

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL

held at the Council House, Nottingham,

on Monday 14 July 2008 at 2.00 pm

ATTENDANCES

✓ Councillor B Grocock	Sheriff
✓ Councillor Ahmed	✓ Councillor A Khan
✓ Councillor Akhtar	Councillor G Khan
✓ Councillor Arnold	Councillor Klein
✓ Councillor Aslam	Councillor Lee
✓ Councillor Benson	✓ Councillor Liversidge
Councillor Bryan	✓ Councillor Long
✓ Councillor Bull	✓ Councillor MacLennan
✓ Councillor Campbell	✓ Councillor Malcolm
✓ Councillor Chapman	✓ Councillor Marshall
✓ Councillor Clark	✓ Councillor Mellen
✓ Councillor Clarke-Smith	✓ Councillor Mir
✓ Councillor Collins	✓ Councillor Munir
✓ Councillor Cresswell	✓ Councillor Newton
✓ Councillor Culley	✓ Councillor Oldham
Councillor Davie	✓ Councillor Packer
✓ Councillor Dewinton	✓ Councillor Parbutt
Councillor Edwards	✓ Councillor Price
✓ Councillor Foster	✓ Councillor Smith
✓ Councillor Gibson	✓ Councillor Spencer
✓ Councillor Griggs	✓ Councillor Sutton
✓ Councillor Hartshorne	✓ Councillor Trimble
Councillor Heppell	Councillor Unczur
✓ Councillor Ibrahim	✓ Councillor Urquhart
✓ Councillor James	✓ Councillor Watson
✓ Councillor Johnson	✓ Councillor Wildgust
✓ Councillor Jones	✓ Councillor Williams
	✓ Councillor Wood

27 CHAIR OF MEETING

RESOLVED that in the absence of the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor, the Sheriff, Councillor Brian Grocock be appointed as Chair for the meeting.

28 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Liversidge declared a personal interest in agenda item 8, Nottingham's Future: A Core Strategy Green Paper as a Council appointed director of EnviroEnergy Limited, which did not preclude him from speaking or voting on this item.

29 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions or petitions were submitted to the meeting.

30 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 6 and 9 June 2008, be confirmed and signed by the Sheriff.

31 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Leader informed Council that in honour of Nelson Mandela's ninetieth birthday on 18 July 2008, birthday cards had been placed at the Council House and Central Library for local people to sign. An intercultural event was held on 12 July 2008 which celebrated and showcased to other European cities the work Nottingham had been doing towards community cohesion as part of the European year of intercultural dialogue. The Leader proposed that the Council join the National Body for Local Authority Action for Southern Africa with a view to working with other councils in the UK on initiatives providing practical support for people in that region.

The Chief Executive also announced the following awards:

Nottingham City Libraries received an award from the Black History Foundation for the East Midlands region in recognition of the Black Family History event which took place at St Ann's Library. Its purpose was to recognise, celebrate and illuminate the varied contribution of Black Heritage to Britain's culture.

Nottingham City Library and Information Services, as a partner in 'Picture the Past', an initiative which makes historic images from the library and museum collections of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Derby and Derbyshire, was one of only 3 projects to be short-listed from a national entry of over 50, and received a 'Highly Commended' award. The judges said that it was 'an excellent example of a multi-authority partnership delivering tangible benefits for local people, encouraging resource-sharing, improving access and offering particular benefits for older people'.

The Council's Works Perks Scheme took home an impressive three awards at the HR Excellence Awards at the beginning of the month, beating stiff competition from employers including McDonalds and Specsavers. The Council were winners of the most effective benefits strategy, the most effective use of internal communications and an HR Excellence Gold Award for what judges described as a 'beacon of good practice'.

The sport, leisure and parks team had received commendations from the Civic Society for two groundbreaking developments. Heskey Park, as part of the regeneration scheme in St Ann's, offered a wide range of much-needed facilities for children of all ages, and the Valley Road Water Meadow was an outstanding conservation project, delivered in partnership with the Environment Agency, that had been designed to act as a flood defence when necessary, while also increasing biodiversity and acting as a nature reserve.

