adopted, including at a time when Councillor Willmott was himself a member of that Commission, what has been welcomed is the extent to which we have used those funds to avoid having to draw down on the capital programme which is essentially focussed on neighbourhoods and to invest in the economy of the city. I could take quite a number of examples which I know Members will appreciate have significantly contributed to the economic well-being of the city and to jobs in the city, but I did want to take just one particular example, and that is the Leicester to Work scheme which has been funded from this. The Leicester to Work scheme has delivered more than 500 jobs, it has supported over 100 new apprenticeships, more than 400 work placements and this latest allocation that we are talking about here will attract more than £2m of European funding helping some 350 disadvantaged residents to find work and support 200 businesses. This support and this spending is a vital part of the programme which actually Councillor Waddington leads in promoting jobs and the economy of the city and I am sure that she will agree with me that it would be very regrettable were we to put in jeopardy the use of this money for these purposes and the creation of these jobs and promotion of our economy and in fact we ought to be welcoming our ability to do it as a mark of our success in holding down spending within the budget during the year and using the proceeds of that to very good effect.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Supplementary question Councillor Willmott?

Councillor Willmott: Yes thank you my Lord Mayor. I think in my supplementary I would have to say that any one off that is repeated consecutively for six years is not a one off, therefore, the underspends and the savings are indeed ongoing. I would ask the City Mayor to consider, I don't wish to put at jeopardy any of the schemes that he has outlined and I do support them whole-heartedly, but nonetheless there is £7.5m of underspend. I would ask him if he would consider and that it would be possible and simply a matter of political will, that we use the £7.5m underspend this last year to reinstate the £1m proposed cuts in the youth service, the £600,000 proposed cuts to voluntary organisations that help people from being taken into care and to keep Rushey Mead library open for 10 years which would only cost £140,000. All of that would come to £1.74m my Lord Mayor still leaving £5.75m to go into the economic action plan. So I am not trying to rob the economic action plan or destroy it, it still has two thirds or even more of this proportion of the underspend. Simply that we also look at our youth service, at the vulnerable people that are elderly in our city and the people who use Rushey Mead Library. Thank you my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I would remind Councillor Willmott and other Members of the Council that as I said in my initial response, we as a result of government cuts are having to take £150m per year in the decade from 2010 to 2020 out of our running costs. I have no doubt at all that every Member of this Council could add a long list of things that they would wish to see us either preserve or to restore from the services the Council has had to consider for reduction as a result of those government cuts. It will be a very long list. Now of course those particular ones are dear to Councillor Willmott's heart but there will be other things that are dear to other Member's hearts as well and I could very easily I am sure go around and ask Members what they would like to see us spend more money on and get the whole of that £150m spent in the evening. But that would be a very irresponsible thing to do because the fact is that we are not going to get that £150m back and although of course we are all heartened by the outcome of the recent general election, the fact is that the government is set on a trajectory for continuing to make reductions in Council spending in general and in our spending in particular in a way that still requires us to find a further £40m cuts over the next two years. Now we could spend that £7m in a number of different ways as I have said, but I think to do so would be grossly irresponsible, not just because I think we would be setting our face against the reality of having to make those £150m cuts but also because they will put in jeopardy the schemes that we are able to support in the short term from the economic action plan including those that I have mentioned but many others beyond those that have brought jobs, brought training to the city and brought investment in the city both from ourselves and from the private sector, and I am sorry to say to Councillor Willmott I am not prepared to do that, either to put the necessity of finding that £150m in jeopardy or to put

that investment in our economy in jeopardy.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. I know the next question is by Councillor Myers but can you just hold on a little bit longer because Councillor Clair needs to go early and the question asked by Councillor Willmott which is question number 18 I will bring that forward so that Councillor Clair can answer that question. So can we move on to question number 18 by Councillor Willmott for Councillor Clair to reply.

Councillor Willmott: Thank you my Lord Mayor. "Will Councillor Clair therefore join with me in thanking the Arts Council for their investment of £24.5m in the city, including funding for eight new organisations and for their choice of Curve to make the national announcement of a total investment of £1.6b across the country?" Thank you my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Clair please.

Councillor Clair: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I am thankful for Councillor Willmott to ask this question. First I would like to inform Council that I am Art Council board member for Midland area and I was part of the decision making process and I can say that how difficult it was to go to that competitive process and also I am board member of Curve. So like Councillor Willmott has said of course indeed we are very grateful for our Art Council. It was a great honour for us as a city to be chosen as a location for first ever press launch outside London. There is no doubt it was a deliberate choice on their part emphasising their overall message that art and culture is thriving outside the capital and across Leicester in particular. It was stressed during those meetings of the Arts Council that it does not mean that they will not spend or probably less spend would be in London. So you rightly said so that Curve was an excellent choice for our launch as an iconic building that has helped transform the cultural landscape of the city and is increasingly now carrying out Leicester brand nationally and internationally especially the Curve touring programme. Not only locally and nationally, internationally right up to Far East, China and Korea. So both Chief Executive, Darren Henley, and Chair, Nick Serota, have explicitly supported and complimented the Leicester ... far of a strategy thanking you to investment in culture and I believe we are being rewarded in part of that investment. I remember when this thriving art venue was in its construction period and all that element of planning was actually designed and funded separately and it was opened 11 years from today. So that was opened by Her Majesty the Queen when of course Councillor Willmott was Leader at that time and you rightly said so that we are so fortunate that quality of the applications from those additional eight organisations across the city who has been supported are exceptionally outstanding, and I hope that it will offer the huge chance for further boost of our profile nationally and internationally the way in which we offer our culture and diversity. I said that because during this process those eight organisations there are particular four organisations from a diverse community which is namely Akosh Odedra, Grambooze, Dadra and Suridentity. So they are especially new both of those four and they recognise the diversity of the city, the way in which we provide services to

