

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, 30 NOVEMBER 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 meeting held on 5 October 2017 are available to view at:

<http://www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk:8071/documents/g8224/Printed%20minutes%20Thursday%2005-Oct-2017%2017.00%20Council.pdf?T=1>

Copies are also available from Democratic Support on 0116 454 6350 / 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 Capital Programme 2018/19 – 2019/20

8. REPORTS OF THE CITY MAYOR OR EXECUTIVE

8.1 Draft Tree Strategy

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
ANNETTE BYRNE
VIJAY SINGH RIYAIT

Aylestone Ward

ADAM CLARKE
NIGEL CARL PORTER

Beaumont Leys Ward

HEMANT RAE BHATIA
SUE WADDINGTON
PAUL THOMAS WESTLEY

Belgrave Ward

MANJULA SOOD

Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields

STEVE CORRALL
ELAINE HALFORD
KULWINDER SINGH JOHAL

Castle Ward

PATRICK JOSEPH KITTERICK
DEBORAH ANNE SANGSTER
DANNY MYERS

Evington Ward

DEEPAK BAJAJ
RATILAL BHAGWAN GOVIND
SUE HUNTER

Eyres Monsell Ward

VIRGINIA CLEAVER
ELAINE PANTLING

North Evington Ward

LUIS FONSECA
JEAN KHOTE

Rushey Mead Ward

PIARA SINGH CLAIR
RITA PATEL
ROSS WILLMOTT

Saffron Ward

ELLY CUTKELVIN
WILLIAM SHELTON

Spinney Hills Ward

SHOFIQL ISLAM CHOWDHURY
MUSTAFA MALIK

Stoneygate Ward

LUCY CHAPLIN
KIRK MASTER
AMINUR THALUKDAR

Troon Ward

DIANE CANK
BALJIT SINGH

Westcotes Ward

ANDY CONNELLY
SARAH RUSSELL

Fosse Ward

DAWN ALFONSO
TED CASSIDY

Humberstone and Hamilton Ward

VI DEMPSTER
GURINDER SINGH SANDHU

Knighton Ward

ROSS GRANT
DR LYNN MOORE

Western Ward

DR SUSAN BARTON
GEORGE COLE
MALCOLM UNSWORTH

Wycliffe Ward

HANIF AQBANY
MOHAMMED DAWOOD

LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Youth Voice Star Innovation Award - How will you hear me?

The Lord Mayor informed Council that the Youth Service had recently received a Youth Voice Star award from the British Youth Council. The award was received for the short film created with young people 'How Will You Hear Me?' which will be used as a training resource for professionals to help ensure that children and young people are listened to by professionals. The film was introduced by Bernadette Killeen Youth Development Worker and Youth Council Member Brahmpreet Gulati who explained the background, aims and impact of the work.

The Lord Mayor and Council thanked all those involved in the film and congratulated them on achieving the award.

Adult Social Worker

The Lord Mayor informed Council that Adult social worker Isabel Andrews had been shortlisted for a Social Worker of the Year award which recognise the achievements of the profession's most innovative and dedicated staff – Isabel was the first member of Leicester City Council staff to be shortlisted. The Lord Mayor and Council thanked Isabel for her work and send their best wishes for the forthcoming awards ceremony in London.

Interfaith Week

The Lord Mayor noted the recent Interfaith Week which had been a great success and thanked all those involved.

Captain Robert Gee

The Lord Mayor thanked all those involved in the moving and fitting ceremony commemorating the unveiling of the paving stone marking the events of 100 years ago when Captain Gee from Leicester was awarded the Victoria Cross.

Councillor Elaine Pantling

Following a recent by-election held in the Eyres Monsell Ward on 23rd November 2017 the Lord Mayor informed Council that Mrs Elaine Pantling had been duly and had made the necessary declaration of acceptance of office. The City Mayor introduced Councillor Pantling to the Council.

Fire & Emergency Evacuation Procedure

The Lord Mayor asked all present to note the evacuation procedures detailed on the Agenda for the meeting and asked anyone with any queries to speak to one of the Town Hall staff who would be able to assist.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

No declarations were made.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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

18. That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 5th October 2017, a copy having been circulated to each Member of the Council, be taken as read and that they be approved as a correct record.

STATEMENTS BY THE CITY MAYOR/EXECUTIVE

The Lord Mayor invited Councillor Russell and Councillor Clarke to make statements to Council.

Councillor Russell noted that the members of the Young People's Council in March 2016 would be stepping down at the end of 2017 and took the opportunity to thank them for their enormous contribution to the Council and the City through many different projects including through the films mentioned earlier in the meeting, work with scrutiny, involvement with Police Gold meetings and networks across the City, Council recruitment processes, involvement events, the 'Make your Mark' ballot, work combating hate crime including 'Reclaim Radical' and combating knife crime including through 'A Slice of Reality' projects and many other impacts making sure that young people are involved and their voice is heard within the city and at a national and international level. The Council joined Councillor Russell in thanking the young people for their work.

Councillor Clarke informed Council of the recent decision by NHS England not to decommission the children's heart surgery unit at Glenfield Hospital. In welcoming the news Councillor Clarke thanked the staff of the unit, the children and their families and all those individuals and Councils across the City and County who had campaigned fought to retain it including the former Deputy City Mayor Rory Palmer and Councillor Alfonso who had collected thousands of signatures for the petition. Councillor Clarke also thanked the Lord Mayor for the opportunity to make the statement. Council and the Lord Mayor added their congratulations and thanks for their work and it was suggested that a victory celebration be organised.

PETITIONS

PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None.

PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Councillor Chaplin presented a petition with 27 signatures in the following terms:
"We the undersigned request the use of ball calming measures at the East End of Upper Tichbourne Street. Due to the road layout it has become a ready-made football pitch for non-residents. Resulting in anti-social behaviour, that causes a constant disturbance to the well-being of local residents. Therefore one of the following counter measures are requested; (a) Signage (b) Electronic Surveillance (CCTV) (c) Additional parking spaces be added to break up the ready-made football pitch."

Councillor Chaplin noted that the text of the petition should read '...ball game calming...'

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

QUESTIONS

Lord Mayor: Questions from members of the public. May I ask all those members who are asking their questions to introduce themselves and present their question please.

Mr. Patel: Hello, hi. I am Vimal Patel. I am asking a question on behalf of Mansukh Pankhania and the question is: "If you merge the Rushey Mead library and the Rushey Mead recreation centre in Rushey Mead how are you going to ensure there is no reduction in size to both services"?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Master.

Councillor Master: Thank you Lord Mayor. I think this is an ongoing conversation that we are having with campaign groups and residents of Rushey Mead in regards to the decision to move the Rushey Mead library into the recreation centre. In regard to the particular question, I think it is the duty of both the officers of the City Council and the users of the Rushey Mead library and recreation centre to ensure that the service that we put in place going forward will be the best possible offer that we can do. There has always been a commitment on our side, myself personally and officers to continually consult with users of both services to make sure that the service that we do put in place going forward will be the best offer for Rushey Mead residents.

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

Mr. Patel: No I don't. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Question number 2 please.

Ms. Kotecha: Hello I am Ms. Kotecha and I am asking a question on behalf of Mrs. Rosalind Marsh. "Why did you ignore the consultation findings which supported keeping the Rushey Mead library and the community centre open"?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Master:

Councillor Master: Thank you Lord Mayor. Again thank you for the question. I think consultation is something that we have done extensively through transforming neighbourhood services over the past couple of years that I have been involved and previously Councillor Russell before that, and we have continued to engage members of the communities, user groups, everybody involved in the services and the buildings that we have been looking at around the process. I think in regards to the actual consultation it is important to make a distinction between the outcome of a consultation and it doesn't always meet what everybody wants and that includes ourself. We have had to do consultation previously where we have made decisions that we thought were right and then inherently they weren't the right decisions. But there is a process that we all need to be part of and I think with the Rushey Mead campaign group, the Rushey Mead residents, they have had this red line where

they are not going to accept the best decision going forward and they have continued to lobby on that basis and unfortunately consultation does not mean you will always get what you want and that is where we are.

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

Ms. Kotecha: No I do not.

Lord Mayor: OK. Thank you. Question number 3 please.

Mrs. Shah: My name is Mrs. Shah. Rushey Mead has very few community facilities only the library and recreation centre. Why is the Council removing the library, leaving us with only one recreation centre when there is a need for better access to computers and a separate children activity room as the existing library site and as other areas have already?

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Master please.

Councillor Master: Thank you Lord Mayor. I think in regards to the decision it is really important that the residents and the campaign group and everybody understand we are not closing the library service, we are moving the library service into the recreation building. The library service within Rushey Mead will be retained.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Master. Mrs. Shah do you have a supplementary question?

Mrs. Shah: Yes, I would like to ask him if they are moving the library and the recreation hall site, then the facility is being cut as it is we have hardly any facilities in that Ward. It is a deprived Ward as far as the facilities are concerned.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Master to reply.

Councillor Master: Thank you Lord Mayor and I think that is going back to my first point for the first question, that is why it is important that the campaign group and other residents focus now on the reconfiguration of the library and the recreation offer going forward to make sure that we get the best possible offer rather than going backwards and keep campaigning to keep both buildings open where a decision was made earlier at the beginning of this year prior to the consultation going back to September 2016.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Master. Question number 4 please.

Mr. Kotecha: My name is Parag Kotecha and I would like to ask the City Mayor why he is not listening to the local people of Rushey Mead who want to keep both their library and community centre open?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor please.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. A range of views have been expressed about the proposals which as the Assistant Mayor has said are part of a much wider review of facilities across the City and as part of that in the Rushey Mead area, as elsewhere, we have listened very carefully to what local people have been saying to us and have heard a variety of different views about what is the best way forward.

We are very much for keeping a facility in this area and services will not cease to be provided, but the way they are provided will change as a result of the need to save many millions of pounds but also the need to modernise services.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Do you have a supplementary question Mr. Kotecha?

Mr. Kotecha: Yes, I would like to ask the City Mayor could he please visit Rushey Mead so the residents can show you what our concerns are because I don't think they have been adequately conveyed to you.

Lord Mayor: City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I have visited Rushey Mead on many occasions over the years, I know both facilities very well indeed and I know that Councillor Master has engaged very much with local people, with those who are here this evening expressing one set of views and with others who have different views about the way forward, and I know that he will continue to engage with them and I will continue to visit Rushey Mead in the future as I have done in the past.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Question number 5 please.

