

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL

held at the Council House, Nottingham,

on Monday 6 February 2006 at 2.00 pm

ATTENDANCES

| Councillor Munir | Lord Mayor |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Councillor Akhtar | Councillor G N Khan |
| Councillor Aslam | Councillor Klein |
| Councillor Bloomfield | Councillor Lee |
| Councillor Bull | Councillor Liversidge |
| Councillor Campbell | Councillor Long |
| Councillor Chapman | Councillor Malcolm |
| Councillor Charlesworth | Councillor Markin |
| Councillor A Clark | Councillor Marshall |
| Councillor C A Clarke | Councillor Mathews |
| Councillor B Clarke-Smith | Councillor Mir |
| Councillor Cobb | Councillor Morris |
| Councillor Collins | Councillor Packer |
| Councillor Cowan | Councillor Palmer |
| Councillor Cresswell | Councillor Parbutt |
| Councillor Culley | Councillor Price |
| Councillor Dewinton | Councillor Shaw |
| Councillor Edwards | Councillor J W E Smith |
| Councillor Foster | Councillor Spencer |
| Councillor Gibson | Councillor Stapleton |
| Councillor Griggs | Councillor Stephenson |
| Councillor Grocock | Councillor Sutton |
| Councillor Hartshorne | Councillor Taylor |
| Councillor Haymes | Councillor Trimble |
| Councillor Heppell | Councillor Unczur |
| Councillor Ibrahim | Councillor Urquhart |
| Councillor James | Councillor Wilson |
| Councillor A Khan | Councillor Wood |

70 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Smith declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to agenda item 7 – Members’ Allowances Scheme – Amendment, in that he was the only member that would be affected by the introduction of a Special Responsibility Allowance for Licensing Panel Chairs and left the Chamber prior to the item being discussed and voted upon.

71 PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Petitions

Councillor Wood submitted a petition to the Lord Mayor on behalf of members of the public who were dissatisfied with the current housing repairs service and called for the Council to exercise more control over its Arms Length Management Organisation, Nottingham City Homes.

Councillor Malcolm submitted a petition to the Lord Mayor on behalf of members of the public who requested the Council re-open and refurbish Breckswood Drive children’s playground as soon as possible.

72 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2006 be confirmed and signed by the Lord Mayor.

73 QUESTIONS

External Grants - Audit Commission Report

Councillor Stephenson asked the following question of the Deputy Leader of the Council:-

What steps are being taken to remedy the deficiencies revealed in the Audit Commission’s report on this Council’s applications for external grants?

Councillor Edwards replied as follows:-

Thank you, Lord Mayor, and I thank Councillor Stephenson for his question.

In asking this question I am assuming that the Councillor is referring to the Audit Commission report of October 2004, which talks about the Council's performance in producing grant claims and returns and not about applications for external grants.

There are recommendations in the report that we have picked up on and they are being made with the intention of improving the consistency with which these procedures have been applied. They are as follows:-

- the procedures of grant claim preparation and submission as practised, should be shared between departments and this recommendation was implemented before the report was issued. It includes monitoring of ground preparation and submission for European funding projects which should be improved;
- a review of the relevant officers' understanding of the requirements of European funding schemes was undertaken early in 2005 and instructions were re-written following that review;
- that we should maintain a central register of grant claims. A revised electronic register was introduced to departments during 2005, allowing detailed reports and the submission of grant claims to be produced centrally and this is an approach which has been applauded by the Audit Commission. The report says that the register should be notified when departments apply for grant money and that register is set up so that claims cannot be submitted without being registered. Authorisation of a claim is not possible without a reference generated by the register;
- a further recommendation is to provide a list of claims due, together with the dates of the external audit, at the beginning of the financial year. Officers have worked closely with the Audit Commission team in 2005 to identify those claims requiring audit that will be submitted by the Council.

The City Council's approach to the management and the production and submission of grant claims has improved considerably since the Audit Commission's report was produced by building on existing

procedures. There are a further range of activities for improvement in place.

Government Green Paper - Making the Connection

Councillor Ibrahim asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Development, Land and Regeneration:-

Would the Portfolio Holder for Development, Land and Regeneration please comment on the recent Government Green Paper - Making the Connection - which sets out a clear strategy for dealing with the long term unemployed and those living on incapacity benefit. What impact does he think this strategy will have upon Nottingham?

Councillor Clark replied as follows:-

Thank you, Lord Mayor, and I thank Councillor Ibrahim for his question.