other art. Obviously the portfolio for our city also includes activity from both universities. We must congratulate them for the quality of their application and their excellence which is now rightly recognised at national level. Another existing eight portfolio organisations which have received funding from last many years so even their funding was kept to the level they receive now. I hope this is a great achievement for us in the city the way in which the Arts Council recognised the value of the art and culture and it is something I am inspiring to achieve in every organisation, in particular from the voluntary sector, that with this money they will try and they will actually excel otherwise sometimes local authority we would not be able to support them to the level of funding which they deserve. So this is four year funding from 2018 to 2022.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Clair for your very comprehensive reply. Councillor Willmott do you have a supplementary?

Councillor Willmott: Yes I have an equally comprehensive supplementary. No, no I haven't.

Lord Mayor: Not a statement.

Councillor Willmott: I would thank Councillor Clair for his answer and I think he has queued himself up for my supplementary which, given that we have such a thriving arts sector in the city and obviously he is in a position of great personal influence, will he be dusting off our city of culture bid and can he tell us whether he would be agreeing to re-submit the city of culture bid soon. I see the City Mayor shaking his head.

Councillor Clair: Obviously I was a member of that panel when we prepared and submitted our city of culture bid. Our bid was really excellent and I was hopeful that we would be the winning city but on that day I think the reason was announced that Hull was in more need than what we were and I can assure you that City Mayor and Executive Members we are a city of culture without the title and we will continue to try.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Clair. Right now where are we, OK. I am pleased to invite Councillor Myers for his first question to the Chambers and his maiden speech. Councillor Myers question number 12.

Councillor Myers: Thank you Lord Mayor. "What ambitions and standards will the City Mayor be pushing to see as part of the local plan that could help the city centre become a more attractive and sustainable part of Leicester to live in?"

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: I thank Councillor Myers for his question my Lord Mayor. The first no doubt of many. My Lord Mayor the local plan which I will be introducing a little later on is going to be the subject of consultation over the weeks and months to come and this is a brilliant opportunity for us to set the

standards that we want across the city so that the priorities we want across the city and particularly of course in the context of this question to set the standards and the content that we want in a city centre of the future. I think there will be an opportunity to look at the standards of internal space within buildings that we want, the amount of open space that we want in the city and the quality of that open space we want, the design of the city centre that we want, the sort of ambition that we have for that design, the environmental, social and economic objectives of the city in general and the city centre in particular. Of course there will be lots of feeding into this process by people who have a general interest in the city, I hope people like the Civic Society will want to have their say for example and other interested groups. I hope individuals want to have their say and frankly I also hope that the developers will want to have their say as well and will want to identify what they want. We will obviously need to balance what is said to us in ways that I do believe that this is a great opportunity for us to look in a comprehensive way at what strategic vision we have got for the city in general and the city centre in particular and I do sort of go on a bit where I introduce the local plan I just want to encourage colleagues you know to engage in the process themselves but also engage in the local community and the people they represent in it as well, and there will be a number of consultation documents that Members can use as part of this process but I think that probably the most useful discussion will be face to face both Councillors in this chamber and in the processes of the Council but also face to face in wards and communities discussing with people about what they want in their area and of course what all of us want in the city centre.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. A supplementary question Councillor Myers? Are you happy?

Councillor Myers: I will learn to tee up a supplementary question in due time.

Lord Mayor: Sure, thank you. Thank you. Question number 13, Councillor Singh please.

Councillor Singh: Yes my Lord Mayor. This question is on the order paper purely indicative of the level of concern in this particular area. I wonder and I think the City Mayor has given a full and frank reply earlier. If you will allow me to continue on to my supplementary. It has been created has it. Of course it is quite legitimate to explore collaborative arrangements and this is going on to the fact that this is in relation to the question of course. And I believe it is something to do with austerity you know. I think that is pretty clear. But Lord Mayor can I ask the City Mayor that nonetheless where there is smoke, not to add any kind of pun, but you never know these kind of suggestions that come forward is simply to say that would the City Mayor ensure that the same approach should something come to fruition in relation to any of these proposals that the same approach is adopted by these authorities as of course does the council involving the public through consultation that they can have their say in any kind of proposals as part of the decision making process. I think that is so vitally important and I simply

seek that assurance.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor for the supplementary reply.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I can repeat as I said earlier that any proposals to significantly change or downgrade the level of provision of fire cover in the city centre and from the central fire station would be bitterly opposed by me and I know by the other Members that represent this authority on the Combined Fire Authority. It is, I do actually take the point that Councillor Singh makes about the effects of austerity, although I would also say that one of the reasons that there is spare capacity in the central fire station is of course changing patterns of service and the way in which, you know, fire crews are available in the 21st century as opposed to the early part of the 20th century when that fire station was built. That does leave questions about how you use the building. It ought not to put into question the presence of adequate fire cover in that station and from that station and the use of that as the base for the fire crews who have served our city centre. But there is surplus space there but I don't think that there is any question at all of it being suggested that they could move out of there, I would oppose it if they did. I think there are questions about whether that space can be used more effectively by actually bringing other services in.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Councillor Councillor Singh for question number 14 please.