Milly Kotecha: Hello I am Milly Kotecha. Does Councillor Russell agree with the Head Teachers in Rushey Mead that the closure of the existing library will be damaging for the children and young people in the area?

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Russell please.

Councillor Russell: Thank you my Lord Mayor and thank you Milly for the question. None of the Head Teachers in Rushey Mead have expressed any concerns to me at all around moving the library facility from the library into the recreation centre. Actually what we have seen in other parts of the city when we have made similar moves is that whilst there has been some initial concerns about how that will work it has actually resulted in often different, longer opening hours, more access to books at times when young people can use them. I think the other thing to say is, and this is particularly important this week when we have had over 150 authors sign a petition to government looking at school libraries because community facilities are really, really important and we have tried to protect our libraries network across the city making sure that young people right across the city can access our library service, but actually young people need good libraries in schools as well, both in primary and secondary school, and I think we have to make sure that we work with our schools to ensure that those can still be provided as well.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Russell. Do you have a supplementary question Miss. Kotecha?

Miss Kotecha: Yes I would like to ask will Councillor Russell please visit Rushey mead so the residents can show you our concerns.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Russell.

Councillor Russell: I am very happy to come and visit the schools and see what is going on. I have visited Rushey Mead community centre and library when I had this portfolio on a number of occasions so I know the facilities again really well, but happy at the invite of schools to come and visit. I try not to show up on the off

chance because they get a bit upset if I do that, so with an invite I am very happy to come along. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Russell. Question number 6 please.

Ms. Vyas: Good evening Rashmi Vyas, local resident at Rushey Mead area. Question for the City Mayor – “would you kindly tell us why he thinks it is fair to spend £400,000 on Southfields library and at the same time cutting back in the Rushey Mead area”?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Master please.

Councillor Master: Thank you Lord Mayor. I think Southfields library is a good example of the TNS programme actually because within that part of the city we closed 3 buildings and merged 3 different services within the Pork Pie library for a fantastic price of what we got in return for our money and a grade II listed building, iconic building, and part of the city which is now fantastically used and valued by local residents. It is a great example and I am glad you raised it of why the TNS programme is important to the City in terms of us being able to save money due to government cut backs but also ensure that services continue to be provided.

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

Ms. Vyas: Yes I do. Do you think it is fair to treat communities unequally?

Lord Mayor: Councillor Master.

Councillor Master: The simple answer to that is absolutely not and I don't think we as a Council have and I definitely know that I haven't as an individual.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Question 7, Miss. Vyas.

Ms. Vyas: “Is the City Mayor aware that the total cost in savings achieved by closing the library will be less than £15,000 per year and it will be devastating for the people of Rushey Mead. It seems to be a small cost”.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Master.

Councillor Master: Thank you Lord Mayor. I think as part of the transforming neighbourhood services programme we have targets to achieve in regards to saving money. Everybody is aware and it is no secret we are under some serious pressures in regards to government cut backs and we have to tighten our purse. The collective figure that is attributed to each area is part of an accumulative total and the total for transforming neighbourhood services is £1.7m which this figure is attributed to. So it may seem menial to some, however, it adds to a collective figure which is reflected across the whole of the city and in fairness the offer that Rushey Mead is getting on the return of merging both services is a good offer. I think it is just about time that the community groups with Elected Members, with the users and most have to be fair to them as well, started to talk about how we make this offer better for the community rather than going backwards all the time.

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

Ms. Vyas: Yes well as we have seen today the Glenfield Hospital Heart Unit

decision was reverted so it can be possible.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Master.

Councillor Master: Unfortunately this decision as I have already highlighted previously was made in January of this year so we were waiting on the Glenfield decision. We have had this decision over 10 months ago.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Question number 8 please.

Questioner: Hello this is for Councillor Master. How can the closure of the Rushey Mead library building and merger of its services with the Rushey Mead recreation centre be justified on grounds of running cost savings when both facilities spend 13p and 14p respectively per visitor, far lower than near all public facilities in the City.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Master.

Councillor Master: Thank you Lord Mayor. I am not sure where those figures have come from so I can't really comment on those further individual centres and users per visit, but as I just mentioned in the previous question the total that we need to save is part of a cumulative figure and that is why we run TNS in the way that we do and the principal behind the programme is to continue the services and to move the services into buildings so we can make those savings and I must make it clear again there is no emphasis as an authority to lose these services. The library service or the recreation it is the building that we are talking about not the services.

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

Questioner: Can I just clarify on the point about whether these figures came from. Those figures came from John Leach in an Executive Briefing to Peter Soulsby and I do have a supplementary question.

Lord Mayor: Yes carry on.

Questioner: So how can St. Matthew's Centre, Pork Pie Centre and Aylestone Leisure Centre be used as a model for merged services when all three buildings are at least 4 times bigger than the Rushey Mead recreation centre.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Master.

Councillor Master: Thank you Lord Mayor. I don't recognise those figures in any Exec paper to be totally honest but I am happy to be stand corrected. In regards again, we must focus on the services and not the buildings. The relocation that you mentioned in regard to Aylestone, we took Aylestone library out of a building that was away from a front facing part of the city and put it into Aylestone leisure centre and it has done fantastically well. User numbers have gone up, membership has gone up, it has been a huge success as have other mergers of buildings across the city. This is the footprint that we are basing our decisions on. But just in regards to, you know, just to kind of. I am aware this is the final question. In regards to this whole saga that has been going on around Rushey Mead, this consultation process started in September 2016. We are now here in November 2017 and we are still talking about a decision that was taken in January. All of these conversations have already happened. I have met with every single person that is in this room in

regards to Rushey Mead library and Rushey Mead recreation centre recently. As part of the consultation none of these representations were made, it has been a year in the making and still we are talking about historic decisions rather than trying to focus on what is going to happen going forward. This has been to full Council twice, it has been to Scrutiny twice, it has been to Labour Group on a number of occasions, it has been to a whole raft of different places. What I would have liked and what I am asking you to do now going forward is to concentrate on the decision that has been made and work with myself and officers and move forward and let's get the best possible offer for Rushey Mead like every other group and every other user of other parts of the city have done. I am happy for you to use all of this information, I am very aware you have got another public meeting on Friday based at Rushey Mead recreation centre which my Elected Member has arranged for yourselves. I hope you get something beneficial out of that and I would like you to contact me on Monday and say we are happy to move forward, can we discuss how we make this service the best service for Rushey Mead going forward.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. That ends the questions from members of the public. The next item is questions from Councillors. Can I request that where any Members have questions for tonight's meeting 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. Councillor Cole question number 1.

Councillor Cole: Thank you Lord Mayor. "The headline news from the Chancellor's budget on the 22nd of November is that austerity measures are still with us in terms of the government's financial strategy for the country. Can the City Mayor say how the Council has dealt with austerity over the past 10 years and how the Council will cope if the predictions are correct in that austerity will still be with us for decades to come?"

Lord Mayor: City Mayor please.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor and my thanks to Councillor Cole because this is the first opportunity I have had to comment to the Council on the impact of the budget. I think it is very clear from the budget that the government imposed cuts on local government in general and on Leicester are likely to continue an unprecedented period of austerity and public spending over the many generations that local authorities have existed in the sort of form that they are today. Our strategy for dealing with these prolonged attacks have been an approach of spending reviews which have been undertaken in terms of in-depth reviews of discrete areas of the Council's operations and as I think Members are aware to date some £37m of annual savings have been found through this process. Alongside of that we have adopted a managed reserves policy building up those reserves to soften the inevitable blows that are associated with that reduction of spending and we have managed as part of our reviews to contribute some £42m to reserves which have allowed us so far to mitigate those cuts, but as Members will be aware the availability of those reserves is going to be diminishing over the next 2 years and will by the end of the financial year after next be exhausted. I will say that this approach has been in contrast to many other local authorities up and down the land who have found themselves, Northamptonshire is one, not having enough reserves to balance their budgets next year; Birmingham recently reported they overspent by £49m last year with an adverse audit report. We have avoided those consequences but it has not been easy to do so. Looking to the future as we can

on the basis of what we know from the budget it is clear that the austerity that has been the hallmark of this government's approach over recent years is set to continue and although we have no indication of the grant that we will receive beyond 2019/2020 there is every indication that it will continue to diminish and that our situation and the situation of those who rely on our services will continue to be under enormous pressure, causing enormous hardship and distress in our city. I can only give an assurance to Councillor Cole and to Members of the authority that we as a Labour administration will do our best to ensure that the people of Leicester are in so far as we are able protected from the worst effects of what the Tory government is doing, and I know he like I will be working very hard indeed to ensure that at the next general election the Tories are out of power and we have a Labour government in power that is committed to end austerity.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. A supplementary Councillor Cole?

Councillor Cole: Thank you Lord Mayor. Can I thank the City Mayor for his response and also pre-empting my supplementary question which is – does the City Mayor therefore agree with me that the real end to austerity will come only when Labour is back in power for the many and not the few? And one of our priorities as Councillors is that we should go out and engage Labour Members in bringing about the downfall of this dreadful Conservative government.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor Councillor Cole will not be surprised that I agree with him entirely but I can't help remarking on the cynical laughter of the sole Liberal Democrat present since it was his party that supported the Tories in government and that began the austerity programme that has been so devastating for people in need in our city.

Lord Mayor: Thank you and welcome to Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: Thank you nice to be here.

Lord Mayor: Question number 2, Councillor Willmott.

Councillor Willmott: Thank you my Lord Mayor. "Could I ask Councillor Dempster to provide me with the budgets for aids and adaptations over the last 5 years?" Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Dempster please.

Councillor Dempster: Thank you Lord Mayor. Well given the very difficult financial position of the Council I am sure that you will all be really pleased to know that in 2013/14 we spent £4.1m; 2014/15 - £4m; 2015/16 - £4.4m and then for the last 2 years, both years, £4.7m each year. So you know given the financial position that we are in I am really pleased that we are continuing to invest in this area.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Dempster. A supplementary question Councillor Willmott?