In terms of its broadest objectives and principles we welcome the recent Government Green Paper on reforming the welfare state.

The fundamental issue of encouraging and empowering people to take advantage of employment opportunities is a good one.

In summary the green paper on welfare reform is to play a crucial part in maintaining the UK's competitive economic position. Its goal is to achieve a national economic activity rate of 80%. To help achieve this the Government is to target lone parents, invalidity benefits claimants and older people who want to work, but due to the benefits trap and other personal issues are unable to do so.

In relation to its impact on Nottingham, the headline objective of reaching an economic activity rate of 80% is in keeping with the economic and social activity already underway within the City Development Strategy. Nottingham's current economic activity rate is around 64%. To reinforce Nottingham's pro-active stance, Making the Connection and Nottingham Works are two excellent examples of where we are already ahead of the game. They have already made in-roads into previously hard to reach areas both geographically and socially.

In summary, 45% of Nottingham Works successful outcomes are male and 36% are from the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities. In addition, 12% of Nottingham Works clients are already classed as disabled. Making the Connection has had excellent success with incoming companies. The Jury's Inn case study is one that shows over 90% of people on the programme have gained and retained employment. In total, both schemes have accounted for nearly 4,000 people, enough to argue that serious inroads can be made on this particular issue.

Indeed it was only last Friday that the City welcomed a ministerial visit by John Hutton, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, to outline to him the current progress and best practice being made locally not only through Nottingham City Council, but also through our partners such as the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the colleges of further education and Job Centre Plus, through mechanisms such as the Skills Board and delivered through successful projects such as Making the Connection and Nottingham Works.

Connecting local people into local jobs and really targeting those on incapacity benefit, older workers and lone parents is the top priority for Nottingham partners. We believe we could build on our work and engage with the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) and other keen Government departments so that we can strengthen our approach and respond to the challenges set out in the Green Paper.

To summarise, the thing Nottingham and its partners already have in place is the Nottingham Skills Board. It is a conurbation wide organisation including all key partners, community, private sector as well as public agencies. This is defining and driving the skills and employment agenda for Nottingham. Making the Connection is our approach to make sure we all work together to connect local people to local job opportunities in key sectors, new development opportunities and with the major employers such as Jury's Inn. With a virtual organisation, underpinning our approach has been an agreement to work across all existing agencies and organisations in a seamless and joined up way. This will soon involve staff being seconded from all the major players into a co-located team. Our local area agreement has a strong focus on worklessness with two of our key targets looking at shifting people from incapacity benefit into work (including reducing the disparity between our most

disadvantaged wards and the rest) and a compact. The agreement has been drafted and already has the support of all the agencies. We decided to hold-off the signing up to the compact until we can see how it might be possible to adjust it in the light of these Green Paper proposals.

Members might be interested in an article that appeared in IRS Employments Review, which featured Nottingham and its skills agenda. It is rather long I'm afraid, Lord Mayor, but I think it does tell the story quite well.

“Nottingham Works is a team set up by Jobcentre Plus - the state-run job-placement service - and Nottingham City Council to put this strategy into action. Five employability brokers, one social inclusion recruitment co-ordinator and a Jobcentre Plus secondee, work with internal recruiters and external organisations to open up employment opportunities for those who are disadvantaged in the jobs market.

When the city council was experiencing acute difficulties in recruiting and retaining residential social workers and support staff a few years ago, it was agreed that a more targeted innovative approach to recruitment and retention was needed.

Having secured national and regional funding to help reduce unemployment, the city council worked with a local college to design and run a 12 week pre-employment training course. Using a less traditional and simple approach to recruitment advertising under a “Do you want to work with children and Nottingham City Council?” banner, the organisation leafleted and put up notices in local authority wards with high unemployment.

Following the success of this initial campaign similar initiatives were rolled out to fill administrative and catering assistant vacancies. Since then the city council's reach to attract marginalised groups has broadened and its initiatives have multiplied.

Nottingham City Council has at least 200 vacancies annually for entry-level administrative posts and there are many more within the city limits. Nottingham Works has therefore teamed up with South Nottingham College and The People's College to run a 10- or 12-week course that develops trainees in key areas such as IT,

customer care and communication, as well as helping them with application and interview preparation.

“We now run around six admin academies three times a year and link in to local private employers to try and place people in work after the course”, explains Sharon Ayrey, employability broker. “If trainees do not gain employment straight away, or if they have not undertaken the course, there is an admin pool that enables us to match their details to future opportunities.”