Councillor Singh: Yes thank you. "How does Leicester compare as a city in terms of the number of small and medium sized enterprises that have gone into liquidation of their own volition or involuntarily over the last 5 years?"

Lord Mayor: City Mayor please, no, sorry Councillor Waddington.

Councillor Waddington: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Thank you Councillor Singh. Yes we can get a picture of this from government published statistics. The latest information is for the financial year 2015 and looking at the six year period covering 2010 to 2015 we can see big differences from year to year both for Leicester and comparator cities. For example compared to Nottingham and Derby in 2014 more businesses survived for three years in Leicester than either of those two cities. However, exactly the reverse was true in 2015 so reading too much into any single year is difficult. It would be fair to say that Leicester is particularly good at starting new businesses. Over the same six year period the number of new businesses being created in the city each year virtually doubled increasing by 84%. By contrast the increase in Nottingham was 74% and in Derby 68%. So Leicester does create a significant number of new businesses in sectors that are however quite risky. Particularly restaurants and other hospitality businesses where sustainability is particularly challenging. Part of the explanation for that is that we do have an entrepreneurial population who are not put off by business failures and will keep on trying to succeed.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. A supplementary question?

Councillor Singh: Yes my Lord Mayor I do. Can I thank Councillor Waddington for that reply. Lord Mayor there is an interesting set of statistics and I am very grateful for that but I hope that the Council will continue to be proactive in supporting these businesses. We had a report from the Director of Finance which indicated that nearly £1m had been written off in terms of debt from insolvency, bankruptcy and so forth and most of that was in reference to SMEs we believe, although I think further investigations could be carried out in respect of that. But I think what is important is I hope that the Council will be proactive in supporting these businesses in collaboration with the LLEP but I think what is important is that we continue to maintain...

Lord Mayor: ... a question please.

Councillor Singh: Yes my question is that I hope that the Council will be proactive in supporting these businesses and that they do so that we continue to have a strong viable case, viable business base for the city and that is good for jobs and that is also good to reduce insolvency debts, debts for this Council.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Singh.

Councillor Waddington: Let us assume the supplementary question was will the City Council continue to support the development and success of new businesses, and the answer to that is yes. Together with the LLEP of course all businesses naturally and we have got a good new opportunity to do that because the City Council has been successful in submitting a bid for European funding, long may it last, for a project called Collaborate which will be using that European money and that will include £1.2m to support small business grants and a whole host of seminars, conferences and other support measures aimed at small businesses on a range of issues which will help them thrive and survive or indeed survive and thrive. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Waddington for that double whammy – questions and answers in one go, thank you. Councillor Chaplin, question number 15 please.

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. “How many calls for rat pest control has the Council received in each of the last five years and how many members of staff have been employed in that team to deal with calls over that period. Thank you?”

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Clarke please.

Councillor Clarke: Thank you Lord Mayor. To answer your second question within your question first Councillor Chaplin. Over the last five years there has been an establishment of six members of staff that has fluctuated over that period due to a review that has taken place within that period, but in 2012 there was the full compliment. The average since then

has been five but the establishment of six remains and remains following the review. The first question within your question in terms of call out to the pest control team for rats: in 2012 – 1,824; in 2013 – 2,005; in 2014 – 2,428; in 2015 – 2,025 and 2016 – 2,114 and to this point of this year the figure I have here is 1,221. I have got a range of other pests as well and I can provide those figure for you after the meeting if you wish, but I would like to refer to one because it was referred to earlier in the evening. Over that period that I have described there have been three call outs for foxes but I don't think any of them were shot.

Lord Mayor: Supplementary please Councillor Chaplin?

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you Lord Mayor and I am delighted to hear that the foxes were safe as a staunch supporter of animal rights. I will try not to make a statement my Lord Mayor but I have to speak quite slowly as you know. So for a number of years and obviously it is really interesting that you said there is a cohort, a number of six members of staff because as I understand it that is down substantially at the moment, possibly to three and for a number of years residents at Walldale Drive referred to in the petition I presented earlier have been struggling to battle against the control of rats and to get the overgrown piece of land maintained by a private landlord and over the years the support that has been offered by the members of staff has been brilliant but it is diminishing as their workload goes up as the number of staff go down. So could you confirm what the actual number of staff is now and could you also confirm that the Executive will look again at making sure that this service is properly resourced, recruited to because obviously rats in particular do cause some public health issues and intense stress for the residents. The mental health and wellbeing of families is, it's getting to a point where the impact is significant so I hope that you will be able to answer that question. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Clarke.

Councillor Clarke: Thank you my Lord Mayor. As I said earlier the figures that I have been given are average figures over the year and there is an establishment of six posts. There has been a review where that has meant that there has been a reluctance to, you know, fill those posts during that time because of the review is ongoing. That establishment remains following the review because the Executive determined that it is an important service. It is not a statutory service but we feel it is an important service to provide citizens of Leicester. It has helped in that much of the service other than rats in domestic circumstances is a paid for service but in terms of the petition you mentioned I would be more than happy from an environmental perspective to discuss that with you and see what support it can provide in terms of a broad environmental health issue because I do appreciate that it can cause the distress that you have described. I would like to say that anticipating this question this evening I have spoken to people last night who did praise the work of the pest control team and the officers themselves and the professionalism with which they do their work. Sometimes working with people who are vulnerable and are distressed and I think we should

recognise that this evening.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Clarke. Question number 16, Councillor Chaplin please.