Councillor Willmott: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I am interested in the figures and the fact that in the capital programme this evening there is a, I'm not quite sure it is unclear, but certainly there is £2m allocated. Whether that is a further £2m or not is not clear from the paper. In the light of the fact that we have the provision I would

ask her to revisit the case of my constituent, Mrs. S, who has been turned down by the Department and have a look at that case again in the light of the fact that we seem to have the money but actually the number of adaptations in this area of providing a ramp declined by nearly 50% last year according to the answer she gave me at the last Council meeting. So I would like her to have a look again at the case of Mrs. S please. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Dempster please.

Councillor Dempster: Thank you and I will happily look at the issue again, particularly in terms of meeting with Councillor Willmott and the person themselves because I recognise what a difficult situation this is. The point is that provision of ramps in terms of the actual decision is not about money. It is about an OT assessing what is going to be in the best interests of the resident, and sometimes that is about extra physiotherapy, it is about different sorts of adaptations, and that is actually why there has been a decrease in the number of ramps. Because what we have been saying to people is actually it is not helpful for you to simply be using a ramp, sometimes we have to give you the help and the encouragement and I know this myself in terms of my own disability that it would be so easy simply to use a ramp but in actual fact what is needed is physiotherapy and other adaptations to continue to push yourself. But I would be very, very happy to meet with the resident and with Councillor Willmott to explore with them the rationale for the decision that has been made.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Dempster. Question number 3, Councillor Willmott.

Councillor Willmott: Thank you my Lord Mayor. "Please would Councillor Dempster agree to ensure that the carers' strategy currently in preparation by officers is fully in place before proceeding with any changes to existing contracts and arrangements for both the support to carers and advocacy services?" Thank you my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Dempster please.

Councillor Dempster: OK. Thanks very much for this question because I think things have moved on quite a lot. In terms of the carers' strategy if we look at that first. There have been a number of local organisations, both voluntary organisations, Age UK, CLASP, for example. As well as statutory that have been involved in the development of the carers' strategy. I understand that it is now just about ready, the draft is ready and that it will be going out to formal consultation in January, from January through to March. Given the level of involvement we would not expect that there will be too many significant, if any significant changes to that draft strategy, and then that will then be agreed by June of next year. Now in terms of the contracts that you are talking about the Council may well remember that these are contracts that we went out to consult earlier this year so in the summer time. And then during that formal consultation we listened to what was being said and as a result that consultation was paused. Now in the intervening period what we are doing is we are: a) talking informally to the groups, that is groups like CLASP and Age UK that would be affected. So we are having those informal discussions and looking in the New Year to recommence formal consultation. But of course the contracts are not actually up until March of 2019. So there is a real difference in the timing of these 2 things. We have got plenty of time to engage with organisations both voluntary and statutory as well as the formal scrutiny process in the Council.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Dempster. A supplementary question Councillor Willmott?

Councillor Willmott: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I thank Councillor Dempster for the answer which I think is very helpful. Just for clarification can she give Council an assurance that the new contract arrangements will be informed by the strategy once it has been adopted by the Council.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Dempster.

Councillor Dempster: Yes, I mean when you are going out to procurement you are looking at what does the law say so in terms of the legislation, the Carers Act, as well as the carers' strategy and given that the organisations that are going to be involved in both the strategy and the procurement exercise, they have been involved in both of those areas, I would not see that there would be any difficulties. I would think that they would neatly overlap each other.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Question number 4, Councillor Willmott.

Councillor Willmott: Thank you my Lord Mayor. "Please will the City Mayor agree to include a new library and community centre for Rushey Mead Ward in the capital programme?" Thank you my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor as already discussed this evening and as Councillor Willmott is aware the unprecedented budget challenge that we have on our revenue budget is one that is demanding a strategic and planned response across the city, and the transforming neighbourhood services programme has looked across the city and has looked at ways at which we can reduce our revenue burden as well as invest in providing facilities that are fit for the 21st century. That is what has resulted from the review of the services in Rushey Mead and the recommendation on that has been very clear. That the sensible way forward is one that sees the current library and community facilities merged together and I have no doubt made the same success as such motives have been in other parts of the city.

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

Councillor Willmott: Thank you my Lord Mayor. The City Mayor will have heard Councillor Master's advice to the people here this evening from Rushey Mead that they should give up their campaign and move on. In the light of the tremendous and successful campaign waged for over a year by the people of the city to keep the Glenfield Heart Unit open, does he not think that the people of Rushey Mead should continue with their campaign and that Councillor Master's advice is not very helpful in these circumstances. Thank you my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor it is not for me to advise Councillor Willmott's constituent but I would advise him that he might suggest to them that positive engagement with Councillor Master and with the Council in general about the future of the facility might produce the same dramatically improved service and use that has been produced in other parts of the city and I would encourage him to

encourage them to engage positively and to ensure that the capital investment that we are prepared to make in the community centre is used, is used soon and produces the same results that it has in other parts of the city.

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

Councillor Waddington: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I would like to ask the City Mayor "What will be the impact on Leicester of the Chancellor's autumn budget?"

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I did struggle to find some positive elements within it for Leicester. I think we managed to discover that there is a possibility of some support through the housing infrastructure fund and perhaps a little help as a result of some of the things that have been said about business rates. But actually the message of the Chancellor's statement and his budget is one that is gloomy in the extreme as I have indicated in my response to Councillor Cole. What is particularly appalling is the entire failure of the Chancellor to address the issue of adult social care. It is not just in Leicester, up and down the land councils of all political persuasions are saying that the national funding crisis due to the inflationary pressures on adult social care and the aging population is unsustainable. This has been said by people of all political persuasions and I think particularly by the Association of Directors of Social Services who are really at the sharp end of trying to deliver services and the failure of the Chancellor to address that, probably because the government is entirely preoccupied with Brexit, is a national scandal.

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

Councillor Waddington: Thank you Lord Mayor. Yes I support the City Mayor's assessment of the Chancellor's budget but I would like to ask about one aspect of it that caught my attention which was the story in the Guardian which talks about the regions billion pound boost for the north and the midlands. This indicates that money will be spent in metro areas, areas with metro mayors, 6 in the country in the midlands and the north, but unfortunately does not include the east midlands. So the billions of pounds that we need are going elsewhere and I wondered whether the City Mayor had considered discussing with Nottingham and Derby City Councils how we might become an area that would be eligible for such large handouts. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor, I do work very closely with authorities across the midlands, not just in the east midlands and have recently met with political leaders in both the east and the west midlands to discuss a whole range of issues. I was today for example in Nottingham talking with the Secretary of State for Transport about the need for investment in the midland mainline and I will continue to make that case jointly with other local authorities. I think though that when Councillor Waddington suggests that we might benefit from some form of metropolitan association I think the geography and indeed the politics of the east midlands mitigate against that. We were of course you know identified as a non-metropolitan area at the time of local government reorganisation in 1973 and it is still the case that unlike the west midlands we don't have a massive conurbation. We do have a mixed geography and mixed political affiliation and leadership. I will continue to work across party lines and across the east and the west midlands to seek to make

sure that our voice is heard, but I am afraid that the government has identified some areas of the country for favourable treatment, more to do with the political advantages that they see from doing so than to do with their need.

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

Councillor Waddington: Thank you Lord Mayor. I think Sarah is to answer this so “Could the Deputy Mayor tell me if the City Council supports the proposal that Leicester should aim to become a UNESCO learning city?”

Lord Mayor: Councillor Russell please.

Councillor Russell: Thank you my Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Waddington for the question. Yes absolutely. The work that you put into train to develop the idea of Leicester becoming a UNESCO learning city will indeed be taken forward. The proposal is around the education strategic partnership leading on the formal learning element. The LLEP being best placed to lead around the business learning element. Where we take it forward and regarding the community learning element I am going to be talking to colleagues about how we best work with our voluntary sector and with our adult learning resource to make sure that the community learning element is properly woven in to that bid as we seek to go forward to put ourselves forward as a UNESCO learning city. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Russell. A supplementary question?

Councillor Waddington: I just want to say thank you to Councillor Russell for her answer which is very encouraging and just to say don't forget please LASALS and their expertise in these areas.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Question number 7, Councillor Waddington.

Councillor Waddington: Thank you my Lord Mayor. “In view of the delegated powers given to the City Mayor for the capital programme 2018/19 and 2019/20 could the City Mayor seriously consider including the following items in the programme: An adventure playground in Beaumont Leys to provide for the large number of children who need this facility and part funding with the LLEP a textile training centre to raise the quality and productivity of Leicester's textile industry and help to address the sweat shop problems that Leicester is experiencing?”

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Waddington. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: Thank you my Lord Mayor. My Lord Mayor the existing adventure playgrounds in the city have a very proud record of being community initiatives and community led and as yet I have not heard proposals coming from the Beaumont Leys area for such a community initiative and such a community led project. Were there to be one of course we would listen sympathetically to them and see whether we could put capital into it. But, and it is a big but, we've addressed it again this evening and we are all intensively aware of it, were it to be something that required revenue support that would I have to say would be a very problematic issue for us because we are already investing very heavily in adventure playgrounds across the city in their revenue and in the capital renewal of them and I know we would have to think very carefully before taking on another one. But if there are such initiatives coming from the community in Beaumont Leys I am sure that my colleagues would be very happy to hear of them. With regard to the second part of Councillor Waddington's questions, I know that she has herself championed the textile industry

in Leicester and I am very grateful for the fact that she has raised it again this evening. We do have as a city a proud and very long textile heritage but we also, I believe, and I know it is a view that she shares with me, have a textiles future as well as a city. Increasingly textiles and garment manufacturing in the city are seeing a resurgence. Issues associated with that and skills, this is associated with them in terms of ethical compliance but nonetheless they are a part of Leicester's future and an important part and we have as a result of that undertaken a feasibility study for a textile skills training centre that has been completed and we have been talking with potential private sector leaders particularly an organisation who managed the successful Fashion Enter training hub in London. I think Councillor Waddington will be aware of it, and we are intending another visit to Fashion Enter in December to move the project forward. I will keep Councillor Waddington and other Members informed of the outcomes of that and I hope will be able to give the Council, before too long, some news of how we might take forward a similar project here.

