

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL

held at the Council Chamber - at the Council House

on 10 September 2018 from 2.00 pm - 4.45 pm

ATTENDANCES:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ✓ Councillor Liaqat Ali (Lord Mayor) | |
| ✓ Councillor Cat Arnold | ✓ Councillor Dave Liversidge |
| ✓ Councillor Jim Armstrong | ✓ Councillor Sally Longford |
| ✓ Councillor Leslie Ayoola | ✓ Councillor Carole McCulloch |
| Councillor Ilyas Aziz | Councillor Nick McDonald |
| Councillor Cheryl Barnard | Councillor David Mellen |
| Councillor Steve Battlemuch | Councillor Jackie Morris |
| ✓ Councillor Merlita Bryan | ✓ Councillor Toby Neal |
| ✓ Councillor Eunice Campbell-Clark | Councillor Brian Parbutt |
| ✓ Councillor Graham Chapman | ✓ Councillor Anne Peach |
| Councillor Azad Choudhry | ✓ Councillor Sarah Piper |
| ✓ Councillor Jon Collins | ✓ Councillor Georgia Power |
| Councillor Josh Cook | ✓ Councillor Nick Raine |
| ✓ Councillor Michael Edwards | ✓ Councillor Andrew Rule |
| ✓ Councillor Chris Gibson | ✓ Councillor Mohammed Saghir |
| ✓ Councillor Brian Grocock | ✓ Councillor David Smith |
| ✓ Councillor John Hartshorne | ✓ Councillor Wendy Smith |
| ✓ Councillor Rosemary Healy | Councillor Chris Tansley |
| ✓ Councillor Nicola Heaton | ✓ Councillor Dave Trimble |
| ✓ Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim | ✓ Councillor Jane Urquhart |
| ✓ Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora | ✓ Councillor Marcia Watson |
| ✓ Councillor Corall Jenkins | ✓ Councillor Sam Webster |
| ✓ Councillor Glyn Jenkins | ✓ Councillor Adele Williams |
| ✓ Councillor Sue Johnson | ✓ Councillor Malcolm Wood |
| ✓ Councillor Carole-Ann Jones | ✓ Councillor Linda Woodings |
| ✓ Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan | ✓ Councillor Cate Woodward |
| ✓ Councillor Neghat Khan | ✓ Councillor Steve Young |
| ✓ Councillor Ginny Klein | |

✓ Indicates present at meeting

31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Cheryl Barnard – leave

Councillor Steve Battlemuch – work commitments

Councillor Josh Cook – personal

Councillor Nick McDonald – work commitments

Councillor David Mellen – other Council business

Councillor Jackie Morris – leave

Councillor Brian Parbutt – unwell

Councillor Chris Tansley – work commitments

32 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Adele Williams declared an interest in agenda item 11 – Motion in the name of Councillor Linda Woodings, as she works for UCU, the University and College Union. However, as this is not a pecuniary interest, Councillor Adele Williams was not required to withdraw from the meeting, and could take part in discussion and voting on the item.

33 QUESTIONS FROM CITIZENS

Student Accommodation and Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

PK asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning:

1. The December 2004 'Jubilee Campus Development Brief' created an agreed framework between the council and the University of Nottingham for the expansion of the Jubilee Campus. This included the building of a 'Student Village' at the Northern end of Triumph Road where the Player's warehouses have recently been demolished. Does the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning believe the University should comply with the Brief by building a student village on the site of the former warehouses to help return houses in areas like Lenton to family occupation? If so, what actions can the council take to ensure the student village progresses?

2. According to the February 2018, Arboretum, Dunkirk and Lenton, Radford and Park Area Committee meeting minutes "NCH Enterprises Ltd are intending to buy and build homes for market rent under the name 'LiviNG' which will provide well-managed and well maintained properties for citizens as an alternative to some disreputable and private landlords." Does the PH for Housing and Planning believe the issue of high concentration of HMOs could be resolved by asking NCH to buy targeted houses in areas which suffer from the strains of too many HMOs and return them to family use?

3. Does the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning believe the University of Nottingham should buy HMOs in the area affected by high concentration of students to return them to family use for mature students or for use by visiting academics?

Councillor Jane Urquhart replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor, and thank you to the questioner for bringing the question. As it is in three parts, as the Chief Executive explained, I'm going to reply in those three sections. So in terms of part one: The Jubilee Campus Development Brief, as the question says, was adopted in December 2004, so quite some number of years ago now, almost 15 years old. It is therefore in planning policy terms very dated, and so the weight that could be applied to it in any planning decisions is quite limited. However, the site of the former bonded warehouses is safeguarded in the Local Plan for the expansion of the Jubilee Campus, and those policies say that permission will be granted for Higher Education, Research & Development, Information & Communication Technology facilities, and ancillary uses such as accommodation and catering facilities for staff or students. So there is some potential for the suggestion that the questioner makes.

The University has not yet shared their development proposals for the site of those former bonded warehouses but I would certainly encourage them to do so at the earliest opportunity and to work with us to meet the wholesale needs of the city and the communities in which the University is situated.

I think that the use of the site for a well-designed student village could provide much needed purpose built accommodation and could assist with our existing efforts to achieve balanced and sustainable communities in more traditional housing areas. And so therefore I would very much welcome closer joint working with the University of Nottingham to develop this kind of scheme and to focus more on helping return HMO houses in areas of high student concentration to family use.