Beechdale Leisure Centre had been re-accredited with the QUEST Award, a national quality award for leisure facilities awarded by Central Government and Sport England, after a rigorous assessment that saw its score increase by 2%.

The Lawn Tennis Association had recognised Nottingham Tennis Centre as the best club in the country for disabled players, which is a tremendous boost as they prepare to host the world's largest disabled tennis tournament, the World Team Cup, there next year.

All the teams across the Council were congratulated for their dedication and high level of service.

Council were informed, with regret, of the death of Christine Russell, who was very active in the voluntary and community sector, particularly in family care.

It was with great regret that Council were also informed of the death on 12 June 2008 of Councillor Michael Cowan, aged 73.

Councillor Cowan was first elected to the Council to represent Wollaton in 1971. Most recently he sat on the Overview and Scrutiny, Wollaton and Lenton Abbey Area 7, Development Control and Audit Committees. He was appointed Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group in May 2004 and Leader in May 2008.

The funeral service was held on Monday 23 June at Wilford Crematorium.

The Council stood in silence in tribute to their memories.

32 QUESTIONS

Funding of Public Transport Initiatives

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

Would the Deputy Leader care to comment on what the financial options are for funding the expansion of public transport initiatives including the tram?

Councillor Chapman replied as follows:-

Over the next few years, Nottingham is likely to see an increase in the number of new homes, a prediction for greater Nottingham is around 60,000. I think that's probably an exaggeration but it is something of that quantity. Possibly another 14,000 jobs by 2015, and already we have got congestion costs which have been calculated at £160 million a year. We therefore need to look ahead and, quite candidly, we need the tram to link up workplaces. We

need bus routes to connect people to jobs and we need an interchange at the station which is going to connect the city to the rest of the country, if this city is to flourish and respond to the challenges.

All of this will benefit business, all of it will reduce congestion and all of it will help create a modern city whilst many other cities without this vision will be struggling to cope. But this does come at a cost. Two new tram lines will cost £67 million contribution from the Council, although the Government will be paying 75% and that is worth remembering, people do tend to forget.

We are looking for £10 million contribution to the hub of the station interchange and £2.7 million per annum for link buses which link workplaces, go into estates and encourage people to use the bus rather than the car. All this needs to be paid for and there have been a number of suggestions, mainly from commerce who will be the beneficiaries.

A few years ago, the suggestion from the Chamber of Commerce was road tolling, but we have dismissed road tolling and we have dismissed it for a number of reasons. First of all the charge - the cost is likely to be £5 per head per visit which I think would be off putting and I think the Chamber of Commerce would think so too. It is difficult in Nottingham to get a configuration which allows you technically to do road tolling as there is no nice, neat ring road to be able to apply it to.

In addition there would be an impact on retail and Nottingham is still a serious major retail sector and we cannot afford to jeopardise that because it creates jobs, it creates wealth and it encourages visitors.

Finally on the road tolling – 50% of the costs of the revenue from road tolling is spent on overheads which makes it an inefficient tax.

In recent weeks, I have had a suggestion from a major player in the city that we ought to be charging the cost of £80 million to the council tax. That is not possible, council tax would rise by £146 for one year, I am not prepared to go to the electorate with that and I do not think anybody else would be. It would be a 12% increase, so even if you got away with it politically, which you couldn't, the government would cap it and in addition you would have no money

for anything else and you would only be charging Nottingham people for a problem which is a conurbation wide issue.

Then we have had the Chamber of Commerce coming forward with the sale of assets. Now for a sophisticated organisation, I would have thought they could have done a bit better than that, simply because to sell the level of assets you need to raise the £11 million needed per year. I am sure people do know that the total amount that all our assets raise over a year in rental is something in the region of £12 million. To sacrifice the amount you need in order to raise £11 million would be somewhat foolhardy, so I would have thought they would have worked that out. However the impact on the council tax would be exactly the same in the long run because you would lose your revenue so we are back to square one.