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

Councillor Waddington: Yes I do Lord Mayor. In 2 parts I suppose because there were 2 parts to my question. I am absolutely delighted that progress is being made on the training centre and the textile field and I hope to see some figures attached to that so I suppose I am asking does that mean the City Council is going to make a contribution towards the setting up of such an establishment and is that coming from the capital programme. And on the first part of my question I was again pleased to see that the City Mayor was open to the idea. I can assure him there is support in the community and I am asking him therefore whether he would agree to a feasibility study being undertaken to look at the possibility and the means by which an adventure playground can be provided in Beaumont Leys since it is an area of considerable disadvantage and probably the one area of disadvantage in the city which does not have an adventure playground available for its children. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor. I can assure Councillor Waddington it is not the only area of the city that does not have immediate access to adventure playgrounds, there are others as well. And I would just say again if there is a strong move from the local community to have such a facility in the Beaumont Leys area I would encourage Councillor Waddington to arrange for them to meet together and then to meet with me or my colleagues to discuss how it might be taken forward. I am very happy to talk with them but I cannot guarantee either the capital and particularly the revenue.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Question number 8, Councillor Cleaver.

Councillor Cleaver: Good evening my Lord Mayor. "Would the City Mayor explain why green spaces are included in the local plan please?"

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor in fact I welcomed Councillor Pantling a little earlier on and it was actually during her election campaign that I became aware of the very misleading propaganda that was being produced by the Liberal Democrats and I think it is notable that the sole Liberal Democrat is not in his place at the moment. I don't know whether that is entirely coincidental, but perhaps he does not want to

know just how misleading his Liberal Democrat candidate was during that campaign and the extent to which he sought to pretend that he had the understanding that the Council was going to build on school playing fields I think it was particularly. I can assure Members that it is not our intention to build on school playing fields and I have talked here in this chamber before about the process of the local plan and I did explain at the time that we have included within the consultation material all of the large areas of open space in the city simply because were I to exclude some and leave others in I would have been I think accused, probably quite rightly, of pre-empting the outcome of the discussion and it is a question of you can't win on this one but I think it was the right thing to do to leave everything in to hear what people have to say and at the end of the day to take out and to rule out what will inevitably be the case the sorts of school playing fields that the Liberal Democrat candidate was trying to spread scare stories about. I can assure her we are not going to build on Rolleston school playing fields.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Do you have a supplementary question Miss. Cleaver?

Councillor Cleaver: No my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Question number 9 Councillor Cleaver again.

Councillor Cleaver: The City Mayor has actually just answered my second question so I don't now have a second question, but I am really pleased at the comprehensive reply that he gave because it is really important especially when there are elections that the information that we are giving out to people is truthful. The interesting thing was a lot of young people in Eyres Monsell who Councillor Pantling and I spoke to were just laughing at the content that they were reading because they knew that as Ward Councillors we would have petitioned the Council and got every family in Eyres Monsell against it, so my Lord Mayor I don't have a second question I just wanted to add that to it. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Fair enough. Thank you. We move on to question number 10 Councillor Riyait please.

Councillor Riyait: Thank you my Lord Mayor. "It has been reported that 31 rough sleepers were found during the recent homelessness action day with Action Homeless, DMU and the City Council. How many of these rough sleepers were not known to the City Council before the count?" Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Connelly please.

Councillor Connelly: My thanks to Councillor Riyait for his question as it gives me the opportunity that on the night of the 7th November in the early hours of the 8th November there was a count in the city, an extensive count, over 120 volunteers worked across our city to identify rough sleepers. I would particularly like to thank all those volunteers from the housing associations, registered providers, voluntary sector and the large number of students from both DeMontfort and Leicester Universities, the Council's own homelessness team, supported by the police and fire service and I would particularly like to thank Councillors Master and Clarke who also volunteered to go out on what was a fairly bleak and damp night. In respect of the 31 rough sleepers who were counted during that particular count, 14 were known to us, the other 17 we genuinely don't know whether they were known to us because the 17 were asleep and were in sleeping bags and bedding and therefore we were advised not to wake up persons. Perhaps understandably not to wake up

rough sleepers in the early hours of the morning. So the other 17, and we could not identify because very simply it was a count not an interrogation.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Connelly. A supplementary question?

Councillor Riyait: Yes thank you. I mean it was really good to see that those organisations working together on that. In terms of those that Councillor Connelly identified that he is not sure whether they were known, is there any follow up action that would be taken either by the City Council or other organisations to see whether we can assist those people. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Connelly please.

Councillor Connelly: Yes I can confirm that we are not the lead organisation, Action Homeless are and they are drawing up an action plan but in the meantime our homelessness team will continue to engage with rough sleepers, persuade them wherever possible to use services and indeed on the night of the count 2 of the rough sleepers were persuaded to access our services and since then 1 further rough sleeper who previously would not access our services is now accessing our services, so of those 31 we know at least 3 who are now in secure accommodation.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Connelly. Question number 11, Councillor Riyait please.

Councillor Riyait: Thank you my Lord Mayor. "A number of residents have asked me whether the Council pension fund invest in fossil fuel companies?" Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Clarke please.

Councillor Clarke: Thank you my Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Riyait for asking the question, genuinely. It is important to understand that the City Council isn't responsible for investment decisions of the pension fund. That lies as a statutory responsibility as I understand it with the County Council. I know that the pension fund invests directly in shares. Their investment decisions being taken by fund managers. It gets quite complex but these funds attract a stock market indices and it is a personal disappointment to me that some of those investments will be in fossil fuels. As you are probably aware the representations on this matter should be made through the representatives on the Pension Fund Committee by the current trustees, those being Councillor Bajaj and Councillor Moore and previously with unbounding enthusiasm by Councillor Kitterick. But what I would say is that following your previous correspondence with myself and other Members is that I do think that we do need to, even though it is a very complex situation and it isn't in our control, we do need to look at our attitude to ethical investments and I do want to discuss with Councillor Moore and Councillor Bajaj what their role might be as trustees but also wider within the local authority through Councillor Myers and his responsibility for social value. I have tasked officers in the Council to look at our role and our opportunities and I would be grateful if Members would wish to come forward to discuss that more with me because I think there is a discussion to be had. There are many institutions in the country that have either divested or partially divested from fossil fuels including some ecclesiastical organisations but also councils as well and I think that even if it is quite complex for us to do so we should at least be looking at it and making our views known about it because it is a question of ethics and I think that as a Labour Group we have strong ethics and we should be looking to stand by those.

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

Councillor Riyait: Yes thank you my Lord Mayor. Thanks Councillor Clarke for that. I just wonder if he could provide some of that information to Councillors so that we can communicate that back to residents so they can see that obviously we are looking to see what we can do. I understand it is a particularly complex area and I don't purport to understand much about that. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Clarke please.

Councillor Clarke: Yes Councillor Riyait is referring to a slight delay in my responses from Members on this and I am absolutely happy to clear that up. The reason for that is the environment team who are looking into this for me hosted the low carbon lecture last week. We hosted also a summit in the day with people holding my portfolio from as far north as Newcastle and far south as Southampton talking about this and many other issues to do with low carbon and air quality. So there is as you know quite a lot of pressure on our officers a reduced number of officers at the moment, but I promise you once they have come back with their findings I will convey those to Members so thank you very much for raising this this evening Councillor Riyait.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Clarke. Question number 12, Councillor Kitterick please.

Councillor Kitterick: Thank you very much Lord Mayor. "Given that there has been little opportunity to contribute ideas to the capital programme due to be agreed this evening, will the City Mayor agree to hold a wide consultation and to include the following as part of that consultation. Funding to build an establishment such as the one operated by St Mungo's at Hope Gardens in London which is for people who are isolated from society. Funding for an energy companies such as the one like Nottingham City Council. 10,000 capacity purpose build arena venue, a properly established municipal housing company to build accommodation in the city?"

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

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor this is the first of three questions in front of us this evening that begin with the identical formula in the first paragraph and it has been asserted by the questioners that they have not had an adequate opportunity to bring forward proposals for the capital programme. I would only say in response to that I don't know quite where they have been for the last 6 years because over those 6 years that I have been there we have had innumerable opportunities to debate the content of capital programmes. We have debated our future plans on numerous occasions in public and in the privacy of our political group. And the capital programme that is in front of Members this evening is one that that has been the subject of very considerable development. It is one that reflects commitments we have made in our manifesto and it is one that reflects the needs of the city as we have jointly identified them today. The capital programme has been the subject of scrutiny and political debate throughout the period of my tenure as Mayor and most of the items on the combined shopping lists that the Members are putting forward this evening have never been mentioned. Taken together the contents of these 3 shopping lists total probably tens if not hundreds of millions of pounds of capital investment. They also have attached to them a totally unrealistic revenue bill that probably also runs to tens of millions of pounds. I would say to the 3 Members who have clearly collaborated in putting forward these questions that they might be

better to collaborate in the process of scrutiny, better to collaborate in the process of political debate within their party and perhaps occasionally have discussions with me and my Executive colleagues.

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

Councillor Kitterick: Yes my Lord Mayor. Would the City Mayor confirm that the capital programme briefing was given to the Labour Group on the 6th November. Will the City Mayor confirm that the Overview Scrutiny Committee to which not all Members were invited then took place on the 20th November and therefore the timing of those actual meetings and that the Economic Development and Transport Scrutiny Committee has not met since the capital programme ... so has had no opportunity to scrutinise this element of the programme. Can I ask that the City Mayor not this year, because we have had 2 weeks to consider it. I know God created the world in 6 days but I think we need slightly longer to discuss how we are going to spend tens of millions of pounds in the capital programme. I would say there is a lot of committees, but there is also a lot of commitment to spending in the budget for us tonight and can I ask in the generosity of spirit in not wishing to reject our list which may work out and may not work out that these be considered in the coming 12 months.

Lord Mayor: City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I would be happy to consider these in an appropriate place in the months ahead, but Councillor Kitterick asks me to confirm some dates. Will he confirm that in the 3 weeks between the initial proposal and today, I think it is actually slightly more than 3 weeks, but will he confirm that he has at no time made any contact with me about any of these proposals or indeed any of the proposals that are within the capital programme and will he also confirm that he has not made any contact with any of my colleagues about them either.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Question number 13, Councillor Kitterick please.

Councillor Kitterick: My Lord Mayor the City Mayor asked me to confirm. I would confirm that I got details of the capital programme.....

Lord Mayor:could you please refer to your... Councillor Kitterick question number 13 please.

Councillor Kitterick: ...I received the details of the capital programme..