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I certainly do know that the residents support the members of staff. So question number 16 is "What conversations has the Assistant Mayor for Housing had with PA Housing (formerly ASRA Housing) regarding poor repairs to homes particularly in cases of rat and mouse infestation?"

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Connelly please.

Councillor Connelly: To be perfectly honest there has been no conversation so far with PA Housing. However, today we have received an email from Matt Cooney the CEO's PA to confirm dates that he is available to speak to me next week and I will obviously be taking up that particular offer. He is on holiday at the moment so he could not speak to me this week but as I say I have now received dates and times by which I can contact him and obviously talk about the problems that Lucy has alluded to.

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

Councillor Chaplin: I do my Lord Mayor. I am making up for Councillor Myers. So thank you very much for your reply. I am delighted to hear that a meeting is being set up. Obviously I understand that you have been given new responsibilities Councillor Connelly and congratulations for being able to hold to account the Council housing issues that you are now able to hold the housing associations to account and I would particularly urge you if you would to raise this issue because as I understand it ASRA as it formerly was have been particularly bad about their maintenance regime in terms of quality and timing wherever work that has been done by pest control in trying to alleviate infestations. So when you have had that meeting would you be able to let me know what is going on. It is not just something that is happening in Stoneygate Ward but I believe it is around the Council and make sure that the new regime at PA Housing actually is taking this issue seriously because as I said before the stress and wellbeing of people it is really impacting on them and they have got enough things to worry about as it is. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Connelly.

Councillor Connelly: My thanks to Councillor Chaplin for the supplementary question. I am pleased to hear that she is saying there have been complaints to pest control because Environmental Health and private housing sections of the authority have stated that they have received no complaints about ASRA properties in the city. So if you have got any particular issues if you could flag those up to me and if any other Councillors have particular issues that would be really useful for obviously when I get to

speak to Matt next week. Thank you very much.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Connelly. Question number 17, Councillor Cutkelvin please.

Councillor Cutkelvin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. This is obviously in the context of the council tax support scheme which has been referenced in other questions this evening. "What assurance can the Assistant Mayor for Jobs and Skills give me that our discretionary policies for supporting vulnerable households are effectively targeting the people who most need it?"

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Waddington please.

Councillor Waddington: Thank you my Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Cutkelvin for the question. The Council has three key discretionary policies to help households that are facing financial crisis. Firstly the discretionary housing payments for those on housing benefit or universal credit to help them meet their housing costs. Secondly the council tax discretionary relief fund which is for those who are experiencing difficulties on a short term basis in making payments for Council tax, and finally the community support grant for those facing immediate financial crisis. This provides food and assistance with heating and electrical costs. Now for all those funds people apply either on line or on a form and each application is considered by the Revenue and Custom Support Service following a clear set of guidelines. Now how do we ensure that people who are vulnerable and facing financial crisis know about these funding opportunities. Well various take up campaigns have been mounted and should continue to be because as we all know the benefit regime changes and people are often faced with new situations or new caps or new problems that can arise because of changes in benefit systems. So we published a booklet entitled "budgeting and debt advice services in Leicester". That has been published in conjunction with the Department of Work and Pensions and is available and apparently promoted at Job Centre Plus as well as in all the advice organisations in the city, housing offices, the social welfare advice partnership and Customer Services. So it is through those methods that we try and ensure that people who are vulnerable and are facing financial crisis are aware of the opportunities to bid for these fundings.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Supplementary question?

Councillor Cutkelvin: Yes, thank you my Lord Mayor. I, like others here tonight, would like to welcome the City Mayor's announcement that despite the current consultation there are no plans to change the council tax support scheme. An essential part of protecting the most vulnerable are these discretionary funds, and the policies which are attached. I understand the policies are due to be reviewed and I hope through that process they will be strengthened. How much money do we spend on these policies and what is the proposed level of funding going forward?

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Waddington please.

Councillor Waddington: Thank you Councillor Cutkelvin for the supplementary and like you I warmly welcome the news this evening that the council tax support scheme will not result in increases being made to the council tax for those who are in the most financially poor situations and I think that is something all of us welcome. The amount of money that we have in the budget currently for the three schemes that I have referred to in response to the question is as follows. This is for 2017/18: for the discretionary housing payment we have £1,186,000 and that is from central government; for the council tax discretionary relief fund we have £0.5m and this is funded from the general fund; and for the community support grant for those facing immediate financial crisis we have £480,000. The spend last year just so you can see how close we were to the anticipated spend was actually a little less for housing, we spent £840,000; for the council tax reduction support we spent £304,000 and for the community support grant we spent £442,000. As we have heard these are under review but that review has not started yet so I am not able to give you any further information about any plans in those areas but of course I will be reporting it to you and to the relevant Scrutiny Commission once we are aware of the parameters of the review.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Waddington. Moving on to question 19, Councillor Grant please.

Councillor Grant: Thank you Lord Mayor. "Can the City Mayor say what tangible outcomes the public can expect from the substantial transfer of underspend to the economic action plan?"