The other suggestion, which in theory is slightly more practical for raising some of the revenue, is the sale of the Bus Company. I do not know what the value of the Bus Company is but it is only raising something like £½ million per annum so there would not be a massive revenue loss. But can you imagine the stupidity of selling off the Bus Company in order to purchase a tram when the whole system is dependent on the integration of the two systems. That would be the last thing you would do.

The success of the Nottingham Tram relies entirely on the integration that we have managed to provide by owning our own Bus Company and therefore to sell it at this stage would be folly. So we are gradually running out of options.

The final option would be a supplementary business rate which the government will be allowing us to create. However I think that rate can only be up to 2p in the pound and that would raise about £4 million. That would only be a small contribution. I can imagine the major protestors about a creation of supplementary business rate to pay for the tram would indeed be the whole of business and not just the businesses that are currently expected to pay for the road tolling, and I can imagine the Chamber of Commerce would be even more outraged by that, so we end up without any other options if we are to provide the transport system which business would benefit from in the long run in this city and which we have to provide if we have any courage and vision.

So we are therefore left with the Workplace Parking Charge. I would prefer not to have to impose any tax at all but if there is a beauty to it, it is that it has to be paid by those who contribute the most congestion. It will be paid by those who benefit most from the investment and it is not just another burden on City Council tax payers. It will be spread across all those who benefit from Nottingham City and its facilities, that is the conurbation and people travelling to work within the city.

Only 10% of the cost of the workplace parking goes in overheads, it is actually a very efficient imposition and a very efficient levy. There are some facts which I do not think the Chamber has passed on as clearly as it could, to some of the employees of its firms.

First of all, this is a levy on the employer and not the employee. I have met people who think that they will individually get a charge, like they would get a council tax charge, which is not the case. For those firms with fewer than 10 spaces, there will be exemptions and that means that the vast majority of firms within this city will not pay, and finally this levy is not anti car. The whole purpose of this is to invest in transport systems to get people off the roads, to enable those who need to use the roads and do not have any alternative to get to their workplace, without having to pay the cost of being stuck in traffic jams which can in itself be very expensive. So that is the reason for it and we will be pressing ahead with it and we do not intend to flinch on this matter because we know it is the right thing for this city. The children of the future of our city will not forgive us if we do not go ahead and provide a proper tram network, a decent station and buses which get people to work from our estates and from our inner cities.

Failing Schools in Nottingham

Councillor Clarke-Smith asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services:-

Does the Portfolio Holder agree with the comments recently made by Schools Secretary Ed Balls that schools where less than 30% of pupils are achieving of A-C grades, including Maths and English, are 'failing schools'?

Does the Portfolio Holder acknowledge that in Nottingham there are 10 of these so called 'failing' schools according to this definition? Can the Portfolio Holder give a date expected for delivering these schools from their status as 'failing' schools to a place where they will achieve more than 30% of pupils gaining A-C grades including Maths and English?

Councillor Mellen replied as follows:-

Thank you, Sheriff and may I thank Councillor Clarke-Smith for his question.

National Challenge announced recently by Mr Balls is a supportive initiative to ensure that the drive to raise standards in our secondary schools continues with the aim that in every school in the country, at least 30% of our pupils will receive 5, or more, good GCSEs, including English and Maths, by 2011.

It is not a mechanism for naming failing schools as Councillor Clarke-Smith suggests, despite how many parts of the media have presented this announcement. Rather it is about an ambitious goal, a package of support and challenge to continue school improvement.