Lord Mayor: Councillor Kitterick you have received, Councillor Kitterick with due respect you have received a response to your previous question so can you please move on to question number 13. Thank you.

Councillor Kitterick: Lord Mayor will the Cabinet member for housing update the Council with progress on installing sprinkler systems in the 6 residential tower blocks owned by the City Council.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Connelly please.

Councillor Connelly: Groundhog day isn't it. Right I can confirm we have appointed a fire safety adviser who is carrying out inspections of our blocks. We intend to start installing part of the refurbishment at Maxfield House in January 2018

and we will commence the installation of the first sprinkler system. I can't give any date in respect of when we will be doing the other blocks because we are still waiting the outcome of the inspections by the fire safety adviser.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Connelly. Supplementary question Councillor Kitterick?

Councillor Kitterick: Can I thank Councillor Connelly for his generous response to our suggestion for capital spending.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Would you like to respond sir?

Councillor Connelly: It has gone straight over my head, if he would like to repeat the question.

Lord Mayor: It is a thank you. We can move on to question 14 then. Councillor Willmott.

Councillor Willmott: Thank you my Lord Mayor. "Please could the City Mayor give Council a list of the projects to be funded by the economic action plan?" I would refer him to his previous answer to this question at the last Council meeting where he listed many of the projects funded already by the economic action plan but gave no indication of those that are proposed for the next £9m. I know there is an amendment to the resolution tonight which he does say he is going to give us some more ideas so I look forward to hearing them either now or then. Thank you my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor it is indeed the case as Councillor Willmott has reminded us that the economic action plan has been responsible it is estimated for some 5,000 jobs, 900 apprenticeships, 370 work placements and a very considerable amount of investment in the city. But it is also the case that I have sought in the proposals that I am making this evening to be much more specific about the way in which it be spent in the period ahead and although I have done so there is some £9m that is in the terms of a policy provision and that is the same sort of approach that we are adopting to the provision of much of the school classrooms and both primary and secondary schools that are included in here. They are not as yet fully specified but as I replied to Councillor Willmott the other evening it will include future work space places, it will include investment that will bring additional homes and workspaces potentially in the Waterside area, it will enable us to look at the delivery of office space as bringing jobs into the city and at an appropriate time there will be opportunities for Members both in public and in private to consider the scheme that has been brought forward. The total shopping list for those is very considerably more than the £9m that has been made available and obviously a degree of prioritisation will be necessary with that as it will be with other aspects of the policy provisions.

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

Councillor Willmott: Yes my Lord Mayor. I understand what the City Mayor has said about the nature of the policy provision but can I have an assurance from him that we will at some point have a definitive list that will be subject to scrutiny which will involve all Members of this Council. Thank you my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I can assure Councillor Willmott that this will be brought to Scrutiny in the normal way and to our political party in the normal way.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Willmott for question number 15 please.

Councillor Willmott: Yes my Lord Mayor. "There has indeed been little opportunity to contribute to this minishiation or this iteration I should say of the capital programme. In fact we had received it in a finished form very late in the day. So I would ask the City Mayor if he would agree to hold a wider consultation, he has the delegated power given to him to do so in tonight's resolution and in doing so include specific items which are indicated a general provision for instance there is a sum set aside to deal with leisure centres but particularly include Spence Street swimming baths. Perhaps a new item would be a conference centre in the city which has been discussed for a long time, an art gallery which I have raised many times before so this is not new to the City Mayor, perhaps a leisure centre for Hamilton and indeed measures to improve road safety which are again policy provisions but particularly on Green Lane Road because this is an issue which has come up many, many times. Thank you my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Willmott. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor. I have already in a sense answered this in my response to Councillor Kitterick. I just would reinforce the point that these may be very good ideas but bringing them up in the context of questions at a Council meeting is not a constructive way of engaging in actually developing these projects and bringing them forward in a form that would enable us to take a real view on them. I have to say the prospect of investing in a large conference centre is not one that I anticipate to be realistic in the present climate. The prospect of developing an art gallery is not one that I would suggest would appeal very much to the neighbourhoods of the city in the present economic climate. At a time when we are talking about, you know, investment in libraries and community centres in Rushey Mead for example I would be very surprised if the people of Rushey Mead felt that an art gallery was an appropriate priority.

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

Councillor Willmott: I do my Lord Mayor. I have not suggested that these would necessarily be priorities but they would be things which we can think about. Of course the art gallery is indeed a manifesto commitment of the Labour Party. It is surprising it is not actually being considered. I think my Lord Mayor that it would be helpful to consider these things in an open and transparent way. I met with Councillor Master and Peter Soulsby in May 2016 when I first put forward the idea for a new library and recreation centre in Rushey Mead. That was done in private and we got absolutely nowhere hence these questions here tonight in a transparent, open and public way, and I would hope the City Mayor takes them in that spirit. They are there as ideas, they contribute towards the overall thinking of this Council and I hope that he will include them. Thank you my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I have already expressed my views about the

mechanism of bringing these items forward and my scepticism about the particulars.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Question 16, Councillor Cole please.

Councillor Cole: Thank you Lord Mayor. “Does the City Mayor agree with me that we here in Leicester should congratulate Prince Harry for embracing diversity”?

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Cole. City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I think we should indeed congratulate Prince Harry and Megan his fiancé on their engagement. I think you know it is a bit of bright news and I think it has been very welcomed. It is good news. And I have to say in congratulating them how particularly impressed I have been by her interviews and her commitments to the issues of equality and diversity. They have been very interesting and very refreshing. She does strike me as very much a woman of the 21st century.

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

Councillor Cole: Yes Lord Mayor and can I thank the City Mayor for his response and just to make the point that the City Mayor made quite clearly of course Prince Harry is marrying an intelligent and beautiful humanitarian woman. Does the City Mayor agree with me that such a union is what the country needs right now to echo the fact that the vast majority of the United Kingdom’s population believe in the rich diversity of our country and the benefits that it brings to our country and that is a good counter for the upshot in racism and bigotry that followed the Brexit decision and the extreme right, right wing racist, fascist and misogynistic behaviour of the so called Leader of the free world.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: I agree with that entirely my Lord Mayor. I mean certainly we as a city on many occasions talked about our pride and the diversity of our City and the diversity of our nation. I think that this perhaps this engagement is something that is in a sense symbolic of the sort of country that we would like to see in the 21st century and although it is difficult to say that it is entirely an antidote to Trump’s tweets it does show that not everybody is as stupid as he is.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Question 17, Councillor Chaplin.

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Hopefully all the women in this chamber and elsewhere are women of the 21st century too. “How many staff in the Council are actually employed through outsourced contracts and what areas of work are they employed in”?

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor this is a deceptively simple question and it is one to which I can give a very complicated answer but it is actually in the question really that the difficulty arises. Of course the staff who are employed through outsourced contracts are not in the Council and that is the very nature of this and are therefore not necessarily easily countable. I just have to give the example, very large example, of the Biffa contract you know the refuse collection contract. Now clearly that is a Council service but in the sense what we monitor is the quality of the

service. What we don't necessarily have an accurate count of is I think the 200 plus people who work for it, and of course like other authorities we have numerous contracts not all of them as large as that where services are provided for us on an outsourced basis and I am afraid it is not easy to count is the short answer. I would be happy to talk with Lucy if she wants to refine the question I would be happy to get some research done but I cannot give a definitive answer because of the inherent contradiction in the question that those who are employed in work on our behalf are not in the Council and therefore are not in our count.

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

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. It is indeed a complicated issue and there have been a lot of concerns about people who are actually contracted to one company where they are actually managed and work within another company and particularly in public services that can be problematic, and I am sure the City Mayor will agree that terms and conditions of work and clear lines of management are important to delivering quality public services, and will he give reassurances that the Council will be working to reduce the number of outsource services so that they can be delivered by employees who have got proper contracts of work with proper terms and conditions. An example being adult social care. It is shameful the contracts that those people work under.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor as I have indicated you know like all local authorities and it is true across the political spectrum a number of our services are provided for us by others, sometimes in the third sector and sometimes in the private sector and it does behoove us to do all we can to ensure, notwithstanding the fact that they are not our direct employees, that they are employed under appropriate terms and conditions and ones that we would find defensible. But it is sometimes more easy than others and I know it is something that colleagues in the past have wrestled with. I would say though that I think we as a Labour controlled Council here in Leicester have a very good record of ensuring not only that those things that are put out are, as far as we are able to control them, delivered in a way that respects the rights of the workers and delivers the service that we would expect the people of Leicester to get. But also actually to keep many things directly within our control and management that many other authorities including many Labour authorities have actually put out to the private or the third sector. I think for example of our sports and leisure services. We have made a very firm commitment, despite quite a lot of encouragement from others to put them out, we have made a very firm commitment to keeping them in-house to making sure that we invest in them and that we continue to manage them and of course to seek to work down the revenue costs of doing them given the sort of pressures we have been talking about earlier on. But we would be happy to talk with Lucy about any particular examples that she has got that she thinks we ought to follow up but I am afraid as I said early on I find it very difficult to give a general answer because obviously numbers are not counted in that way.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Question number 18 Councillor Chaplin.

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor and I know that the City Mayor is going to speak in the same terms probably as he has addressed others tonight, but what I am asking is "If the City Mayor and the Executive will agree to consult more widely again in the future about the detail of the capital programme and I have to

say that these items I believe I have raised previously: Eid lights for St. Stephens Road, reconfiguring of some street blocks in Highfields to help local policing, that is part of the petition that I presented and I have spoken to officers about that; develop jointly with health and police services a more flexible facility for people with complex mental health needs who find themselves homeless. At Scrutiny last night the Chief Executive of the LPT said that he was interested in having discussions about that: developing Cedar Road Park as a space and a venue for local youth. We have discussed that before, and adapting the old Mayfield Road centre for use as a community centre which I have raised on many occasions.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I will give a similar answer initially because the common opening paragraph to this is based on the mistaken assertion that Members have not had an opportunity to contribute to the capital programme and I would say again that the capital programme is something that is developed over a considerable period of time and very significantly as a result of the sort of discussions that Lucy said we have had on these issues, that others have had on other issues and will find them included in this capital programme and I am quite prepared to be persuaded by her and by others – I know my colleagues are as well – that some of the things that have been mentioned this evening could be included in future capital programmes. But I would say again it is on the mistaken hypothesis that there hasn't been any chance to influence the capital programme. Frankly others have taken the opportunity to influence the capital programme and have been successful in so doing and I think that if the Members who have raised these question in this way were to reflect on their engagement in the process, I would suggest they might conclude, as I conclude, it isn't that they have not had the chance it is that they have not taken the chance.