Lord Mayor: City Mayor please.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I have already referred to some of the tangible outcomes in the answer to my earlier question, certainly as I said the Leicester to Work element of it has produced 500 jobs, 100 new apprenticeships and so much more. And of course those are all outcomes that have been reported either to the Economic Development Scrutiny Commission or to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on a frequent basis and have been very warmly welcomed there. I know that of course other elements of the economic action plan have provided literally the environment in which others have sought to invest in the city and support a tremendous number of jobs and investment alongside of it. For example the work that has been done in the area around St. Martin's to support Delilah's, that delicatessen, to support Middleton's Steak Bar, it has brought new owners to St. Martin's Square who are very keen to invest in that area and of course it is not investment that is unrelated to the decision of IBM to make a new home here in Leicester; to Hastings Direct to bring their work here and the many, many hundreds of jobs associated with them, and of course it is also very much related to the decision of Charles Street Buildings to invest some £50m in what they are describing as the great central square which is the area immediately opposite the Showcase Cinema on the other side of

the central ring road adjacent to the great central station which will bring two new hotels and over 300 jobs. I hope Members will agree with me that those are all very, very tangible indeed and all very directly attributable to the investment of the economic action plan.

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

Councillor Grant: No Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Question number 20, Councillor Grant again please.

Councillor Grant: I believe the City Mayor has also answered this one several times perhaps so if he is happy I will move on to the supplementary. "Given his answer to previous questions does the City Mayor, the city's most senior representative on the Fire Authority, still have confidence in the senior leadership of the Fire and Rescue Service who appear to have released the fox.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor on this occasion I am able to say I do have absolute confidence in them and I really do and I have not always been able to give such an unequivocal answer, but I really do. The Chief Fire Officer is somebody with whom I have the highest regard and I know that is a regard that is shared by all Members of the Fire Authority including its Chair of course who is the Leader of the County Council with whom, on the Fire Authority I am able to work very effectively and I know that whatever it may have been reported that has been said he has considerable respect for the Fire Authority and recognises that it is the ultimate decision maker on these matters and I don't think would have any expectation that he would have any easy ride were he to make a proposal which he has not made to close the central fire station and indeed I think he would well anticipate, and he is intelligent enough to realise it, that were he to make such a proposal he will get the same sort of response that his predecessor did.

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

Councillor Grant: Thank you. "Given the high number of trees lost in storm Doris how long does the Council expect it will take to replace all of the trees lost in that event?"

Lord Mayor: Councillor Clarke please.

Councillor Clarke: Thank you. Thank you my Lord Mayor. I would like to thank Councillor Grant for his continued interest in environmental issues and his continued interest in the impact of Storm Doris. Over 200 trees were lost over 188 different locations as a result of Storm Doris. That was during February of this year and that is on land managed by Leicester City Council,

mainly in parks and on our highways. In addition to 100, around 100 other trees felled across the city during the same year which gives an example of this severe weather event which we can only say will increase in number as a result of climate change. Owing to replacement costs the current highway tree replacement policy is to prioritise replacement along main routes and in conservation areas with good reason and where funds are available other locations are considered. This is a mammoth task following this event and we are looking to replace the quantity of trees lost over that event over the two to three year period. Obviously there are funding considerations with that, whether there are internal funding opportunities through our capital programme or external funding opportunities is what we are looking at currently.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Clarke. A supplementary please?

Councillor Grant: Yes. I would be interested in exploring any ways that we can accelerate the replacement programme and given the high priority that both myself and Councillor Clarke put on the environment would one way be to place a moratorium on the installation of banners within the city until we have caught up on all replacements as the costs for both is about the same.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Clarke to respond please.

Councillor Clarke: There are no current plans for any additional banners.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Grant to ask question 22 please.

Councillor Grant: Thank you Lord Mayor. If you will just indulge me a second, could I take this opportunity in posing what may be the last question for some time to Councillor Palmer to support most of the statements of the City Mayor and to praise and I hope that praise from a proud Tory does not cause him an even more awkward moment. "Have voluntary sector organisations with contracts from Adult Social Care been given sufficient time to consult on the proposed changes to their contracts?"

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Deputy City Mayor Councillor Palmer please.

Deputy City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor and I thank Councillor Grant for his generous words. In terms of the consultation timeframe I believe so given that our legal officers provided advice on that timeframe and given that we are over two weeks into that consultation and not one of the organisations concerned has made contact with me to express any concern about the consultation timetable. I believe that the timetable is still adequate and suitable.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. A supplementary question please?

Councillor Grant: I am aware that one organisation is concerned that they won't have sufficient time. I also believe that in other consultations that have taken place in Adult Social Care we have had to give extensions. So I

wondered if such a representation was made to the Deputy Mayor, would he look at it sympathetically and if there were any extensions what would the consequences be?

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Deputy City Mayor.

Deputy City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Clearly if an organisation wants to make such representation I would look at it seriously and give it due consideration. Clearly there will be consequences in terms of the decision making timeline and therefore ultimately on the potential financial implications of contract extensions or procuring new services but clearly if an organisation concerned feels it cannot make the representations it would want to in the time frame I would not want to prevent that from happening, I would want all organisations concerned in this exercise to be able to make their views fully known and to do so on a fair basis. So if that representation is forthcoming I will clearly look at it.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. That ends the questions from the Councillors.

MATTERS RESERVED TO COUNCIL

7.1 REPLACEMENT LOCAL PLAN

Under Council Procedure Rule 22 (d) (ii), the Lord Mayor agreed an extension of time to the City Mayor in speaking on this item.

The City Mayor gave a presentation regarding the Replacement Local Plan, consultation process, key issues and challenges to be addressed and the anticipated timetable.

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

9. That Council approves public consultation for this stage of the replacement Leicester Local Plan as set out in the report.

7.2 LEICESTER CITY DRAFT YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2017/18

A report was considered which sought approval to the Plan and set out details of how youth justice services were to be provided and funded, how the Youth Offending Team would operate and be composed and funded and what functions it would carry out.