Nottingham has been very successful in raising standards since becoming a unitary authority in 1998. The number of pupils gaining 5 A*-C grades has risen from 26% across the city to 53%. Some of the National Challenge schools have made remarkable improvements in the past 5 years at this measure. For example Elliott Durham School, 15% A*-C in 2002 to 44% in 2008, River Leen School 8% in 2002 to 43% in 2008 and Fairham, 13% in 2002 to 53% in 2008.

Now we have a different target by which we will be measured, that is 5 A*-C grades including English and Maths. It makes the target more challenging but we welcome that, recognising how important literacy and numeracy are for preparing students for further study and the world of work. We already have plans in place to meet the new floor targets of 30% of pupils achieving 5 A*-C grades including English and Maths by 2011.

All ten schools are predicting improved results this year and in many other ways these schools are far from failing schools. None of these schools are in special measures following an Ofsted inspection. Five of these ten schools have a higher than average contextual value added scores for pupil progress that pupils make between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. In fact one of these schools, Big Wood, was inspected after the National Challenge announcement was made and was judged to be a good school with outstanding features.

Six of the ten schools in Nottingham not reaching the new target are included in major development proposals, either as academies or as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme, which after years of neglect is allowing us to provide school buildings which are fit for the 21st Century with the latest information technology provided for staff and pupils.

I welcome the additional support being provided through National Challenge which will involve each school receiving support from a National Challenge advisor, sharing best practice from across the country and bringing educational support programmes which will address the needs of the school. I am confident we will meet the National Challenge target by 2011.

Nottingham's Twinning with Harare, Zimbabwe

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

Will the Leader of the Council please tell us whether Nottingham is still twinned with Harare, Zimbabwe and if so, why?

Councillor Collins replied as follows:-

Thank you, Sheriff. Nottingham is still twinned with Harare in Zimbabwe, although given the current regime, contact between Nottingham and the Council and the people of Harare, in recent years has been impossible.

The twinning link was first established in the early 1980s after the then Chief Executive, Michael Hammond, acted as an elections officer in the Independence Elections at that time.

The reason we continue these links now is that despite recent events in Zimbabwe, at some point, and hopefully soon, Mugabe will either die or be deposed and then the people of Harare will need all the practical help they can get to reconstruct their city and economy.

Along with others in Local Government I hope and expect that Nottingham as a City twinned with Harare will be in a position to do our bit.

Refuse Collection Service Fuel Expenditure

Councillor Price asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Area Working:-

Can the Portfolio Holder tell us how much money is spent on fuel by our refuse collection services in the city?

In light of the steady increase in oil prices per barrel can the Portfolio Holder tell us what affect these rising prices has had on fuel costs for our refuse collection services per month over the last six months and is the Portfolio Holder aware of the efforts of Blaby District Council in Leicestershire to try and gain a rebate from the government in fuel excise duty in order to minimise their costs? Will the Portfolio Holder be petitioning the government in the same way in order to reduce costs for this council?

Councillor Urquhart replied as follows:-

Thank you Sheriff, and thank you Councillor Price for your question. I do have some detailed figures which I will give to you a little later on. But first I just wanted to say that Councillor Price, I think your question raises a very important issue but in a very narrow way.

Increasing oil prices and the consequent increase in the cost of fuel is of great concern to all of us and particular to me and my portfolio. I will of course be continuing our ongoing dialogue with our Labour Government on this overall issue.

For me though, the issue of what we can do to assist ordinary people to deal with their fuel bills, through insulation programmes

and improvements to their windows and our warm front initiatives are quite crucial.

It is just as important to ensure that we have an affordable public transport system so that people can make that choice not to use their own cars, given the cost of petrol and diesel. Councillor Price however, in his question, seems narrowly concerned with the Council's costs and not the things that are worrying ordinary people.

In terms of fuel cost for our refuse service, yes, unsurprisingly costs have increased. In fact, in January of this year they decreased.

