

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL

held at the Council House, Nottingham,

on Monday 12 October 2009 at 2.00 pm

ATTENDANCES

✓ Councillor Packer	Lord Mayor
✓ 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 Morley
✓ Councillor Cresswell	✓ Councillor Munir
✓ Councillor Culley	✓ Councillor Newton
✓ Councillor Davie	✓ Councillor Oldham
✓ Councillor Dewinton	✓ Councillor Parbutt
✓ Councillor Edwards	✓ Councillor Price
✓ Councillor Foster	✓ Councillor Smith
✓ Councillor Gibson	Councillor Spencer
✓ Councillor Griggs	✓ Councillor Sutton
✓ Councillor Grocock	✓ Councillor Trimble
✓ Councillor Hartshorne	✓ Councillor Unczur
✓ Councillor Heppell	✓ Councillor Urquhart
✓ Councillor Ibrahim	✓ Councillor Watson
✓ Councillor James	✓ Councillor Wildgust
Councillor Johnson	✓ Councillor Williams
✓ Councillor Jones	✓ Councillor Wood

39 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Price: a personal interest, in agenda item 9 - Motion in the Name of Councillor Klein on 'Sure Start' Children's Centres, (minute 47) as an employee of the Learning and Skills Council, with a professional involvement in the matter under discussion, which did not preclude him from speaking or voting.

40 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No petitions were submitted.

Public Questions

Question asked by students of Top Valley School of the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Area Working as part of their involvement in activities during Local Democracy Week.

"The Government is constantly asking us to live healthier lives, this ranges from what we eat to the activities that we do. As young people living within the Top Valley area, we are becoming increasingly frustrated with how limited our options are, if we are to consider another key outcome; our safety.

We want to ride our bikes to school – but there are no appropriate crossings outside the school and critically there are no cycle lanes on our community roads, we get into trouble with the Police if we cycle on the paths but there are no alternatives, when the roads are so unsafe and we have no cycle lane – it feels like we are being set up to fail!

We want to be able to use the great outdoor facilities you have put into the community for us – but as the evenings get darker earlier, the lack of lighting makes the area feel very unsafe and we feel vulnerable to crime.

So we would like to know the following, are there plans to put cycle lanes on our community roads and a crossing outside our school and increase lighting, particularly in social areas (skateboard park). If you do, we feel confident we will continue to adopt healthy lifestyles but in a manner where we feel safe to do so?

On behalf of the Citizenship Students of Top Valley School."

Councillor Urquhart replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you very much for the question. I am really pleased to see you here to hear the answer as well.

It is great to have this level of interest in health, cycling and safety coming from Top Valley School.

I am a cyclist too, to start with that bit of the question, and I know thinking you want to, or ought to cycle somewhere is one thing, but actually getting on your bike, in sometimes, colder, wet weather and sometimes travelling on roads you are not sure about isn't easy.

I have been keen, therefore, to see the progress we have made as a City in introducing new cycle lanes to encourage cycling as an everyday means of travelling about. There are some examples of improvement to the cycle network in your area and I will say a little bit about those. We have had new cycle paths, recently completed on Hucknall Road, leading into the Top Valley School routes. We have installed a special crossing to make it safer to cross Hucknall Road for both pedestrians and cyclists and hopefully that provides a useful connection to the Highbury Vale area.

New signing and cycle lanes have been put in place to create a route between Ken Martin sports centre and Southglade leisure centre making it easier to travel to and from Bulwell and those surrounding leisure facilities.

National cycle route 6, which runs through the area, is being upgraded. Those new routes and the crossings mentioned make travel a bit easier, in particular when travelling North beyond the City Centre, and are trying to provide routes which become as car free as possible. Of course in terms of specific sites, I would be more than happy for us to have further discussions about the specific sites that you mentioned, to see what more can be done.

In the Top Valley area, Top Valley Way, Bestwood Park Drive and The Ridgeway have each had some investment in the last few years to improve safety and routes to school. Local cycling groups do recommend those roads for cycling, due to the comparatively low level of traffic that they have and the cycling groups feel that they do help to provide a

network of quieter roads that link housing to the school and the leisure centre.

It's difficult to provide dedicated cycle lanes for all the routes that everybody wants to use because we do always have to balance the amount of money we have with the demands we have on it and I am sure as students of citizenship you will understand that.

What we do, in order to prioritise, is monitor all reported road casualties across the whole City and that gives us evidence to identify specific problem sites. We use that casualty data to rank how dangerous all the roads in the City are according to the accident statistics, so that then we can prioritise our resources and invest in those roads where we have the greatest problems, as I said before though we are quite happy to have further discussions with the school about their particular issues.

In relation to safety outside schools in general, all across the city we have a program of introducing 20 mph zones around schools, along Bestwood Park Drive there is an experimental 20 mph zone, going in, which restricts traffic to 20mph at the times children would be arriving and leaving the school, which should of course help cyclist safety too.

One of the ways you can get involved and help to improve facilities is through a School Travel Plan and it would be great for your school to meet our School Travel Planning advisors and get involved with that and see what more progress we can make in that area and of course discussions are just getting underway, about how your school can be transformed through the Building Schools for the Future programme, which would be an £11million pound investment and amongst the many aspirations for improvement for the school could be the inclusion of secure cycle storage, so once you cycle to school your bikes would be safer and that could become a part of the design for the improvements for your school. I am sure that those sorts of things are some of the things that you might well be discussing when pupils from Top Valley come back here on Wednesday, to take part in a democratic dilemma debate with your local councillors. You are right, there are lots of excellent activities in your area, both outdoor activities, youth work activities, the Top Valley Dance Academy, all of those kinds of things.