On to part two of the question. The questioner is right that NCH Enterprises Ltd are looking to build and purchase properties for market rent in order to create a high quality, well-managed private rented offer within the City. For NCH Enterprises Ltd this is part of an overall strategy from the Council to help raise the quality of housing provision across all sectors and to expand the choice of quality homes available to the increasing number of Nottingham people who need to rely on the private rented sector to meet their housing needs.

So, applying a purchasing strategy in areas of high concentration, such as LiveNG is seeking to do, is right, and it does have the additional benefit of helping redress the balance in a particular area and so it is a useful tool towards meeting the aims of a rebalanced community. Of course though, NCH Enterprises Ltd need to ensure that any particular purchases are within their own viability and value for money parameters and are within available budgets. So therefore purchase decisions are taken on a case by case basis, and properties are very carefully selected. This means that that project is one possible tool in tackling excessive concentrations of poor quality HMOs, rather than the only tool that balances specific neighbourhoods.

And of course, we at Nottingham Labour and in this Council have actively employed a whole range of strategies to seek to mitigate the impact of over concentration of HMOs, and those include the Article 4 Directions requiring planning permission for conversion to HMO status, the Regulation 7 restrictions on the display of letting boards, the Additional Licencing Scheme that we've introduced and that we are seeking at the moment to come to the end of the period of decision making as to whether we should renew that Additional Licensing, and of course the encouragement through our existing planning policy of purpose built accommodation for students.

So in terms of part three of the question. Yes, I agree that this is an excellent idea. Our policies to try to achieve balanced and sustainable communities in our traditional housing areas definitely require a joint effort and the direct purchase of HMOs in this way would have significant benefits in terms of restoring mix to neighbourhoods. So as a key stakeholder to many of the areas affected by HMO concentration, I would welcome ideas from and collaboration with the Universities about direct interventions of this kind that they could make, particularly interventions which could meet multiple aims.

Loan facility to Robin Hood Energy

WS asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Energy and Environment:

As recorded in minutes of Full Council, Councillor Chapman stated that the “Executive Board on 17 March agreed a loan facility of UP TO £11,000,000 for Robin Hood Energy, to fund the set up and early running costs.” He further stated that in addition to interest on commercial terms, the loan “would mean repayments of £407,000 in 2016/17, and £1,630,000 per annum in subsequent years.”

As the accounts of both Robin Hood Energy and the City Council show that instead of the schedule of repayments, the amount owed to the City by RHE has in fact increased to over £20,000,000.

Would the relevant Portfolio Holder please state what action has been taken or is proposed to remedy this clear failure to meet its publicly stated objectives?

Councillor Graham Chapman opted to answer the question. He replied as follows:

Thank you. Robin Hood Energy is a rapidly expanding business. Expanding businesses have changing needs, especially in the energy market, which is extremely fluid. So the situation for Robin Hood Energy has been fluid, and the expectation that everything will remain the same, as it was at a particular report several months ago is unrealistic.

The current position is that there was a loan facility of £11,000,000 taken out on 17 March 2015 for the setup costs. This was subsequently supported by a further £4,000,000, bringing it up to £15,000,000 initially. This has since been converted into a £7,500,000 loan and £7,500,000 shares owned by Nottingham City Council.

Moreover, there was a delegated decision in July 2017 to create a £5,000,000 hedging loan capacity. Now that is a capacity, it may or may not be drawn down, but hedging is absolutely necessary in the energy market in order to stabilise the purchasing power against fluctuations in the oil cost, particularly with regard to the dollar. And we know that recently the dollar has increased in value, and therefore the more we can give them a hedging facility, the more stable it will be.

The consequence is that loan one is scheduled for repayment on 31 March 2027. It is being charged at interest of 11%, which at the time was a reflection of the risk of Robin Hood Energy. The more recent loan which is due by 31 December 2024 is at a lower rate of 7.56%, which again reflects the risk, but I would please note that it is a reducing risk which means that the company is stabilising. The interest is charged quarterly, and the first principle repayment of the loan is due by the end of this month. Thank you.

Temporary accommodation of families at the Stage Hotel

RH asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:

Nottingham City Council recently closed the Stage Hotel, reportedly for serious criminal incidents – including child sexual exploitation – that date back to November

2015. Before its closure, the hotel was used as temporary accommodation for homeless families and individuals. This accommodation was clearly unsafe and inadequate. Children have been placed in extreme danger.

Who is responsible for sending mothers and children to the Stage Hotel over the past three years? How was this possible under the Children Act 1989? Who will be held responsible for these actions?

Councillor Jane Urquhart replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor, and thank you to the member of the public who raised this important question. Prior to 2015, Nottingham City Council did not use bed and breakfast at all to provide temporary accommodation for homeless households in the City. However, since 2015 a national crisis of homelessness has put significant pressure on accommodation, both in Nottingham and throughout the country.

When concerns were raised about the Stage Hotel, the City Council led multi-agency meetings to address these issues, and closely monitored performance and standards at the property. Children's Services did not use the hotel from 2015 at all. However, during the period of time where conditions and standards had seemed to improve, other services did continue to use the hotel. Once further concerns were identified the Council stopped all use of the hotel. The responsibility for ensuring temporary accommodation for homelessness has recently moved within the Council to the Children's Services department. This move will provide further protection to ensure that when families need to be placed in temporary accommodation the children are properly safeguarded.