Recognising that the city council’s established recruitment process may appear daunting to those who have been out of work for some time, the Nottingham Works Team has adapted both the application form and process for its corporate pool recruitment to make them more accessible to those seeking administrative work.

“Instead of the normal application form and job specification, we have developed a simpler format to make it easier and quicker for people to apply”, Ayrey explains. “And instead of the traditional, three-panel interview setup, we use a much more practical and appropriate selection technique.”

Assessment for the admin pool takes the form of work-sample testing, where candidates are observed as they undertake a series of tests, including an in-tray exercise and IT, telephone and team tests. According to Ayrey, this skills-based approach is far more relevant and far less intimidating an approach to selection for those who may not have recent experience of an interview setting. As she points out: “if a person is familiar with being asked lots of questions at interview they will have the confidence to perform in that situation, but that is far less likely if someone has been unemployed for a long time.” ”

Following the meeting on Friday, we have collectively been invited to submit a bid to the Department of Work and Pensions for a pilot to build upon and expand our current good work. Given the political priority, enhanced resources and increased freedoms and flexibilities I am sure that Nottingham can become a true leader in this field with all the economic and social benefits that result. With regard to the Green Paper, it is perhaps prudent to point out that lone parents and older workers are also included and for policy makers, deliverers and the press to achieve a balanced approach to its coverage.

National Ice Arena - Amir Khan

Councillor Wood asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:-

Would the Leader of the Council comment on the recent positive publicity generated by Amir Khan's fight at the National Ice Arena which reflected positively upon both the City and the NIC, and does he share my belief that the positive impact of the publicity will long outlast the 75 seconds that it took for Amir Khan to win?

Councillor Collins replied as follows:-

Thank you, Lord Mayor.

Can I say, whatever people's views about boxing, its undoubtedly the case that Amir Khan's fight, just over a week ago at the National Ice Arena, was great news for the City and brilliant publicity for Nottingham.

Economically, the event brought thousands of visitors and their spending power to the Arena, with all our hotels full on the night and many visitors having to travel out to the conurbation and beyond for accommodation.

The fight was also watched by an estimated 4 million viewers, many of whom tuned in for the whole programme during which the commentators, Jim Rosenthal and Barry McGuigan, spoke enthusiastically about the Ice Stadium as a "stunning" venue for boxing.

In fact boxing promoter Frank Warren was so impressed by Nottingham and the Ice Arena that he has pledged to stage another Amir Khan fight at the venue and to bring a World Championship fight to the City as soon as possible.

After the match, Amir Khan was out and about in the City, helping to put Nottingham in the media spotlight for all the right reasons. Its also worth mentioning that while he was in Nottingham, Amir Khan took time out to support a collection at the Ice Arena for the Lord

Mayor's Pakistan Earthquake Appeal and donated his boxing gloves to be auctioned for the same purpose.

Lord Mayor, boxing is a big part of Nottingham's history and we have a number of boxing clubs in the City that are thriving today. In Bulwell and Lenton, for example, there are amateur clubs that give youngsters a chance to get fit and to do something other than to hang around on the streets. In the west of the City, Bilborough Boxing Club, based at the Harvey Haddon Stadium is going from strength to strength and indeed Rob Anderton, who also won his fight at the Ice Arena on Saturday night, is a local lad that started his boxing career there.

Nottingham also has a number of other notable boxers based in or originating from the City including World IBO Welterweight Champion Jawaid Khaliq who comes from the Meadows and Carl Froch who defended his British and Commonwealth Super Middleweight title at the Ice Arena just over a month ago.

Having met both fighters, I am bound to say that I was impressed by how proud they were of Nottingham and, above all, about their commitment to give something back to the communities they were brought up in. Both Jawaid Khaliq and Carl Froch, I believe, are great role models, showing what can be achieved through hard work, training and commitment and we should be proud to know that they come from Nottingham.

Finally, I am pleased to say that boxing is not the only major sporting event that's either been to the City or is coming to the City over the coming months. Last week the Ice Stadium hosted a major international ice dancing event, next month we have the Inter-County Cross Country Running championship at Wollaton Park, the Nottingham Open Tennis Tournament returns to the Tennis Centre in July and the British Open Squash Championship is at Nottingham University in September.

Nottingham's a big city and it's great to know that we are able to attract big sporting events to what is the capital of the East Midlands.

Respect for Nottingham survey

Councillor Mathews asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Area Working:-

Would the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Area Working please update Council as to the results of the recent Respect for Nottingham survey and would she also inform Council on recent announcements concerning prostitution and the likely impact they have on the City?