In January of this year we spent £30,963, and I am quite happy to give Councillor Price these figures afterwards, that was nearly £3,000 less than we spent in 2007. In February we spent £32,642, £472 more than in the previous February. In March we spent £66,494 and that was a very large increase on the previous year of £33,941, and I will come to some of the reasons for that in a moment. In April we spent £50,000 on fuel, an increase of nearly £3,000 on the same period last year and in May again £50,000, that was an increase of £12,000 on May the previous year. In June we have spent £68,138 compared to £43,916 June last year, so overall last year's annual spend on diesel by the refuse collection service was £550,699. The spend to date for this year April to June is £153,299.

If the price stayed as it is currently, and we do not know that it will happen, it may not, the annual amount for this year is forecast to be £708,000, which would over the year represent a £158,000 increase on the 2007-08 figures. However, of course, the cost of fuel for our refuse service is about more than simply fuel cost. It is also about the amount of journeys our refuse vehicles make.

It is interesting that in previous debates Councillor Price's group had advocated that we should return to weekly collection of residual waste and I would not mind Councillor Price's views on how much extra he thinks that would cost on our fuel bills.

The other important factor in determining the distance of our vehicle travel is how much of our residual waste we have to take to land fill. So our recycling effort and the progress we have already made towards the achievement of our 40% recycling target is in this

respect crucial. The more of our waste that can be recycled, the less we have to landfill and the less we have to take more locally to our incinerator.

The other crucial factor therefore is also periods of in-operation at the incinerator due to essential maintenance because clearly when the incinerator is not working, our vehicles have to travel further to take waste to landfill rather than locally for incineration.

So, our work will continue to try to reduce fuel use and in fact I can also tell Councillor Price that our fuel use reduced by 2% between April to June this year compared to the previous year and also to research the potential for vehicles that do not rely on diesel.

In Blaby, refuse collection is a large proportion of their overall cost. I would guess as a district council, they do not have as many different services to run as we do as a large City, but I can see why Blaby District may have chosen to take up the issue in the way that they have. I am wondering in the request that Councillor Price makes to me whether he has been influenced by the comments of Eric Pickles in terms of his advice to Tory members and their engagement with Government.

For us as a large City with a wide range of services, the issue of refuse collection fuel costs is not so proportionately significant on its own as it would be to Blaby. However I will of course continue to engage with our Government to discuss the issues of overall energy use, oil prices, alternatives to oil or oil based fuels and in those discussions I will of course continue to emphasise the needs of ordinary people, alongside the impacts on our own budgets.

33 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08

The report of Councillor Wood (as set out on page 82 of the agenda) was submitted and its recommendation was moved by Councillor Wood and seconded by Councillor Griggs.

RESOLVED on the motion of Councillor Wood, seconded by Councillor Griggs, that the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2007-08 be accepted.

34 DECISION BY PORTFOLIOS UNDER SPECIAL URGENCY PROCEDURE

The report of Councillor Collins (as set out on page 84 of the agenda) was submitted and its recommendations were moved by Councillor Collins and seconded by Councillor Clark.

RESOLVED on the motion of Councillor Collins, seconded by Councillor Clark, that the portfolio holder decision 437, which authorised the disposal of Welbeck Workshops and the building occupied by Peoples Centre off Woodborough Road, St Anns and the reason for urgency, namely to secure time limited grant funding before 31 March 2008, be noted.

35 NOTTINGHAMS FUTURE: A CORE STRATEGY GREEN PAPER

The report of Councillor Clark (as set out on page 87 of the agenda) was submitted and its recommendations were moved by Councillor Clark and seconded by Councillor Chapman.

RESOLVED on the motion of Councillor Clark, seconded by Councillor Chapman, that:-

- (1) the key planning issues that need to be addressed in the City-wide Core Strategy be noted;**
- (2) the opportunity for making formal representations at the Issues and Options Consultation stage of the Core Strategy, to be held later in 2008, be noted;**
- (3) members early views on the main issues to be developed during the consultation be provided by way of a transcript from the meeting.**

36 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

RESOLVED that the following in year changes to committee memberships be noted:-

Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee

Councillors Liversidge and Parbutt to be added to the list of substitutes

Audit Committee

Councillor Liversidge to be removed and Councillor Parbutt to be added to the list of substitutes

Overview and Scrutiny

Councillor Munir to be added as a member of the Committee

The meeting closed at 5.11pm.