Homelessness is an issue which Nottingham takes incredibly seriously, and one which frankly we're appalled by. I share a sense of outrage that in our city, people should have to be accommodated in unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation. Councils up and down the country are working hard to deal with increasing levels of homelessness, and in Nottingham we are working hard too. We are not alone in using temporary accommodation for households who present with nowhere to stay, but it remains an unacceptable form of accommodation. The use of temporary accommodation such as bed and breakfasts is never a good solution, either for the individuals or families housed, or for the councils making those difficult decisions. That's why in January this year, we stood in this chamber and shared our commitment to not use bed and breakfasts by the end of the year, and we continue to be committed to achieving this aim.

Expansion of Nottingham City boundaries

AM asked the following question of the Leader:

Nottingham is not taken seriously on the national or international scene and is often overshadowed by other core cities such as Birmingham, Leeds and even Leicester.

The city was recently ignored by Channel 4 and the East Midlands Airport is not as influential or popular as other airports and all this is because the Nottingham city boundary is too small with a population just over 300,000 making it below average for a city in the UK.

Couldn't Nottingham do what other cities are doing and change their boundaries to include those areas that rely on the direct Healthcare that Nottingham does provide for them by taking Rushcliffe, Broxtowe, Gedling and Hucknall to be a part of the City, as those residents enjoy the events and parks that Nottingham has, they will go to QMC for emergency treatment and seek education and policing help from the Nottingham City. If Nottingham did that then the popularity will spread across the UK, and with a post-Brexit looking more and more depressing for the cities of the UK, this move would ensure that Nottingham could not only survive but prosper if they were united with the other boroughs rather than seek it alone with Leicester, Sheffield, Leeds and Birmingham becoming more increasingly popular?

Councillor Jon Collins replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor, and can I thank whoever is responsible for the question for submitting it. Whilst I think the case may be overstated, I think the questioner is correct in suggesting that Nottingham is an under-bounded city, and faces challenges as a result. The City can be described as under-bounded because while the population covered by the Council is around 320,000 the population of the built up area that people would normally recognise as being Nottingham is closer to 550,000. However, let's be clear that despite being under-bounded, Nottingham is taken seriously regionally and nationally as a City and is increasingly popular, not just with families and individuals looking to relocate but with inward investors too.

For example, Nottingham has the sixth fastest growing population of any local authority area within the Country, our universities are amongst the most popular nationally and this year we are on track to land 1,000 new jobs through inward investment. Nottingham is also recognised as having a strong voice: in the LEP, through Midland Connect on transport issues, through the Midland Engine on Regional Economic Development issues, and nationally through Core Cities, a grouping of the 10 largest UK cities of which I am vice-chair.

Furthermore, there is also no automatic or direct correlation between Council size and influence. For example, Manchester City Council is probably more under-bounded than Nottingham but might be considered more successful than say Birmingham which is the largest local authority in the Country administering an area that more accurately reflects its boundaries. Where Manchester succeeds however, despite being an under-bounded authority, is in its ability to work closely with its neighbouring authorities. The authorities that make up the conurbation of Manchester have over the last 20 years worked closely together to promote and develop the City. Recently this has been formalized through the creation of a Combined Authority and subsequently a mayoral devolution deal which while short on formal powers has significantly raised the profile and influence of Manchester. Other Core Cities including Liverpool, Birmingham, Newcastle, Bristol and Sheffield have followed suit and while the balance of benefits and disbenefits of such deals has varied, there is a growing recognition that conurbations of sub-regional co-operation is actually important for the success of cities.

So where is Nottingham in all of this? Well members might recall our attempts 3 years ago to lead the development of a Combined Authority and to negotiate a devolution deal. We came very close but ultimately the deal was undermined by

government's attempts to dictate boundaries for party political benefit, by two Conservative controlled district councils, and by a number of local MPs. It's also true that other under-bounded Core Cities benefit from being surrounded by all-purpose unitary authorities and not, as in Nottingham's case, two tier County and District Councils. This makes sub-regional discussions easier and it's interesting to note that despite many attempts, the combined authority and mayoral devolution deals that have been negotiated have almost all been for areas covered by unitary authorities.

So having failed to secure sub-regional arrangements similar to other Core Cities, Nottingham has sought to develop the Derby Nottingham Metro as an alternative, building on the complimentary nature of the two City economies and our shared agenda around infrastructure and regeneration. Through the Metro we have been able to engage closely with the private sector, our local universities and with District Councils that want to develop this kind of collaborative working and increasingly its having an impact regionally and nationally. Of course we have some way to go. The challenge for the East Midlands has always been a lack of identity and a diversity of local authority interests that makes it easy for government to overlook the needs and concerns of this part of the country. The decision to dismantle the Regional Development Agency eight years ago compounded that problem and it's no accident that the region sits at the bottom of most league tables when it comes to government resource allocation.

So fundamentally I believe the answer to the question about how to secure greater influence and recognition for Nottingham is more about working more closely with our neighbours and developing a single simple and settled set of asks from government than about changing the Council Boundaries. For example, we need to be clear about our asks for Toton and the HS2 hub station, for the infrastructure investment needed to fully exploit the economic potential of what should still be called Nottingham East Midlands Airport, for the electrification of the Midland Mainline, for the rail and road interchanges around Newark which for Nottingham would mean easier access to the A1M and the East Coast mainline.