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

10. That Council:
 - (i) Notes and agrees the Leicester City Youth Justice Plan for 2017/18.
 - (ii) Notes the review of progress and agree the priorities in the report.
 - (iii) Requests the Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission to review progress against the actions and recommendations in October 2017.

7.3 MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2017/18 – CONFIRMATION OF SCHEME

A report was considered which set out the 2017/18 Scheme and proposed amendments to the scheme.

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

11. That Council confirms the Members Allowances Scheme for 2017/18 including the ability for the City Mayor to vary Deputy and Assistant City Mayor Special Responsibility Allowances according to changing responsibilities within the overall financial envelope for these allowances, and the minor amendment to section 5ii of the Scheme relating to the commencement of allowances after an election.

REPORTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

8.1 STANDARDS 'ARRANGEMENTS' - REVISIONS

The Monitoring Officer presented a report that sought the approval of Council to the revised "Arrangements" for dealing with complaints against Members and co-opted Members under the Localism Act 2011, (found in Part 5 of the Council's Constitution).

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

12. That Council accepts the changes to the arrangements as set out in Appendix A to the report.

EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES

None identified.

NOTICES OF MOTION

None identified.

ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no items of urgent business identified the Lord Mayor declared the meeting closed at 8.10pm.

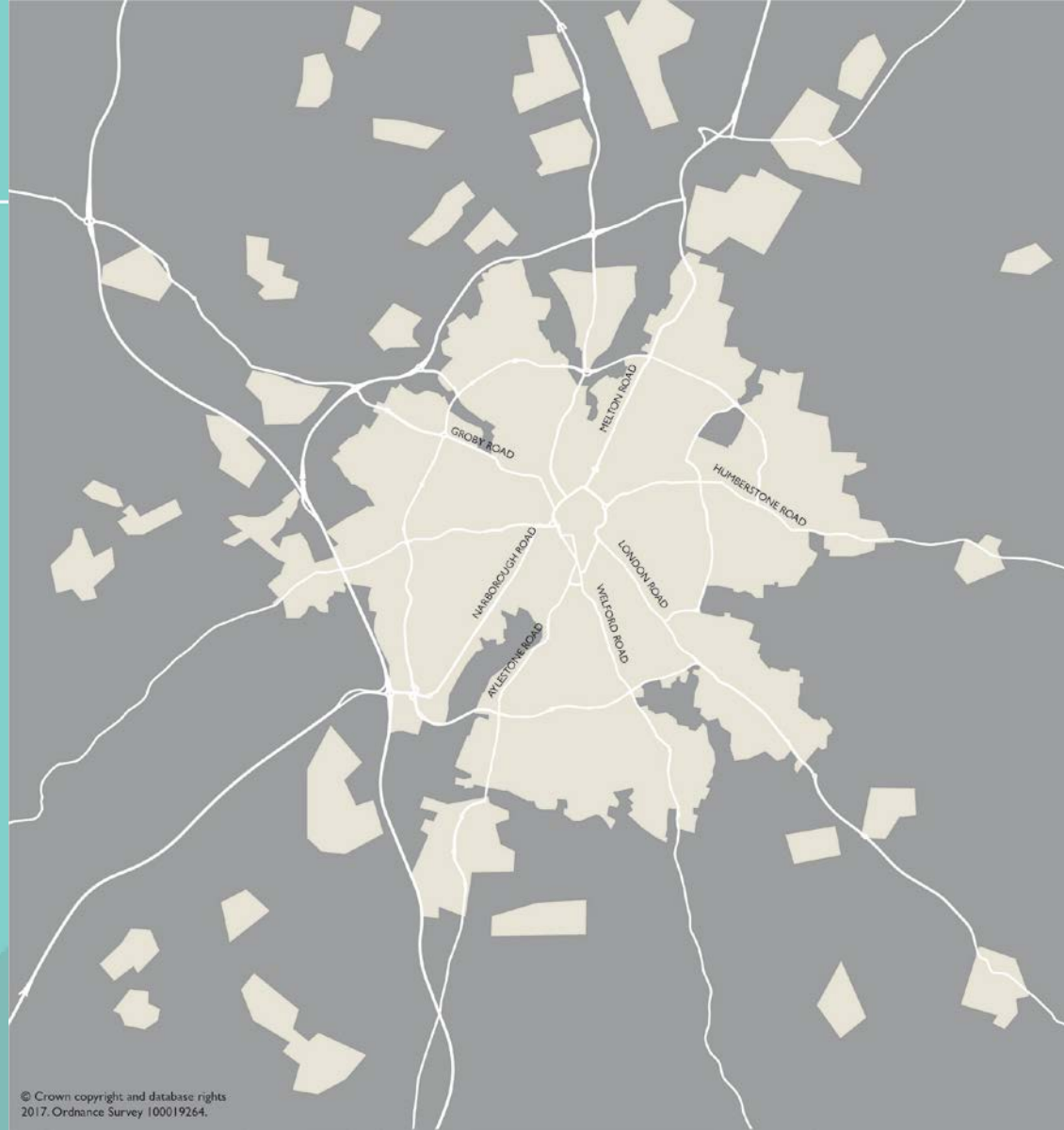
New Leicester Local Plan – July 2017