Council Question requiring a written response

The following response was circulated to all members on 22 July 2008.

British Formula One Grand Prix - Donington Park

Councillor Davie asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Leisure and Culture:-

Will the Portfolio Holder agree that it is great news that Donington Park will be hosting the British Formula One Grand Prix for ten years from 2010? What will the Portfolio Holder be doing in order to promote Nottingham as a tourist venue in anticipation of the event attracting more tourists to our city?

Councillor Trimble replied as follows:

Thank you for your Council question submitted for Monday 14th July regarding the recent news that Donington Park will be hosting the British Formula One Grand Prix for 10 years from 2010. This is indeed great news for the City and also for the conurbation and region, all of whom will undoubtedly benefit in a number of ways over the 10 year period from 2010. In particular, this is great news for sports fans and this announcement builds upon our ambitions as a City to play host to, and be associated with, top class international sporting events. This announcement certainly compliments the recent news that Trent Bridge Cricket Ground will help stage the Twenty20 World Cup next year in June 2009.

It also compliments the support the City Council has given to developing Nottingham's major events programme and this year alone, we have already staged a fantastic City Pulse event over the May Bank Holiday weekend. It is estimated some 30,000-40,000 people attended the Old Market Square events and around 15,000 people attended the other City outlying venues. We are also looking forward to the Splendour music festival at Wollaton Park this coming weekend, which along with our regular annual programme of events, and the new Children's Festival, means that we now have the largest events programme in the City's history.

With regards your specific enquiry about promoting Nottingham as a tourism venue off the back of the Grand Prix event, this is something that the City Council and its partners have immediately started to look at so that we will be well placed to ensure tangible benefits are realised back into the City come 2010.

We understand that the Donington Park circuit will require £100 million investment over the next few years to ensure that it becomes a world class home for the British Grand Prix. We also anticipate that over 100,000 people will visit the event on an annual basis, bringing together a global media presence.

The event presents two obvious opportunities which Nottingham can benefit from, these being; the extensive media coverage this event brings and a chance to present Nottingham to an international audience in a very positive manner, building our positive reputation even further. On a more commercial basis, the event will undoubtedly deliver a sizable economic impact back into the City and the region, which is an area we must plan to exploit and indeed will be doing so with our many partners, businesses and organisations, locally and regionally.

From an impact study undertaken on the 2002 British Grand Prix, we know that this event attracted around 116,000 visitors travelling from all over Britain and indeed internationally. It was estimated in the study report that visitor expenditure totalled some £34.7 million and adjusting for inflation, it would not be unrealistic to expect a figure of approx £40 million for the 2010 event.

Based on these figures, it is obvious why there is so much excitement around the announcement and the opportunities for tourist visits to the City over this event period and the economic spend that visitors would make.

Specifically, Experience Nottinghamshire along with the City Council and industry partners, will focus on the press and PR opportunities and also seek to encourage visitors to lengthen their stay beyond the 3 days of the main event. We will also be exploring how we can develop an integrated event welcoming programme of activities into the City to position Nottingham as the City associated with the British Grand Prix.

This announcement for July 2010 compliments a programme of international sporting activity for Nottingham that is both mouth watering and unique for spectators, participants and residents alike. As well as the British Grand Prix, during July, Nottingham will also play host to Test Match Cricket (England v West Indies) at Trent Bridge, and the Women's Champions Trophy, an international women's hockey tournament, that is both televised and is set to generate over 5,000 tourist bed nights in the City.

Once again, many thanks for your question, this is indeed a great event and an exciting opportunity, one which the City Council is proud to be associated with.