What I'm not saying however is that expanding the City Council boundaries is unimportant. However, our experience in 1998 when Nottingham went from being a District to a Unitary Council tells us that the process is all-consuming, expensive and likely to distract from the real issues that our electorate want us to address. In many ways the debate about boundaries is an exercise in "rearranging the deckchairs on the Titanic" as local government as a whole sinks under a toxic cocktail of increasing demand and responsibilities, matched with dramatically less funding and fewer powers. Nevertheless, we do know that Nottinghamshire County Council has decided to argue for local government re-organisation and consequently we will need to be a part of that debate too. If the County puts proposals to Ministers for unitary local government outside the City, we will respond with our own views of where Nottingham's council boundaries should be so that they better reflect the reality of our urban area. In reality we believe those boundaries should include many of the areas mentioned in the question. For example, any neutral observer would take the view that Arnold, Carlton, Beeston, Hucknall, West Bridgford and Stapleford, to name but a few, are all in reality a part of Nottingham and our proposals would seek to reflect that. And as the County develops their business case for the options they wish to put to Government, I can assure Council that similar effort and resources are being put into developing our case for change too.

Lord Mayor, Nottingham is a growing, successful and increasingly influential city and we shouldn't lose sight of that. Indeed there are plenty of examples where in other cities and in response to the same debate about growth, size and influence, Nottingham has in fact been cited as an example of a city that punches above its weight. However there is more to do. While we're trying to do that we must continue to be a well-run city, a city that gets basic services right, a city that is good to live and work in, a city that is easy to get around, and a city that understands what being a big city is actually all about and behaves accordingly. But we must also look to how we can continue to develop and grow. Changing our boundaries could be a part of that but I'm afraid it's not the simple single solution the question seems to suggest it might be.

34 PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS ON BEHALF OF CITIZENS

Councillor Anne Peach submitted a petition to stop the felling of trees in St Peter's Park adjacent to Radford Grove Lane. The petitioners requested further evidence of the need for the trees removal, and for appropriate consultation to take place with local residents. The petition received 19 signatures.

35 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 9 JULY 2018

Councillor Jim Armstrong raised a point of order in reference to Standing Order 21 relating to conduct – "Councillors shall at all times during Council meetings behave with courtesy and respect towards others and do nothing which might bring the Council into disrepute or disrupt Council business". Councillor Armstrong felt that the omission of the answers to supplementary questions in the minutes of Council was misleading, and would therefore bring the Council into disrepute. The Lord Mayor stated that as Standing Order 21 relates to Councillor conduct, it should not be applied to the recording of minutes. Councillor Armstrong requested a recorded vote on confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting.

Councillors voted to approve the minutes of the previous meeting as follows:

| | For | Against | Abstained |
|----------------------------------|------------|----------------|------------------|
| Councillor Liaqat Ali | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Jim Armstrong | | ✓ | |
| Councillor Cat Arnold | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Leslie Ayoola | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Ilyas Aziz | | | |
| Councillor Cheryl Barnard | | | |
| Councillor Steve Battlemuch | | | |
| Councillor Merlita Bryan | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Eunice Campbell-Clark | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Graham Chapman | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Azad Choudhry | | | |
| Councillor Jon Collins | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Josh Cook | | | |
| Councillor Mike Edwards | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Chris Gibson | ✓ | | |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Councillor Brian Grocock | ✓ | | |
| Councillor John Hartshorne | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Rosemary Healy | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Nicola Heaton | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Patience Ifediora | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Corall Jenkins | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Glyn Jenkins | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Sue Johnson | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Carole-Ann Jones | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Neghat Khan | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Ginny Klein | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Dave Liversidge | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Sally Longford | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Carole McCulloch | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Nick McDonald | | | |
| Councillor David Mellen | | | |
| Councillor Jackie Morris | | | |
| Councillor Toby Neal | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Brian Parbutt | | | |
| Councillor Anne Peach | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Sarah Piper | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Georgia Power | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Nick Raine | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Andrew Rule | | ✓ | |
| Councillor Mohammed Saghir | ✓ | | |
| Councillor David Smith | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Wendy Smith | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Chris Tansley | | | |
| Councillor Dave Trimble | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Jane Urquhart | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Marcia Watson | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Sam Webster | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Adele Williams | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Malcolm Wood | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Linda Woodings | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Cate Woodward | ✓ | | |
| Councillor Steve Young | ✓ | | |

The minutes of the meeting held 9 July 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

36 TO RECEIVE OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Ian Curryer, Chief Executive, reported the following:

International Youth Camp in China

I am pleased to report that during the summer break, six young people from Nottingham attended an international youth camp in Chengdu, China hosted by the Sichuan Provincial Government. The group, which consisted of three members of our Children in Care Council and three members of our local Youth Council network, raised £5,000 themselves in order to attend the international youth camp, which was a positive and life-changing experience for all of those involved.

Howitt Building

The City Council owned Howitt Building on Lenton Boulevard, which was formerly the offices of the Raleigh Cycle Company completed in 1931 to the designs of T Cecil Howitt, has been recognised as a nationally important building. Historic England announced that the building is the country's 400,000th Grade II Listed Building. This builds on the Council's award winning Heritage Strategy – promoting heritage led regeneration within the city.

Honorary Alderman Martin Brandon Bravo

Honorary Alderman Martin Brandon Bravo passed away on 15 August 2018, aged 86. He was elected to represent the Robin Hood Ward in 1968, where he served until 1970. He was then re-elected to represent the Wollaton Ward in 1976, where he served until 1987. He was appointed as an Honorary Alderman in December 2011.

Councillor Andrew Rule spoke in tribute to former City Councillor, former MP, former County Councillor and Honorary Alderman Martin Brandon Bravo, and a minute's silence was held.

37 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS - TO THE CITY COUNCIL'S LEAD COUNCILLOR ON THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

None.