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

Councillor Chaplin: I do and I feel roundly told off which is the way it seems to have gone this evening. What I would say is that we know there has been a very successful scheme of really constructive and ongoing discussions around capital spending on highways programmes and with Councillors across the Council and that has been brought in by the City Mayor and it has worked really, really well. So what I would really like is an undertaking that similar levels of consultation will be organised for all aspects of capital funding for Councillors because obviously they know their areas and they know what people are saying to them in their Wards. But also they will have a view

Lord Mayor:question please.

Councillor Chaplin: ...yes excuse me Lord Mayor you didn't actually stop Councillor Cleaver when she was making a statement so with respect I would just like to finish my question. So I would like it if he could also welcome the opinion of Ward Councillors for their views because their residents also use services right across the city. So we not only have something to say about our own local areas but we do have relevant information for services across the city. Thank you my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor. I would just say and I think other Members will bear

me out on this that when Members ask to speak with me or one of my colleagues about matters of concern to them whether specific to their Wards or more general they get that opportunity to do it. We sought on some specific things to actually initiate some of that discussion but frankly the responsibility lies on both sides. Of course we should give the opportunities but there is also the responsibility of individual Members to try and make opportunities and make sure their voices are heard and I would say to the 3 who raised these questions this evening that they do need to look at the way in which they engage in discussion, whether they initiate meetings, whether they make the case and not expect everything to come from the top down.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Question 19, Councillor Chaplin.

Councillor Chaplin: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I am initiating things here hopefully. What powers does the Council have and how often are they used to check that landlords comply with regulations particularly concerning discrimination against potential tenants who are registered disabled and have an assistance dog?

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Connelly please.

Councillor Connelly: My thanks for the question. Unfortunately the Council has absolutely no powers at all to monitor landlord's compliance with equality requirements. If a prospective tenant feels that they have been discriminated against under the Equality Act then they need to pursue that through the relevant tribunal. There are services available to them but I do repeat unfortunately as a Council we have absolutely no powers in this particular area.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. A supplementary question Councillor Chaplin?

Councillor Chaplin: Yes my Lord Mayor and I am actually going to speak slowly because I just need to be careful about what I say so just forgive me if I take a little longer. So it is interesting to hear what Councillor Connelly has said because I wondered if there could be a scheme developed that is similar to the smiley face scheme for the hygiene for takeaways and food outlets but for private landlords. Given that a lot of the housing solutions that people are being directed to are with private landlords it would be helpful for people to know whether or not that landlord is potentially going to be somebody who meets certain standards and I think that being part of this is about people who are registered partially sighted or blind need special requirements so they do need to have an assistance dog it is not a pet and they also need to stay within their familiar neighbourhoods so in terms of our own services my Lord Mayor can we not adapt our services so that instead of being told they have to widen their search area, there is some sympathy towards the fact that actually they need to stay near where they know because otherwise they won't be able to get around easily.

Lord Mayor: So what is your question please.

Councillor Chaplin: I have asked if a scheme could be developed for landlords along the same lines as the smiley faces for hygiene and food outlets? Thank you.

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

Councillor Connelly: The reality is I understand the question from Councillor Chaplin. The reality is that the only way that we can introduce a smiley face system is through a landlord licensing scheme and we have a government that is opposed

to landlord licensing schemes. We are looking at the issue of trying to see whether it is possible to implement one within the city, but ultimately even if we want to progress down that route, ultimately we would need the government to approve such a scheme and the government is proving to be very loath to approve such schemes and therefore I think it is unlikely that we will be able to pursue a smiley face scheme on a sort of regulatory basis. Obviously we could try and introduce one on a voluntary basis but the reality is that we don't have the resource in order to be able to go and inspect private landlord properties across the city. The resource required would be quite significant. Very simply in these present financial times it would be very difficult to justify investing in such a service.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Connelly. Question number 20 Councillor Chaplin

Councillor Chaplin: My Lord Mayor given that I initiated this at the previous Council and this week I have now got a date I am withdrawing that question. Thank you.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Then we move on to question number 21, Councillor Grant please.

Councillor Grant: Thank you Lord Mayor. "Following the welcome decision to replace highways trees at a faster pace acknowledging their importance to the local environment, has consideration been given to their ability to capture particulates and contribute to local air quality?"

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Clarke please.

Councillor Clarke: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Action 16 of the city's air quality action plan states that we aim to use trees and plants to reduce air pollution, we work very closely with the expertise of particularly Professor Monks and Professor Lee at the University of Leicester in supporting us to identify how we might do this. It has been considered as part of the draft tree strategy that is going to be presented to Council this evening, and it recognises that well placed trees, and I will emphasise well placed trees can have a positive impact to help provide good air quality by filtering out pollution and by trapping particulates in the leaves and branches. Since 2000 however the particulate matter 10, we have not exceeded that at any of our monitoring stations so we don't have an issue with that particular particulate, I say that slowly, what I should also say is that there is evidence emerging that poorly placed trees can have a negative impact on air quality. I am not an expert in this matter but as I understand it the canopy can kind of hold poor air in certain places and have a negative impact. So we really have to recognise the expertise, not only of the University of Leicester but the local authority in advising us on where best to place trees. The research that comes out will help to inform over the next many years how we adapt to that research. Finally we are working with the University of Leicester on a green wall which will provide us with useful information relating to how we push forward on such initiatives in that area too. So there is a great deal of research emerging and we need to be cognisant of that research but also to recognise the great benefits as we will talk about later that well placed trees can have in our city and I will conclude by saying that I hope that Councillor Grant does not have cause to go out and have a go at people in the street about knocking down well placed trees with the City Mayor as he did on Shanklin Drive some months ago.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Clarke. Do you have a supplementary

question?

Councillor Grant: Yes thank you Lord Mayor. Thank you for that. I know I ask regular questions about trees and this question was put in before I received the tree strategy earlier today. Just in response to the useful answer that the Assistant Mayor has given, can the Council publish the advice on appropriate use of trees and which trees to use so that private landlords can be encouraged to adopt that methodology and assist in this area.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Clarke please.

Councillor Clarke: Councillor Grant has asked a very interesting and important question. I think the answer to that in short is yes. 50% of the trees in the city are managed by the City Council but I know there is another 50% that we need to support the management of and his suggestion is a very useful one and I hope that he will forward that into our consultation process that will start this evening.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Clarke. Councillor Grant for question number 22 please.

Councillor Grant: “Has the City Mayor considered allowing zero and low emission vehicles such as electric and plug in hybrids to use bus lanes, encouraging people to make the switch to vehicles that have no or marginal impact on the local air quality?”

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Clarke please.

Councillor Clarke: Thank you again for the linked question around air quality and raising this issue this evening Councillor Grant. The short answer is that we have looked at whether this would be something that we would want to forward. Councillor Willmott when he was chair of the Scrutiny Commission last year considered this and looked at evidence around that and I was very aware of that evidence and reflected on that evidence. It is true that Nottingham are embarking on a process of delivering a similar scheme to the one that Councillor Grant suggests, but I would be mindful of the view of the RAC foundation and their spokesman said recently that we need to be aware of the risk of allowing electric vehicles access to bus lanes as well as to free parking because it can be at odds with other policies and strategies in terms of promoting public transport and actually having buses slow down can actually worsen the air quality of particular areas. So I think we do need to recognise that the jury is out on that and also the fact that in terms of being able to administer such a scheme might be difficult because it would mean bringing in a lot of extra technology, it could create confusion in terms of other vehicles joining a bus lane seeing what looks like a normal car in a bus lane and so there are issues that we must consider. It is not something that we would rule out in the long term but from my perspective at the moment bus lanes should be primarily for buses. Thank you my Lord Mayor.

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

Councillor Grant: No my Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor: No thank you. Question number 23, Councillor Grant again please.

Councillor Grant: “When the highways department are carrying out safety

schemes around schools why do they not talk to the schools or local Councillors about their final proposals before doing the work”

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Master please.

Councillor Master: Thank you Lord Mayor. As Councillor Grant will know we have a substantial school run and parking improvement plan which we have had some great results over the past 12 months and I am sure we will have some more successes going forward. We also have some regular meetings that have already been noted in the chamber earlier on with regards to highways officers where these kind of things can be brought up. Though as far as I am aware unless there is a particular incident that my colleague wants to raise, officers are usually quite good at negotiating and discussing with Ward Councillors and the schools in where works are going to be taken out.

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

Councillor Grant: Yes Lord Mayor. Mayor, I do welcome the works that are currently going on around the city and the regular briefings and opportunities for Members to take part but I do think we are missing a trick. For instance I know from the schools that my children attend where we have implemented the work without there being any discussion with the schools or parents that it would have been easy to have pointed out that if you are trying to protect a dropped kerb on a corner that 1 bollard does not actually do the job. All it means is that somebody with good parking sensors can park right up to that bollard and still block the kerb. So we are actually waiting on this. So I would encourage the Assistant Mayor to ensure that this does become part of our process and that actually the schools could use it as part of attempts to educate the minority of parents, predominately parents, who are part of the problem.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Councillor Clarke please.... sorry Master, I beg your pardon.

Councillor Master: If my colleague were to provide me with the details of that particular incident or where that has been done I would be happy to follow that up. We do run educational programmes with the schools as part of the process that we implement in terms of going into assemblies and speaking to the young people as well as giving literature and holding assemblies for parents to ensure that they are part of this programme because as you rightly highlighted there are a few parents that are quite inconsiderate around the needs of the dangers to young people in and around schools, and I will continue to challenge those as we go forward.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Master. Question number 24, Councillor Grant please.

Councillor Grant: Thank you Lord Mayor. Just briefly. I will forward the photos that I have to Councillor Master but they have already been forwarded to the Head of Highways to show where the work we have done has not achieved the outcome that we were trying to attain. “If an outcome of the City Mayor’s budget process is to have regular surpluses which are routinely transferred into projects as the City Mayor sees fit should that be seen as an intended outcome or is the original budget setting insufficiently robust?”