Councillor Palmer replied as follows:-

Thank you, my Lord Mayor, and can I thank Councillor Mathews for his question.

The latest wave of the Anti-Social Behaviour Survey took place during September 2005. The results came through in November and were available publicly from 20 November 2005.

The findings continue to provide evidence that the 'Respect for Nottingham' initiative is having a marked positive impact on anti-social behaviour in Nottingham. Overall, there has been more consistent improvement in the last six months than in the previous six months.

Awareness of the 'Respect for Nottingham' initiative remains at the same level as in March 2005, with 41% partially or fully aware, although there is an increase in the proportion of people who are 'fully aware'. We are currently developing a new communication strategy to maintain and build on this.

The authors of the report concluded that the findings continue to provide evidence that the 'Respect for Nottingham' initiative is having a positive impact on anti-social behaviour in Nottingham. However, given the nature of anti-social behaviour and its underlying causes, it is not surprising that some problems persist or reoccur across the City.

There was good news on anti-social behaviour; the proportion of respondents that nominated at least one anti-social behaviour incident as a problem has reduced significantly since March 2005.

Of the 25 anti-social behaviour issues surveyed for neighbourhoods, 9 have improved significantly, 15 have not shown significant change and 1 has got significantly worse.

Improvements were for speeding cars, motor bikes, litter, dog fouling, street drinking, drug dealing, drugs misuse and harassment, street begging or rough sleeping and abandoned cars.

The area that got significantly worse was binge drinking. However, this may have been linked to the increased media coverage on the issue, in advance of the liberalisation of licensing hours.

For the City as a whole, five areas improved significantly and five were seen as significantly worse. Speeding cars, street begging, litter, graffiti and fly-posting showed improvement.

Those that deteriorated were binge drinking, street drinking, discarded needles, assault, threatening behaviour, verbal abuse and arson. I am quite happy to circulate the percentages if people would like them, I just thought it would be very difficult for people to take them in if I read them out now.

The second part of the question is about prostitution. On 17 January 2006, the Government announced its long-term strategy for reducing street prostitution, ruling out the idea of "managed zones".

It promises better enforcement of laws against kerb-crawling and those who exploit prostitutes, more opportunities for women to leave prostitution, including better links between Police and projects that work with prostitutes, and an increased focus on preventing children, particular vulnerable children, from being lured into prostitution.

These proposals build on, and no doubt were strongly influenced by, the approach of 'Respect for Nottingham' and our child protection work, which was witnessed at first hand by Ministers who visited us. Our approach has always prioritised the protection of children from exploitation through close working between our Social Services teams and the Vice Squad. We have always warned against 'tolerance or managed zones'. Through Respect, we have taken a 'zero tolerance' approach to kerb-crawlers and with our change

programme its been significant. We have also successfully worked to help and support prostitutes to stabilise and exit this lifestyle.

As for the announcement that there will be a change to the definition of a brothel, in order that two women can work together indoors for safety purposes, we will continue to work closely with the Vice Squad to ensure prostitution is not forced indoors. They are focussing on child protection and tackling human trafficking. We will continue to make full use of existing and new legislation which enables us to crack down on anti-social behaviour and even, where necessary, close down houses where there are criminal or other anti-social activities taking place.

74 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHILDREN ACT 2004 – LEAD MEMBER ACCOUNTABILITY ARRANGEMENTS

The report of Councillor Collins (as set out on page 227 of the agenda) was submitted.

RESOLVED on the motion of Councillor Collins, seconded by Councillor Edwards, that:-

- (1) the decisions of the Leader of the Council in respect of:-**
 - (i) the re-designation of the Portfolio Holder for Education and Training, currently Councillor Graham Chapman, as the Portfolio Holder and Lead Member for Education and Children’s Services from 1 April 2006 be noted;**
 - (ii) the re-designation of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Social Services, currently Councillor David Trimble, as the Portfolio Holder and Lead Member for Adult Services, Housing and Health from 1 April 2006 be noted;**
- (2) the formal delegation of responsibility for Youth and Play Services from the Portfolio Holder for Education and Children’s Services to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Community Services and Tourism from 1 April 2006 be approved;**
- (3) the amendments to Appendix 6 (F) (pages 150, 152 and 153) of the City Council Constitution as from 1 April 2006 to capture the**

revised accountability arrangements, as shown in appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

75 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME - AMENDMENT

The report of Councillor Collins (as set out on page 236 of the agenda) was submitted.