38 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS - TO A MEMBER OF EXECUTIVE BOARD, THE CHAIR OF A COMMITTEE AND THE CHAIR OF ANY OTHER CITY COUNCIL BODY

Funding for councils

Councillor Michael Edwards asked the following question of the Deputy Leader:

Does the Deputy Leader share my anger at the Government's latest attempt to bailout failing County Councils with 'negative RSG' funding while continuing to take money away from places like Nottingham?

Councillor Graham Chapman replied as follows:

Earlier this summer the government announced £153,000,000 additional funding for local government. Very generous of them you might think. Well, not really given the

billions that have been taken away from local government since 2011 and even less so when you realise that 86% of this money went to Conservative councils. Worse still, those councils benefitting are amongst the richest in the UK, and the vast majority of them are in the south of England.

But it gets worse, and it gets more unfair. Not only are the benefitting councils overwhelmingly Conservative, not only are they amongst the richest with the highest Council Tax and Business Rates base, they also have had the fewest cuts since 2011. Whereas the poorest councils have received 30% reductions in grant on average, many of the councils benefitting have had less than 10% reductions in grants. And it gets worse still, because most of these same councils have benefitted from £300,000,000 in previous handouts in transitional grants in the last two years, from which not one of the poorer councils has received a penny – including Nottingham.

And it gets worse still, because these same authorities are the very authorities which are suffering fewer pressures in terms of the two biggest spending areas of councils; adult care and children's services. Unlike poorer areas where there are very few self-funding adults in care, there are many self-funders in these authorities.

So just to give you an example; in Surrey, one of the richest areas in the UK, between 2011 and 2019 had a 4% reduction in its spending power. Nottingham has suffered over 25% cuts in its spending power. Yet in the last three years, Surrey has received an additional £54,000,000 in government grants. Nottingham in that period has received not a penny of it. Nor has Derby, nor has Leicester, nor any of the northern or Midlands cities. Nor, interestingly, have any of the inner London boroughs, even though a lot of the outer London boroughs have received it. So in the current world of local government finance, the better off the area and the fewer the financial pressures, the less you lose and the more you receive in government handouts. The converse is true; the poorer you are, the more you lose. The biggest losers have been Liverpool, Mosely and Hackney, and the biggest winners have been places down south like Uttlesford, Woking and Wokingham.

It is a blatant fix based on political expediency. It is behaviour which makes a mockery of any objective grant distribution. It is verging on a scandal. But we are not taking it lying down. We are working with SIGOMA, an organisation which represents many cities in the UK, to publicise the abuse, and to take the matter to the Public Accounts Committee.

And I would finish on one important point: these authorities are mainly county councils. They are well off, they have fewer pressures than we have, they have had fewer cuts, and they have had more one-off money thrown at them. So why are these same authorities – Surrey, Northamptonshire, Worcestershire, Norfolk, and Somerset, all in severe financial difficulty? And it's the same reason they've got the grants, it is because they are Tory. They have followed a Conservative model which is broken. They have had all the advantages compared with Labour Councils, yet these Tories have messed up – assets have been sold off, services have been outsourced, and they have totally misjudged their council tax strategy over seven years. And that is why they are in a particular mess, and that is why the government has thrown money at them at the expense of other authorities.

So we can say, not only the better off you are, the fewer pressures you have, the more you receive; we can now also say the more incompetent you are, the more you receive, providing of course you are Tory. Of course I share your anger, thank you.

Revised planning policy framework

Councillor Steve Young asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning:

Does the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning share my disappointment with the Government's revised National Planning Policy Framework that was published in July?

Councillor Jane Urquhart replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor, and thank you Councillor Young for asking this question. So a National Planning Policy Framework is of course an important document which should help shape our planning decisions and is critical to our planning policy. It is important therefore that it should take account of the needs and opportunities of cities like Nottingham, but sadly the revised framework from government fails to do this in a number of ways. This Tory government, and its predecessor, and the coalition before that have made changes to planning policy that have successively weakened local accountability and increased central dictates, through making more and more developments subject to what's called permitted development status. We have seen this in terms of office buildings being able to be converted into flats, and the government's current proposals on fracking. In Nottingham we have always been clear that such decisions as this should be taken locally, by accountable local planning systems, and should not be dictated by national government policy.

There are a few positives in the new Planning Policy Framework, it does remain a succinct document and it does reinforce the need for a plan led system. It requires that all councils should have a local plan and that this should be reviewed every five years. It reinforces the need for high quality buildings and places and it's clear that cross boundary working must be in place. All of these things should be seen as positives, but they are of course high expectations and resource intensive, and of course all of this comes at a time as we've already discussed against a backdrop of severe cuts to council budgets.

Despite the apparent focus on housing in the new National Planning Policy Framework, I do feel somewhat underwhelmed and disappointed that it really doesn't provide the tools to solve the nation's housing crisis; the growing housing waiting lists, the rise in homelessness, the increasing costs of buying and renting, and the harm that this is doing to the economy and to people's life chances. It doesn't give us an ambitious vision for how we should fairly plan our nation. And I'm not alone in this sense of disappointment. Lord Porter, Chair of the Local Government Association, and possibly more well known to our Tory colleagues than to me, said "the new proposals fail to give councils the powers they need to ensure that planning permissions are built out quickly, with the necessary infrastructure in their local communities". So I wonder whether our colleagues on those benches will share my sentiment.

The new Housing Delivery Test within the Planning Policy Framework will see councils penalised with further loss of control over decision making if enough houses are not built, even though everyone knows that most house building is outside of a council's control. In Nottingham, we are performing well on house building at the moment so there's not at risk to us, but it is indicative of a further diminishing of accountable decision making for local communities.