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor. The Council budget is a matter of policy is in a sense a snapshot of a particular period of time, but it does include all decision taken up to that point in time and all the savings achieved at that time through the spending programme. What we do is to encourage Directors to finalise outstanding reviews as promptly as they can and to enable savings to be banked as soon as it is possible to do so and that of course is what has made possible for us to use underspends to boost our managed reserved strategy. It has enabled us to always balance the budget and avoid the prospect that some other Councils of different political persuasions have had to have of year end crisis cuts. I think that is a prudent way of dealing with budgeting and it certainly is one that has avoided a crisis here in Leicester. It is not the same in a number of other local authorities and I mentioned 2 earlier on. Northamptonshire is in a situation where they are having to seek special permission from the government to balance their budget over a number of years as they can't balance it next year. We are not in that situation and Birmingham, I mentioned them earlier on, have identified at £49m overspend reported last November on the basis of plans that have been described as flawed and unrealistic. I know which position I would prefer to be in. I think perhaps just to put them into context while the underspends of the amount we are able to bank as a result of underspending you know is a significant figure it is tiny in proportion to the overall budget of the Council and I did ask officers to look back and it has varied over the last few years to just under 1% of the budget in some years has been underspent and sometimes slightly over 2% as the net figure. So yes of course it is a good place to be in but it is not a place to be in that does not take a considerable amount of effort from my colleagues in managing the budgets that they are responsible for and the officers who deliver them.

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

Councillor Grant: Yes Lord Mayor. I think it comes as no surprise to people that I very much welcome savings in departmental budgets mid-year but thinking back to when I worked more than I do now and did not look after children quite so much I have had people who have worked reporting to me as their manager and when I have been reporting to other people as their manager and if information was regularly incorrect or unreliable you would challenge it and refine the methodology. So does the City Mayor do this or can we expect continued monies to go into what is colloquially called "slush funds".

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor officers must sometimes feel that they are damned if they do and damned if they don't on this. I have to say that I am enormously impressed by the ways in which the officers, the senior management and indeed many others who are budget holds in this authority have coped with the appalling situation that they found themselves in over recent years, the result of the government cuts to the Council's funding. It was not what many of them came into local government for, they came in to provide services and they did not come in to deal with the sort of crisis that the government has forced on to local government. And I think the way in which they have dealt with it in Leicester is a model to other local authorities. I said earlier on I gave an example of 2 but there are many others where they have stumbled from one crisis to the next over the last few years. We have not had that situation, and that is down to good budgeting. I said you do not criticise for being, to use Councillor Grant's words, incorrect or unreliable in their budgeting. I actually would praise them for having done in very difficult

circumstances so well in delivering the process of managing down our expenditure that has avoided the sort of crisis that has beset other authorities.

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

Councillor Porter: Thank you Lord Mayor. Yes the question is "Since May 2011 how much money have the Council lent to businesses?"

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: Lord Mayor it is another one of those questions that is deceptively simple and actually quite difficult to pin down because of course lent to businesses covers a whole range of circumstances in which the Council acts to promote either the wellbeing of the business but more often the wellbeing of the City and I have to say I have struggled a little and would ask Councillor Porter perhaps in his supplementary, and I will certainly follow it up if necessary with some written response, to be more specific about what it is he needs to know. What I have got from the officers is in the interests of improving our local authority the Council has lent some £6m to a number of businesses since 2011 but that is a very general figure and I think really what Councillor Porter needs to do is to refine his question so that perhaps I can give him something more useful.

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

Councillor Porter: Yes. So that is £6m for the select few not the many. What concerns me and I think it would also concern the people in the city who are on minimum wage, who are on zero hour contracts, that why is it that he and his Council sees fit that they can invest or put our hard earned public money into businesses which the private sector..

Lord Mayor:can you ask a question please...

Councillor Porter: ...banks and any other lending institution has rejected basically on the basis of their commercial attitude that these issues are either not good businesses or they are going to fail...

Lord Mayor: ... can we Councillor Porter can I have a question please, a supplementary question not a statement.

Councillor Porter: The question is can the City Mayor confirm is this really about handing out tax payers' cash to the selected few who he deems to be worthy of it rather than the many people who live in this city.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor as I think Members will expect I don't make these sorts of decisions personally. They are made by officers of the Council in accordance with the policies of the Council. It is done in the same way as some Tory councils do, many Liberal Democrat councils do. I would just simply say that in a Labour administration it is done more effectively and it does actually produce far more jobs for Leicester than I can imagine any Liberal Democrat council could ever do with the monies available to them.

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

Councillor Porter: It might produce jobs but they are not real jobs if people are on zero hour contracts. My question is “Since May 2011 how much money of this £6m that the Council has lent out to these businesses has actually been paid back to the taxpayer?”

Lord Mayor: City Mayor please.

City Mayor: This is such a vague question again that I am struggling to give Councillor Porter any sort of meaningful answer. But I did ask the officers to try and, you know, put something together. What they have said for me is that like any responsible organisation that loans money the Council has considered the affordability and repayment arrangements for these loans. There are currently no unanticipated concerns about the future repayments. To date we have received some £1.3m of repayments from the various organisations that we have supported, but as I said earlier on if Councillor Porter does genuinely want to pursue these issues I would be very happy to talk with him myself, to try and understand what issues he has, what areas of the Council lending he wants more information in or he could go directly to the officers who I know would want to do their very best to explain it to him.

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

Councillor Porter: Yes and thank the City Mayor for giving us these figures because a repayment of £1.3m is pretty appalling I would say. If they have lent out since 2011 £6m that they have only got £1.3m back. In terms of this what I am trying to get at and I think the City Mayor as the Leader of the City Council and responsible for so much public money, is why should he be trusted when the investment decisions that we are clearly aware that he has made have been made into a bar which is loss making, it is in the Cultural Quarter and why does he believe....

Lord Mayor: Councillor Porter, Councillor Porter...

Councillor Porter: ...why does he believe that he is capable of handling this amount of public money and what...

Lord Mayor: ... Councillor Porter I do not want any personal attacks on anyone. Can I ask you once again to ask a specific supplementary question.

Councillor Porter: OK the question is will he please make available to the public all the organisations that the £6m has been lent to since 2011.

Lord Mayor: Thank you.

Councillor Porter: ... for clarity and transparency.

Lord Mayor: City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor I think that was probably the most predictable outburst of the evening and you know I am not going to rise to it. I always tell myself I am not going to rise to Nigel and then on this occasion I am actually going to manage, I hope, not to respond to it. The fact is as I said earlier on the sort of decisions that

are made about loans in this sort of context are ones that are made by experienced officers who know what they are doing and they are doing it in accordance with Council policies. If Councillor Porter or any other Members have concerns about individual elements of that it is all available to them and they can raise them with the officers cornered if necessary with me and my colleagues. I would just encourage him you know if he does have concerns about any of them to let those officers know about them, to let me know about them, let my colleagues know about them and of course we will follow them up.

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

Councillor Porter: “Since May 2011 how much money has the Council actually given to businesses?”

Lord Mayor: City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor. The Council gives grants to a wide range of organisations for a wide range of different purposes and this one is even more difficult to quantify than the loans. I mean I did ask officers if they were able to do that. They really have struggled with it because some of the stuff we deliver directly. Quite a lot of it is done by the Local Enterprise Partnership, LLEP, you know which is actually tasked by government you know to support a lot of these initiatives. I really do say to Councillor Porter he will need on this one to refine it more if he wants to get any sort of meaningful response to it because as Members are aware from the range of the things that the Council does, some of them do involve giving grants and let me think, yes, shop front improvements in you know areas of the city, some of them in the city centre, some of them in the peripheral roads, there are grants associated with that that are numerous and probably a significant sum. But there are all sorts of other grants that are given for lots of different purposes to promote, yes through the townscape heritage initiative we have given grants to Deli-Ish you know the deli on the corner there. They have got a grant for that. But I don't know quite how on earth you would ever get a complete total of all of the things that we have given a grant to that would satisfy Councillor Porter. I would suggest Nigel you do need to refine that question.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Do you have a supplementary question which is a clarification of what you have just been told?

Councillor Porter: It is what I clarify to you Lord Mayor. It is what I just haven't been told. I asked ...

Lord Mayor: ..so can you ask a specific supplementary question rather than wild accusations..

Councillor Porter: ...this was for your benefit because I asked him a question about how much money has the Council given so I think it is actually disgraceful that we are sitting here at a Council chamber when we are told about the high level of government cuts and how the Council is cash strapped and he is unable to give an answer to a straightforward question about how much money, whether it is in grants or loans. He clearly knows what I am referring to because he gave a long list and I think it is absolutely disgraceful that he is unable to do that. The Council...

Lord Mayor: ... question again please.

Councillor Porter: .. the Council should be squeaky clean and should be seen to

be squeaky clean...

Lord Mayor: ... Councillor Porter

Councillor Porter: ... so how can he justify the decision the morality of the decision to use taxpayers' cash to dish out to private businesses and then not have the decency to come to this Council chamber and when asked a question about how much money has gone out he refuses to give an answer.

Lord Mayor: ...question please otherwise you can sit down and move on to the next question.

Councillor Porter: ..I mean it is...

Lord Mayor: ...so what is your supplementary question.

Councillor Porter: ..the question is how can he justify the morality of the decision to use taxpayers' cash to fund private businesses let alone one which his daughter is now involved in?

Lord Mayor: OK that is enough, Councillor Porter please sit down. Thank you. City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor for obviously reasons I will ignore a part of that question and just say that I really am of the opinion that Councillor Porter needs to refine this question, that he needs actually to say what it is that he wants to know about the activities of the Council in terms of giving grants to other organisations and I will be happy to ensure that officers provide it. They were not able to provide an answer to the global question that he asks but I would say again that quite a lot of this is a part of the economic action plan that we talked about earlier on and that is money that is used very effectively in producing those 5,000 jobs, that is real people in real jobs in Leicester. There are 900 apprenticeships, that is real opportunities for people, often young people, but not only young people to actually gain skills that will enable them to contribute not just their own income but to the wellbeing of the city. 370 work places, a lot of those associated with the money that we are talking about here. Lots of investment of course that could be classified as a grant but could be classified that brought IBM to Leicester, that brought Hastings Direct to Leicester. They are quite large sums but there is 1,000 jobs in Hastings – there are hundreds in IBM. Graduates kept in the city. You know that is not money just given away that is money invested in the city and I make no apology for that. I make no apology for the fact that it probably adds up to quite a big total. But I would say that if Nigel actually wants to put a figure on it he does need to tell us much more precisely which element of the Council activities he is wanting us to look at and what he wants us to total up. It is a lot of investment but my goodness is it a major boost to the city's economy.

My Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Question number 28, Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: Thank you Lord Mayor. Yes this question as was said earlier comes from ...

Lord Mayor: ..question number Question number 28...

Councillor Porter: The question is "As part of the Council's investment strategy, do the Council have any investments in oil companies and I have listed a few of the

major oil companies for example Shell or BP but there are a lot of other big oil companies”?

Lord Mayor: Thank you.

Councillor Porter: I’m sure he will get the idea.

Lord Mayor: Councillor Clarke please.

Councillor Clarke: Councillor Porter has slightly reworded his question which is very helpful because it seemed he wanted to ask the same question as Councillor Riyait asked. He has actually asked a completely different question, very intelligently. He has asked about our investment strategy and I took Councillor Riyait’s very complicated question made to me via email as well as this evening to a very highly paid and highly skilled Head of Finance and she gave me a very complicated and well-reasoned answer to that question and you know as Councillor Riyait pointed out this evening it was very complex area. Now the answer to Councillor Porter’s question is no.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Councillor Clarke. Councillor Porter please make your question a specific supplementary question rather than a statement.

Councillor Porter: I will try my very best. I will obviously pass on this message to the local residents who contacted me because they obviously raised concerns about the Council’s investments in fossil fuel industries which obviously includes BP or Shell. So although as has already been explained we are not able to influence the Council’s pension scheme directly...

Lord Mayor: ... so what is your question...

Councillor Porter: I am pleased that we have had an answer to this question.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. Do you want to respond to that Councillor Clarke.

Councillor Clarke: No.

Lord Mayor: Question number 29, Councillor Porter.

Councillor Porter: Another one back to May 2011. I wonder why I’m picking that date. Anyway “since May 2011 how many trees have the Council cut down”?

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor please.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor we are covering the tree strategy in a little bit and I will talk about some of the figures in that context. We don’t actually take a detailed tally of how many are cut down at any one time. What I can say in response to Councillor Porter is that the numbers that have been cut down are a tiny proportion of the numbers that have been planted.

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

Councillor Porter: Yes. Once again representations from people who are genuinely concerned about the environment and about the Council’s plans to fell 21 trees, mature trees, in St. George’s Church yard. My question to the City Mayor regarding this felling of these very, very important trees which will have an impact

on the churchyard itself and obviously air quality within the city is, is the proposal really about trying to address issues of anti-social behaviour in the area, or is it really about trying to attract more people down to loss making bars in the Cultural Quarter.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor.

City Mayor: I'm not going to get cross I will just simply say my Lord Mayor that as Councillor Porter is well aware decisions about the Cultural Quarter are not ones that I have any part in and not ones in which I am prepared to comment this evening. I will say, however, and I will be talking about this in a little while, that while of course people are concerned about the loss of individual trees, the fact is that the Council has a brilliant record of planting trees. We have, and they have not counted them one by one, but it is over 150,000 trees in the Council's ownership. And of course that does not mean to say that any one tree and its loss or any group of trees and their loss are not a matter of debate and potential concern, but I do think that they need to be kept in proportion to the excellent record that we have had over successive Labour administrations in planting trees in the city and caring for trees in the city. I would say, and I am coming to it in a little while, I would just say that it is important to remember that for every one that has been lost over the last 30 or 40 years many, many, many more have been planted.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. Last question Councillor Porter. Question number 30.

Councillor Porter: "Does the Council have any plans to purchase a betting shop/ investment property in the vicinity of the Town Hall"?

Lord Mayor: City Mayor please.

City Mayor: The answer to that and it is a matter of public record is yes. I have to say that it is not actually, primarily the betting shop that is being purchased but it does have a tenant and it does pay a decent rent on it and it happens to be a betting shop. The purpose of purchasing that property is to get away from that grotty alley that is such a major eyesore and horrible place between the lovely Town Hall Square and the new space that has been created in and around the market, and that opportunity to make that link. To get what I believe is a good deal in terms of purchasing the property to knock that one down but also to get the adjacent property with a tenant in it is one that adds up and makes very good sense from every perspective.

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

Councillor Porter: Yes. Earlier on Sir Peter in answer to some other questions appeared very good at saying what was not a priority. But I am certain that most people in the city will think it isn't a priority to go buying a betting shop and wasting even more public money on vanity projects. So would he..

Applause

Councillor Porter: ah a round of applause so at least people are listening. Does the City Mayor agree with me that it would be a much better use of public money £1.6m to spend that money building some council houses on the numerous derelict brown field sites across the city rather than wasting £1.6m on another ridiculous

vanity project which includes this betting shop.

Lord Mayor: Thank you. City Mayor.

City Mayor: My Lord Mayor this is one of those occasions when I answer either /or. We are actually able both to continue our decades long policy of investing and particularly investing in property that produces income and that is something that the Council benefits from when it looks at its revenue budget. It is an important part of the income of the Council that we invest in investment properties and that we use that to boost our ever diminishing revenue and this will be one such tool that will help to do that. At the same time it is investing in facilities across the city. We have talked and will be talking in a few moments particularly about investing in schools. We will be talking early in the New Year about investing in housing and the opportunities to build houses for rent is one of the opportunities we are constantly looking out for and about which I think it is anticipated there will be more news in the very near future. But I would just say to Councillor Porter I make no apologies for investing as we will be and will talk in a little while, in a variety of things across the city centre including investing in what is almost literally our shop window which is our city centre. Investment in the city centre is something that has been a major magnet attracting private sector investment into the city centre, a major factor in ensuring that our retailing in the city centre continues to prosper when many other city centres are dying as a result of changing shopping patterns and shopping on line and so on. Ours does not face that bleak future. Significantly as a result of the investment that I and my predecessors have made in the city centre, particularly in this public realm, and people will compliment Labour administration and successive Labour administrations on the work that we have done to ensure that our city centre continues to be a place where people continue to want to invest because people continue to want to shop there, people increasingly want to live there and ensuring the continued viability of our city centre is one of the many priorities that this labour administration has.

Lord Mayor: Thank you City Mayor. That concludes the questions from the Councillors.

MATTERS RESERVED TO COUNCIL

7.1 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/19 – 2019/20

A report was considered which sought approval of a Capital Programme for the Council for the period 2018/19 to 2019/20. Details were included within the report of the resources position and proposed projects. The report had been considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 20 November 2017 and a copy of the relevant minutes of the meeting were made available at the meeting.

Moved by City Mayor, seconded by Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Russell and carried:

19. That Council,

1. thank the Overview Select Committee for their comments and their support of the draft programme;
2. approves the recommendations at paragraph 3.1 in the report to Council and adopts the programme included within the report and;
3. notes the changes from the draft programme described at paragraph 10 of the report to Council which arise for 2 reasons:

- a) Inclusion of expenditure funded from the Government's recently announced National Productivity Investment Fund;
- b) In response to comments made, to provide more specificity regarding schemes funded from the Economic Action Plan – the general provision has been reduced and individual projects included.

REPORTS OF THE CITY MAYOR OR EXECUTIVE

8.1 DRAFT TREE STRATEGY

The City Mayor gave a presentation to Council giving detail of a proposed Tree Strategy for the Council and a proposed consultation period. A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

Moved by City Mayor, seconded by Councillor Clarke and carried:

20. That Council:

- a) agrees to the commencement of a period of consultation ahead of an Executive Decision to approve its formal adoption as a working policy designed to steer continued focus and investment in this key element of Leicester's green infrastructure and;
- b) notes that a finalised public version will subsequently be produced which will be available to download from the Council's website.

EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES

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

21. That:

1. Councillor Gugnani be appointed as Chair of Neighbourhood Services & Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission.
2. Councillor Thalukdar be appointed as Vice Chair of Neighbourhood Services & Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission.


ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

As there were no items of urgent business the Lord Mayor thanked students from De Montfort University for their attendance and on behalf of himself and the Lady Mayoress wished all present a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

The Lord Mayor closed the meeting at 8.44pm.

Leicester City Council Tree Strategy 2018 – 2023



 City Mayor


Leicester
City Council

Overview

- First Tree Strategy for Leicester
- Strategic approach for management of the council's tree stock
 - 150,000 trees
 - 107 hectares of woodland
 - 15.69% authority tree canopy cover (1,200 ha)
 - 24 Conservation areas and over 500 TPOs





Sustaining tree canopy

- Replacement policy more than 1:1
- 50,000 trees planted since 1980s
- 10,000 tree project
- Additional new capital schemes, developments
- £174,000 Capital investment
- LEW budget £30,000 annually







Tree management assets

- Budget £1.3m expenditure
(turnover £1.7m)
- Operational staff 28 FTE
- Technical 6 FTE
23% staff resource increase since 2009
- Depot
£1m specialist equipment and vehicles
Waste storage for 400 tonnes

Tree management assets

- Budget £1.3m expenditure
(turnover £1.7m)
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- Technical 6 FTE
23% staff resource increase since 2009
- Depot
£1m specialist equipment and vehicles
Waste storage for 400 tonnes



Waste management



- 100% materials recycled
- 2,000 tonnes a year
- 50% bio mass fuel
- 40% fire wood
- 10% milled
- Small volume carved
- £20,000 income, saving £170,000 landfill charge

Waste management



Actions supporting strategic aims

- To maintain tree numbers / canopy cover
- Promoting amenity
- Promoting habitat and wildlife
- Enhancing microclimate and land use
- Responding to global obligations
- Fulfil formal obligations
- Manage resources appropriately
- Manage pressure of trees in the private sector

Review and monitoring aims

- Planting success rate
- Surveying and work programme cycles
- Quality control
- Resources management
- Staff training and development
- Complaints and compliments
- AA assessments
- Recycling rates
- Management of TPO's and Conservation Areas





Adoption of Strategy

- Comment and feedback from Full Council
- Agree a final draft
- Format for online publication
- User-friendly school version to be developed
- Public launch