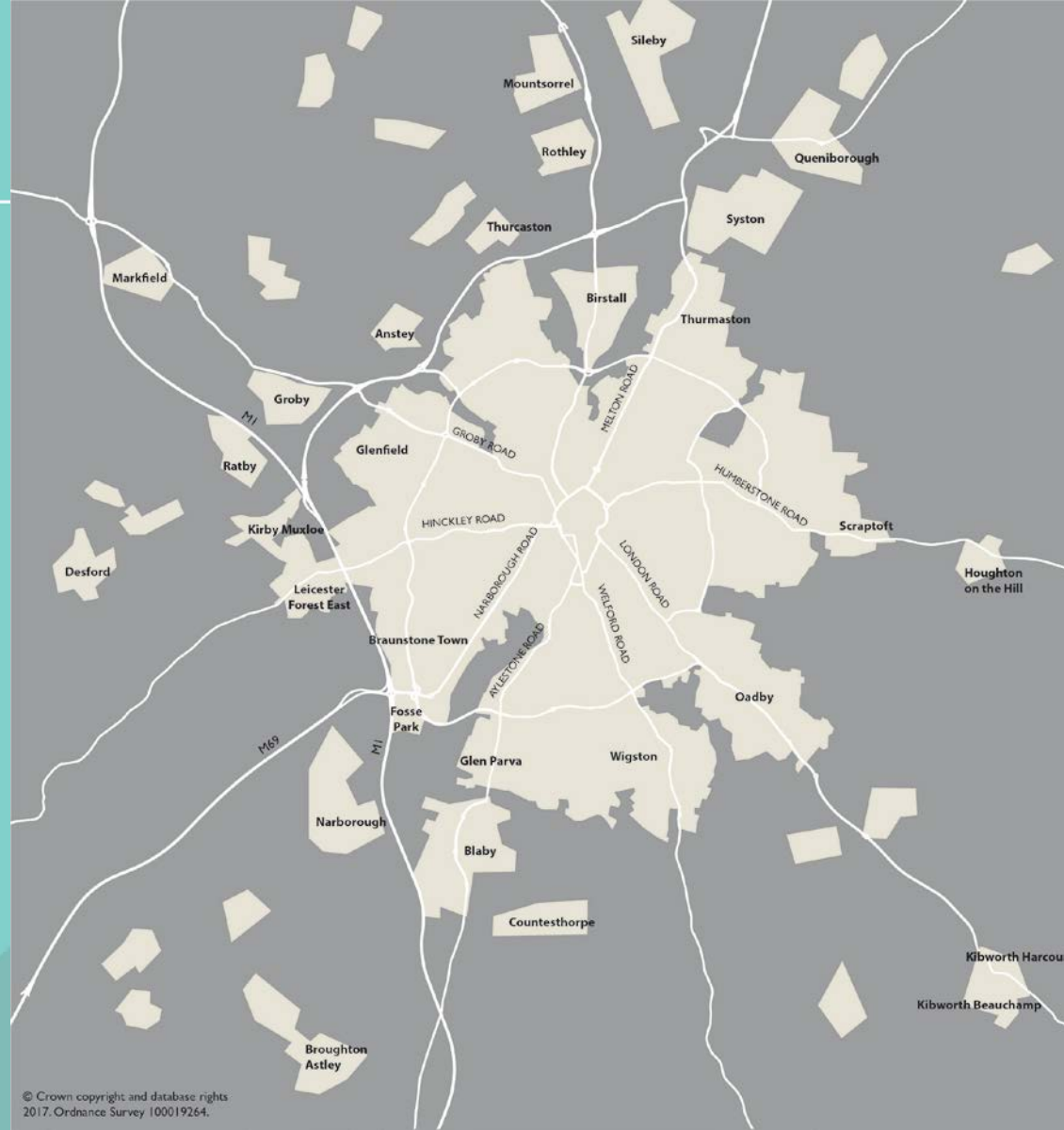


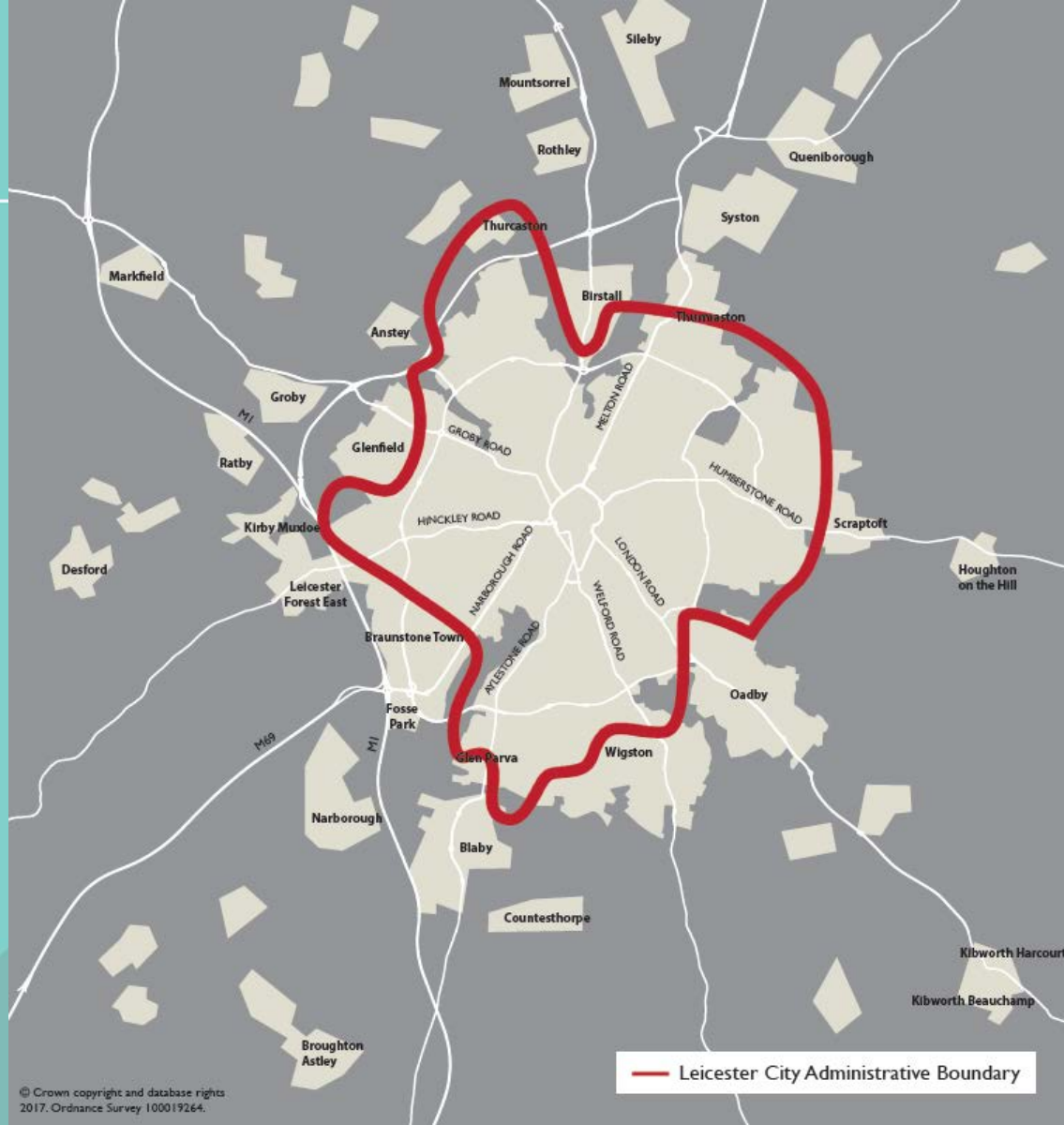
The Importance of a Local Plan

- Sets councils policies up to 2031
- Replaces Core Strategy 2014 and saved policies 2006
- Meets needs for homes, jobs, shopping and leisure, open space

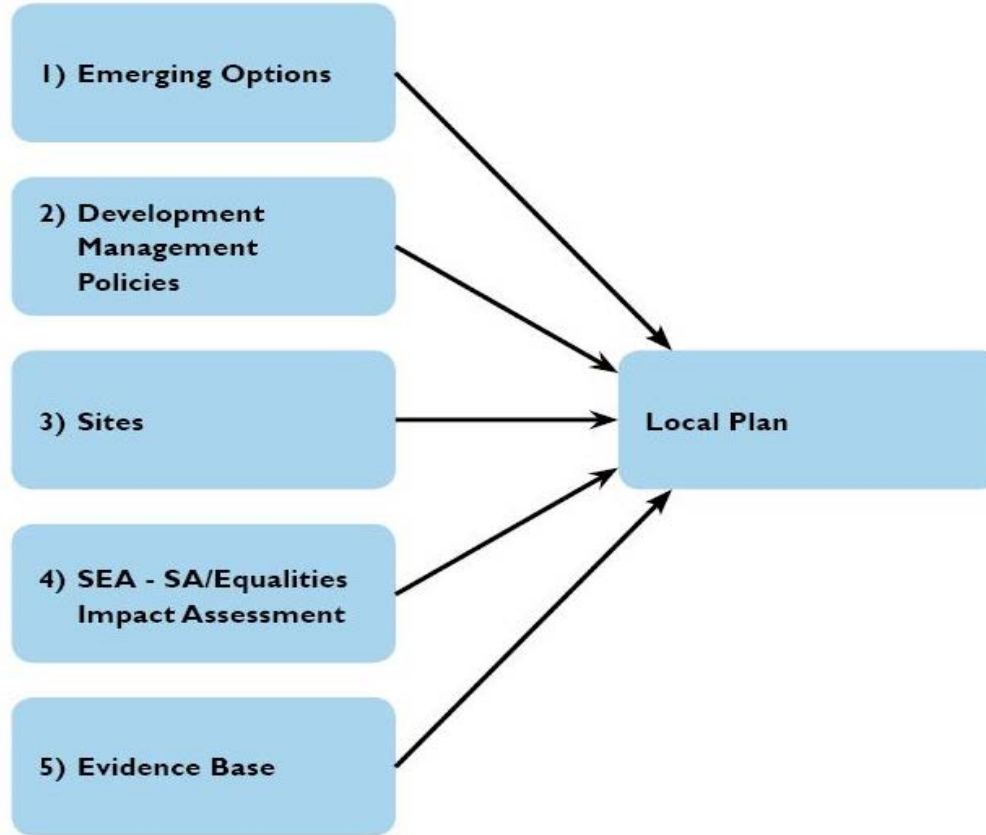








Consultation Documents



Key Issues/ Challenges

- Identify land for new
 - Housing
 - Employment
 - Education
 - Community facilities
- What infrastructure is needed to support growth



Key Issues/ Challenges

- Protect and enhance the City's heritage and green environment
- City Centre and Regeneration
- Transport



Timetable

- Full Council – 6th July 2017
- Emerging Options, Sites & Development Management policies consultation: July - October 2017
- Scrutiny during Consultation Period
- Draft Local Plan: Winter -Spring 2018
- Public Examination and plan adopted: end of 2018