A new nationally set methodology for calculating housing need has been introduced that will see more housing being built in already overheated local housing markets largely in the south east. The recent funding and public investment decisions that have just been discussed have made funds available to councils in the south east, and to councils who do not have the same desire to build as we do. So the imbalances that currently exist will be emphasised and our housing and regeneration needs within our city will not be addressed.

It would have been great if the new National Planning Policy Framework could have really been at the heart of how we plan and direct development investment across our city and our country. But it isn't, and it's a failed opportunity. The potential for housing growth, infrastructure investment, and wider development should be properly coordinated and could help rebalance the economy and support regeneration, but that opportunity has been missed. In Nottingham, we will of course continue to use our efforts to work with our local communities, with businesses in Nottingham, and with our neighbouring authorities to ensure that we support sustainable development within and around our City.

Universal Credit introduction

Councillor Merlita Bryan asked the following question of the Deputy Leader:

Can the Deputy Leader give an update from their meeting with the Department of Work and Pensions regarding the implementation of Universal Credit in Nottingham?

Councillor Graham Chapman replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Bryan for your question. Universal Credit is due to roll out in Nottingham in less than six weeks. From the middle of October, when someone makes a new claim or has a change in their circumstances they will transfer onto Universal Credit. Migration onto Universal Credit of existing benefit claimants whose circumstances do not change is due to begin in July next year and is expected to be completed by mid-2023. So full-blown use of Universal Credit in Nottingham is imminent. We have so far escaped.

As a result, following concerns raised by the National Audit Office about Universal Credit, I invited officers from the Department for Work and Pensions to meet with me. The meeting was friendly, it was constructive, and it was made up of people, civil servants, doing their best to minimise the damage done by what I consider to be a misconceived system. And I asked a number of questions, ones which concern our constituents. I asked about concerns that work coaches, the individuals assigned to help claimants, are not notified when a claimant leaves a message on their online journal; this sounds petty but it's very important if you're trying to get your Universal Credit sorted. I was told that if someone calls their work coach on the number

registered for them on their account, it will automatically create a journal entry for that call, so they will be alerted. This will need publicity so that people can understand.

I was told that unless they appeal, Personal Independent Payment, or the notorious PIP checks claimants do not have to go through a PIP reassessment unless previously notified in their acceptance letter. This too will need publicity, and it will be a relief to a great many people with disability, and that is a good thing. I was reassured that documents including Fit Notes can be scanned and submitted, you don't need the originals, and that claimants doing so will receive confirmation of receipt, reducing the risk of forms being lost. This, again, is progress, but it does leave the problem that not everyone has access to a scanner.

I raised concerns about the timing of a Universal Credit assessment potentially leaving the claimant out of pocket due to fluctuations in payment for any work they undertake. I was informed that the claimant's overall payments through Universal Credit would not be affected, but the key is the word overall. This is good, but it does not solve the problem because it is overall, of cash flow of people with few savings, and therefore probably the need to rely on food banks in the interim before the money starts flowing.

I asked about support for landlords, who have expressed concern that tenants may fall into rent arrears as a result of direct payments to the tenant. Where a landlord has concerns about a tenant's ability to pay, I was told then the landlord can assess the tenants' needs and if necessary apply for a managed payment to the landlord to be put in place. That means that you can bypass direct payments, and the payment can go directly to the landlord and not necessarily to the claimant. This is major, major progress, and something we have lobbied for as a Council. It could save a number of evictions and reduce the risk to our Housing Revenue account – we shouldn't underestimate that, the debts tend to accumulate. But again, the main thing is that it may very well help avoid a number of evictions, and it does mean that landlords have a lot more say in who receives direct payments and who doesn't, and that is a big breakthrough.

I asked about concerns where the household's entire Universal Credit payment is paid to one member of the household, for example the risk for people in abusive relationships where one partner withheld money from another. I was informed that in those circumstances individuals can request separate interviews and split household payments, which again is progress, but I can see that this is going to be difficult in practice. I asked about advance payments of Universal Credit during the initial assessment 'waiting' period. I was assured that work coaches will inform people of all their availability, and of financial liabilities, including any bank loans and Council Tax payments. The trouble is this advance payment is a loan, so it does not solve the problem that people will have to pay back the money from what in many cases will be a reduced budget forcing them into increased indebtedness.

So what are we doing as a council? We will be using funding available through the DWP for Assisted Digital Support – to get more of our residents to get online. We will directly, and indirectly through the voluntary sector, help provide personal budgeting support to ensure residents are prepared and supported through the process, and with their overall budgets, not just looking at their Universal Credit allocation. We will

be helping to publicise the pitfalls and support, we are helping to draw up a communications strategy with the DWP.

The DWP representatives have agreed to meet with me again before Christmas to discuss further concerns which may arise and to look at how rollout of Universal Credit in Nottingham is progressing. Having said all this, although Universal Credit is good as a concept, we as a party should accept that and I think we do, it has to be right to bring the different confusing allowances together, however it has been ruined by using it to cut allowances and deliberately to punish claimants. There is a disincentive punishment element, basically saying “you shouldn’t really be a claimant, should you?” And even after all the delays, the IT systems are still not prepared, and I don’t believe the smooth running that has been described to me is going to happen in practice.