RESOLVED on the motion of Councillor Collins, seconded by Councillor Edwards that:-

- (1) the views of the Panel regarding the special responsibility of the role of Licensing Panel Chair be supported in principle but a lesser allowance of £2,645 be allocated;**
- (2) that the remaining recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel be adopted in full;**
- (3) that the revised Members' Allowances Scheme, set out in Appendix B to this report, be adopted with effect from 1 April 2006.**

**76 MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR SUTTON –
EDUCATION WHITE PAPER, “HIGHER STANDARDS, BETTER
FOR ALL”**

Councillor Sutton informed Council that he had withdrawn his motion.

**77 MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR CHAPMAN –
EDUCATION WHITE PAPER, “HIGHER STANDARDS, BETTER
FOR ALL”**

MOVED by Councillor Chapman, seconded by Councillor Collins:-

Nottingham City Council welcomes proposals in the Education White Paper which reinforce the strategic role of the Local Authority (LA); which put greater emphasis on personalised learning; and which promote the 14-19 vocational curriculum - to quote but three examples. It nevertheless urges Government to ensure that the greater autonomy for schools promised in the Bill does not lead to

selection or to unregulated expansion and contraction of school places, both of which would be detrimental to education provision in the city.

MOVED by Councillor Sutton by way of amendment and seconded by Councillor Chapman:-

Insert after "Nottingham City Council" on line one:-

"believes that the over-riding objective of schooling must be to help every child achieve the best and most appropriate education and preparation for life. It".

Insert after "It nevertheless urges Government to ensure that the greater autonomy of schools promised in the Bill does not lead to" on line seven:-

"an uncoordinated admissions policy and".

Insert after "selection" on line eight:-

"by academic ability".

Insert after "or to unregulated expansion and contraction of school places, both of which would be detrimental to education provision in the city." on line eight:-

"It believes that education services should remain accountable to local people through local democracy."

The amended motion to read:-

Nottingham City Council believes that the over-riding objective of schooling must be to help every child achieve the best and most appropriate education and preparation for life. It welcomes proposals in the Education White Paper which reinforce the strategic role of the Local Authority (LA); which put greater emphasis on personalised learning; and which promote the 14-19 vocational curriculum – to quote but three examples. It nevertheless urges Government to ensure that the greater autonomy for schools promised in the Bill does not lead to an uncoordinated admissions policy and selection by academic ability, or to unregulated expansion

and contraction of school places, both of which would be detrimental to education provision in the city. It believes that education services should remain accountable to local people through local democracy.

After discussion the amendment was put to the vote and was carried.

MOVED by Councillor Cobb by way of amendment and seconded by Councillor Cowan:-

Insert after “which puts greater emphasis on personalised learning;”:-

“which support setting or grouping of children of similar ability and attainment;”.

Delete “but three”, insert “several”.

Revised motion then reads:

Nottingham City Council believes that the over-riding objective of schooling must be to help every child achieve the best and most appropriate education and preparation for life. It welcomes proposals in the Education White Paper which reinforce the strategic role of the Local Authority (LA); which put greater emphasis on personalised learning; which support setting or grouping of children of similar ability and attainment; and which promote the 14-19 vocational curriculum – to quote several examples. It nevertheless urges Government to ensure that the greater autonomy for schools promised in the Bill does not lead to an uncoordinated admissions policy and selection by academic ability, or to unregulated expansion and contraction of school places, both of which would be detrimental to education provision in the city. It believes that education services should remain accountable to local people through local democracy.

After discussion the amendment was put to the vote and was carried.

MOVED by Councillor Culley by way of amendment and seconded by Councillor Cowan:-

Insert after “which puts greater emphasis on personalised learning;”:-

“which support parental choice;”.

Revised motion then reads:

Nottingham City Council believes that the over-riding objective of schooling must be to help every child achieve the best and most appropriate education and preparation for life. It welcomes proposals in the Education White Paper which reinforce the strategic role of the Local Authority (LA); which put greater emphasis on personalised learning; which support parental choice; which support setting or grouping of children of similar ability and attainment; and which promote the 14-19 vocational curriculum – to quote several examples. It nevertheless urges Government to ensure that the greater autonomy for schools promised in the Bill does not lead to an uncoordinated admissions policy and selection by academic ability, or to unregulated expansion and contraction of school places, both of which would be detrimental to education provision in the city. It believes that education services should remain accountable to local people through local democracy.

After discussion the amendment was put to the vote and was not carried.