Claimants are expected to effectively pay for the delay in processing from their own pockets. There is heavy dependence on IT use from a group of people who often cannot afford the IT in the first place. The increased debt will arise from delays and reductions, and this will increase the debt on our Housing Revenue account, affecting all Council tenants, and on our Council Tax collection, affecting all rate payers. It will increase pressure on food banks which are already struggling. And if there is one factor for me which indicates more than any other how flawed this implementation is, and how flawed this policy is and the way it’s been applied, it is that we will have to rely on voluntary food banks to close the gaps. This reliance on food banks, and the testing of people, and the complexity of the hoops people have to go through, and this reliance on building voluntary food banks into a social welfare system, there is something very, very wrong. It is the 21st Century, this shouldn’t be happening. For me, it belittles people, it robs them of their dignity, it is everything that we as a party try to avoid. This is not a sign of a civilised society, or of a government wanting to unite the country. Yet this is the sad state we’ve arrived at, and I’m not only angry and sad, the second time I’ve been angry this afternoon, about this as a member of the Labour party, I’m actually quite sad as a citizen of Nottingham, and quite sad and angry as a UK citizen that that’s the state we’re in. Thank you.

Late notification to Companies House by Robin Hood Energy

Councillor Jim Armstrong asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Energy and Environment:

Is the Portfolio Holder aware that after issuing an additional £7.5 million of additional shares Robin Hood Energy failed to submit the appropriate notification to Companies House within the prescribed timeframe which placed it in breach of the Companies Act; and has she asked the Chairman of the RHE’s board to account for this failure? If not, will she be doing so?

Councillor Sally Longford Replied as follows:

Thank you, I am aware. The 17/18 company accounts were filed within the prescribed timescale. Councillor Armstrong is referring to the allotment of shares, which requires the company to notify Companies House, following approval from the City Council. The company’s lawyers filed the notification as soon as practically possible but this was beyond the 30 days and therefore, technically late. These are

ultimately matters for the company and whilst the notification should have been undertaken within the timeframe, this wasn't possible in this instance, but it made no material difference to either the company or the Council and no penalties or charges were levied by Companies House for any such late filing. Therefore I think that Councillor Armstrong is probably trying to create some sort of storm in a teacup here, thank you.

In relation to an answer to a supplementary question, Councillor Jim Armstrong raised a point of order under Standing Order 21, which was not upheld but was noted by the Lord Mayor.

Staff employed by Enviroenergy

Councillor Jim Armstrong asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Energy and Environment:

Whilst the Portfolio Holder's predecessor previously confirmed that there are 43 members of staff employed at Enviroenergy; the company accounts state there are only 4 members of staff employed by the company; could the Portfolio Holder clarify this inconsistency?

Councillor Sally Longford replied as follows:

Thank you for the question. The four persons referred to in the company accounts are directors of the company. Enviroenergy staff are employed by Nottingham City Council and supplied to Enviroenergy, so they are not formally employees of the company. The 43 refers to the Nottingham City Council employees supplied to Enviroenergy by the City Council.

Traveller encampments

Councillor Andrew Rule asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Community Protection:

The Portfolio Holder will be aware of the issues at the beginning of the summer with travelling encampments across the City, but in particular the issues caused by the encampment on Ruddington Lane Park – will he consider utilising the council's rights under common law to instruct private bailiffs to evict travellers where there is evidence they are responsible for anti-social behaviour towards City residents as this would provide a swifter resolution as Rushcliffe Borough Council recently demonstrated with an encampment on Boundary Road which was removed within 48 hours?

Councillor Toby Neal replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor, and thank you Councillor Rule. Thank you for the question, and I know that he values the work that our officers have done over this, they have done some significant amount of work. I think that the issue that you've raised around the common law isn't as clear-cut as you would like it to be, but we do use it in terms of evaluating each encampment site. The use of bailiffs under common law is incredibly expensive in relation to what we do through other processes; also it

requires the immediate presence of Police to avoid any public order issues. There are implications in terms of how we enforce through the possession of the land, and how we can protect that land going through, and I'll explain that in a minute.

Over the last few years, the Council has considerably streamlined our eviction process, and got it down to a pretty effective process, so much so that we have been providing help and support to district authorities around us because of the issues that they've had. We've developed a single point of contact within the council in terms of the neighbourhoods, so everybody knows who they need to go to immediately to notify of land being taken. Getting people off the site is the outcome we seek, and we will use whatever tools are available to us. So common law is possible, but the preferred option generally is through court orders because that allows us to take possession over a longer period, so if people come back we immediately have the authority to remove them in, I believe, a six to nine months period, but I could stand to be corrected by Malcolm.

So we have that, and I'm aware that Rushcliffe did that, but there are also examples of local councils in the area around here where that actually has gone badly wrong because there were no Police in attendance, or not enough bailiffs turned up to do the work. I'm also personally much more comfortable with the idea of taking it through a formal legal process through the courts, so that there is no ambiguity in what we do.

So I would just say, we do assess given the circumstances, and we do make sure that in terms of what we do on sites where they are is we make sure we deliver all our safeguarding responsibilities, so we engage with them. We will often start a process of negotiation immediately, and from that then take some sense of how far we need to go with the legal actions and getting people off site. I'd just like to actually say that over the last few months, and I'm pretty sure you'd agree with me, that the work that our neighbourhood team have been doing around this across the city has been pretty good, and certainly I would offer full support to them, but I would say that we would look at things like common law in light of the circumstances, but generally that's not our preferred option. Thank you.

Confirmation of empty properties

Councillor Andrew Rule asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Community Protection:

Could the Portfolio Holder detail the process completed by the City Council to confirm a property is empty before writing to the homeowner to make enquiries confirming the same?