After further discussion the substantive motion, as amended, was put to the vote and was carried and the Council RESOLVED that:-

Nottingham City Council believes that the over-riding objective of schooling must be to help every child achieve the best and most appropriate education and preparation for life. It welcomes proposals in the Education White Paper which reinforce the strategic role of the Local Authority (LA); which put greater emphasis on personalised learning; which support setting or grouping of children of similar ability and attainment; and which promote the 14-19 vocational curriculum – to quote several examples. It nevertheless urges Government to ensure that the greater autonomy for schools promised in the Bill does not lead to an uncoordinated admissions policy and selection by

academic ability, or to unregulated expansion and contraction of school places, both of which would be detrimental to education provision in the city. It believes that education services should remain accountable to local people through local democracy.

**78 MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR EDWARDS –
TRANSFORMING NOTTINGHAM’S NEIGHBOURHOODS**

MOVED by Councillor Edwards, seconded by Councillor Collins:-

This Council welcomes the progress made in our neighbourhoods as shown by the massive investment into our city’s schools, neighbourhood environmental schemes, street lights and paving as well as a range of other initiatives. This Council further recognises that Transforming Nottingham’s Neighbourhoods is a major priority for the City Council, and welcomes the city’s commitment to further investment into our estates and inner city areas including the Leisure Transformation programme, pavement improvements and environmental schemes.

MOVED by Councillor Cowan by way of amendment and seconded by Councillor Culley:-

Delete the words:-

“the progress made in our neighbourhoods as shown by the massive investment into our city’s schools, neighbourhood environmental schemes, street lights and paving as well as a range of other initiatives. This Council further recognises that Transforming Nottingham’s Neighbourhoods is a major priority for the City Council, and welcomes the city’s commitment to further investment into our estates and inner city areas including the Leisure Transformation programme,”.

Amended motion to read:-

This Council welcomes pavement improvements and environmental schemes.

After discussion the amendment was put to the vote and was not carried.

After further discussion the motion was put to the vote and was carried and the Council RESOLVED that:-

This Council welcomes the progress made in our neighbourhoods as shown by the massive investment into our city's schools, neighbourhood environmental schemes, street lights and paving as well as a range of other initiatives. This Council further recognises that Transforming Nottingham's Neighbourhoods is a major priority for the City Council, and welcomes the city's commitment to further investment into our estates and inner city areas including the Leisure Transformation programme, pavement improvements and environmental schemes.

79 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

RESOLVED that the following amended committee memberships to reflect changes to political balance after the Wollaton East and Lenton Abbey by-election of 5 May 2005 be noted:-

- (i) the appointment of Councillor Stephenson as a member of the Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee;**
- (ii) the appointment of Councillor Sutton as a member of the Overview and Scrutiny (Call-In) Sub-Committee;**
- (iii) the resignation of Councillor Stapleton from the Regulatory Committee and the appointment of Councillor Foster as her replacement;**
- (iv) the resignation of Councillor Bloomfield from the Health Scrutiny Standing Panel and the appointment of Councillor Long as her replacement.**

80 AMENDMENT TO THE SCHEDULE OF FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS

RESOLVED that the schedule of Council meetings be amended by bringing forward the 3 April 2006 meeting of Council, one week to be held instead on Monday 27 March 2006.

The meeting concluded at 6.54 pm.

Council Question requiring a written response

Councillor Stephenson asked the following question of the Deputy Leader:-

The Audit Commission's report into the 'Performance of the Council in Producing Grant Claims and Returns' for 2003/2004 described the 'promptness of submission and quality of grant claims' as 'poor'. Would he inform the Council what the comparable performance was in 2004/5? Would he care to predict what the comparable performance will be in 2005/6?

The following response was circulated to all members on 14 February 2006 as part of the Council minutes:-

The Audit Commission's Audit and Inspection Letter for 2004/05 outlines the District Auditor's evaluation of performance on the management and submission of grant claims. This notes an improvement in that fewer claims, as a proportion of the total audited, were issued with a qualification letter as a result of concerns raised during the audit (34% in 2003/04, 17% in 2004/05).

The District Auditor also notes the late timing in his 2003/04 report and the limited extent to which, therefore, procedures could be corrected in order to provide better outcomes before the financial year-end.

In respect of your question regarding the financial year 2005/06, improved procedures are now in place, finance and other related staff continue to improve those processes and share best practice and the strong cooperation that exists between key finance staff and the local Audit Commission team supports this. I would, therefore, expect comparable performance to improve in 2005/06.