Councillor Toby Neal replied as follows:

Yes, thank you Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Rule for your question. Community Protection's Environmental Health and Safer Places team is responsible for identifying empty properties and securing their re-occupation. To conduct this work the Council Tax team periodically provides the team with a list of properties they believe to be empty and have been empty for at least six months. As resources permit each property will be visited by an officer who will try and determine the

property's apparent occupation status. That usually means knocking on the door to engage with any occupants, visiting and speaking to neighbours, and looking for other evidence that usually indicates that a property is unoccupied. That could be things like the accumulation of letters and mail in the hallway, unfurnished interiors etc. There are properties where this is difficult to do, flats are usually the most significant. Having determined that a property is probably empty the officer will write to the registered owner and interested parties in the property address and any other addresses that we can ascertain, whether that's through Council Tax or other avenues. Letters will be sent out, further visits will take place, further letters will be sent after a period of time because invariably most people don't respond to letters in the first instance, only later on.

Matching up records can sometimes be a bit of a problem, updating of Council Tax can take a bit longer to come through, so being aware of when a property is in use or not doesn't always match up with what our own officers on the ground will do.

In specific terms, why this is now a priority for us is that we identified a budget pressure that was we needed to reduce the cost of bed and breakfast and hotel accommodation, not just the cost but also the fact that it's not appropriate accommodation for some people who are reliant on us to help them in difficult circumstances. So using the empty lists and also using what intelligence we have on the ground which can include Councillors as well as CPOs and Neighbourhood Officers. We are feeding that into a process to identify properties as quickly as possible to bring them back into use where we can, whether that's through a variety of different processes in terms of whether properties are available to purchase, or willing to be rented out, or to be moved on. So there's a whole range of things there. There are some partnerships that we are putting in place around that as well. So that's a bit of a summary of the processes that are in place.

39 DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER URGENCY PROCEDURES

The Leader submitted a report detailing decisions taken under procedures which include exemption from Overview and Scrutiny Call-In procedure rules and special urgency Access to Information rules, as set out on pages 23-26 of the agenda.

RESOLVED to note the urgent decisions (exempt from call in) set out below:

| <u>Decision Reference Number</u> | <u>Date of Decision</u> | <u>Subject</u> | <u>Value of Decision</u> | <u>Reasons for Urgency</u> |
|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 3224 | 02/08/18 | Future Event Planning | Exempt | Due to very short time scales in the bidding process which failure to meet would result in Nottingham not being included within the bid |

40 THE CRIME AND DRUGS PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2015 TO 2020 (2018/19 REFRESH)

The Portfolio Holder for Community Protection presented a report to refresh the Crime and Drugs Partnership Plan 2015-2020, as set out on pages 27-50 of the agenda.

RESOLVED to approve the Partnership Plan 2015 to 2020 (2018/19 refresh), as set out in appendix 1 to the report.

41 MOTION

Moved by Councillor Linda Woodings, seconded by Councillor Neghat Khan:

The closure of Basford Hall Nursery by Nottingham College on Friday 27 July means the loss of an important community facility and could see some potential college students put off accessing education at Basford Hall in the future.

Nottingham College's own information shows the nursery was at 95% capacity in January 2018 and making a surplus. The last Ofsted inspection rated the nursery 'Good' and it is used by the children of 22 college students. Given the college is expanding it is likely that demand for nursery places will rise and therefore this council sees no good reason for its closure.

This council resolves to:

- Continue to support the parents, staff and local residents involved in the Save Nottingham College Nurseries Campaign.
- Lobby Nottingham College to provide nursery provision on their sites.
- Campaign to improve the accountability of Further Education establishments to the communities they serve.
- Look at ways to help users of the nursery find alternative child provision.
- Reaffirm our commitment to increasing the number of 2 year olds in Nottingham in nursery by 40%.

RESOLVED to carry the motion.

42 MOTION

Councillor Nick Raine declared an interest as an employee of a trade union; however after seeking advice, The Lord Mayor stated that this was not sufficient to preclude him from proposing, discussing or voting on the motion.

Moved by Councillor Nick Raine, seconded by Councillor Adelle Williams:

This council notes:

- Over £288 million has been injected into the local economy over the last three years as a result of the City Council's Procurement Strategy.
- Since 2014, a total of 567 contracts have been awarded to firms by the Council as part of its role to provide vital services to local people.

- 364 entry level jobs and apprenticeships have been created for local people as a result of the Council's Procurement Strategy.

This council believes:

- Procurement processes can and should be used to benefit the local economy and create jobs for local people.
- The practise of blacklisting is wrong and The Public Contracts Regulations should be more explicit in 'blacklists' as a specific ground to exclude bidders.
- No one should have their livelihood taken away from them on the basis that they are a member of a trade union.

The council resolves to:

- Continue with the current Procurement Strategy to use local suppliers wherever we can to help Nottingham's economy, creating business for local firms and jobs for local people.
- Ensure satisfactory evidence is provided by potential contractors that they do not currently practise 'blacklisting'.
- Lobby Government to make blacklisting a criminal offence and make it more explicit in the Public Contracts Regulations as a ground for bidders to be excluded.
- Ensure that contractors comply with any statutory provisions relating to trade unions, in particular with regards to collective agreements and trade union representatives.

RESOLVED to carry the motion.

43 MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

RESOLVED to note:

- (1) the appointment of Councillor Cate Woodward to replace Councillor Jackie Morris on Planning Committee;**
- (2) the appointment of Councillor Leslie Ayoola to replace Councillor Rosemary Healy on Planning Committee;**
- (3) the appointment of Councillor Nick Raine to replace Councillor Rosemary Healy on Audit Committee.**