You also raised the issue of lighting, most particularly in respect of the skateboard park, I think the best way to take that one forward would be to say I know the skateboard park have set up a steering group which will

be meeting up for the first time on the 22 October and that group will discuss issues like security and lighting. That group will also of course, have to be mindful that the skateboard park operates clearly for the benefit of local young people but needs to operate in a way that does not cause problems and issues for other members of the local community in that area, so that will be another democratic dilemma for you to participate in discussions about through discussions in that Steering Group.

Again more widely in terms of overall lighting and street lighting in particular, just to let you know, that the Council is in the process of procuring a street lighting private finance initiative which will provide new or upgraded lighting to all the street lights in our City, so that the quality of light on all our streets will be improved, making the lighting better and improving safety to the City.

So I hope you can see that there have been some recent improvement to cycling safety features and that more is possible, but lighting potentially can be improved, and that you can continue to be involved in these improvements by: getting your school to do a school travel plan; by helping to shape by Building Schools for the Future improvements; by continuing to work with your Local Councillors, who will continue to pass your concerns on to me and my colleagues to see what more you can do.

Thank you for your question and I hope I have provided some of the answers that you seek and I hope I will be able to provide more if we have some more detailed discussions and finally I hope you enjoy the rest of the debates that you are here to see today.

41 MINUTES

RESOLVED

- (1) that, subject to replacing the word "improve" with "impose" in Councillor MacLennan's question (minute 36, page 109), and to replacing amount of "£150" with that of "£850" in Councillor Trimble's response to Councillor Price's question (minute 36, page 115), the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2009, be confirmed and signed by the Lord Mayor**

- (2) that the voting record of Mr John Heppell MP on Post Office Closures shown in the Annex to the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2009 (page 103) be amended from "Yes" to "No" to reflect his vote against the Suspension of Closure Programme.

42 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Chief Executive reported the following communications:-

National Association of Care Catering

Adult Support and Health received two national awards.

Long Meadow Day Centre has won the Care Establishment of the Year award at the National Association of Care Catering's annual conference in Blackpool.

At the same event, Laura Chambers Lodge was Crowned Innovation of the Year for its partnership with Nethergate Special School around growing food, meals and healthy eating.

Quest

The Sports Development Team achieved Quest Quality Award re-accreditation with a score of 94%, representing one of the highest scores in the country, and the independent assessor praised the team for its innovative delivery of sports with partners, especially work with young people and the work that had been done on sporting events.

Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

Joan Bray, Service Delivery Manager with the Libraries and Information Service, has been awarded a Fellowship of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals by the Chartership Board.

This is a magnificent achievement and one which very few people nationally achieve. It recognises Joan's commitment to the profession over more than forty years.

MBE

Social worker Stuart McNeil has been awarded an MBE for services to children.

Congratulations to all those involved. That we are being recognised in such diverse fields as children's social work, parks and open spaces and adult care is testament to the exemplary work going on across the Council.

43 QUESTIONS

Questions to the Nottinghamshire Police Authority.

Drug Related Crime

Councillor Culley asked the following question of the Chairman of the Police Authority:-

"We note that crime figures for Nottingham City and County show a reduction and we welcome this. However, the figures show an increase in drug related crime. We would be interested to know what additional strategies the Police have or plan to implement to tackle this increase?"

County Councillor Clarke, Chair of the Police Authority, replied as follows:-

Thank you Lord Mayor, Councillor Culley, thank you for the question.

With regard to the increase in drug crime, it shows that our strategies for dealing with this type of criminality are working.

An increase in drug related crime is indicative of our proactive way that we tackle offences of this nature and are invariably only crimes because they are found by the Police.

We have invested heavily in our serious and organised act and serious and organised drugs supply appears in the Force Control Strategy as a priority.

Thank you Lord Mayor.

Closure of Fairham Day Centre

Councillor Price asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Adult Support and Health:-

"Can the portfolio holder tell us what actual savings has been made in the current financial year by closing Fairham Day Centre and what costs have been incurred by providing alternative arrangements? In retrospect, does the portfolio holder feel this saving is worth the distress and anguish this ill timed closure has caused the residents?"

Councillor Campbell replied as follows:-

Can I thank Councillor Price for his question.

As Councillor Price will know, we are not yet half way through the financial year so can only make an estimate on the savings that will be delivered. Also Fairham only closed at end of August, so the savings are yet to be kicked in. I believe that by the end of the financial year the savings will be an estimated £60,000 and at the end of the full year the saving will be an estimated £100,000.

There has been no cost incurred by providing alternative arrangements, as all former Fairham users have been allocated places within other local authority day centres, mainly Long Meadow.

Regarding Councillor Price's point as to whether or not the closure was worth the distress, I am pleased to point out that all of our feedback shows that those affected by the closure are satisfied with an alternative provision provided. All those affected were given individual reviews and consultation took place with every one of them and their carers to ensure the best possible alternative arrangements were made. This was done sensitively and I'm pleased that people have been moved successfully.

I feel that given the challenging financial times and the fact that Fairham Day centre had only approximately half of its allocated places filled, we had no alternative but to make the difficult decision to close it. Decisions

like this are never very easy but this decision was taken with sensitivity to those affected by it and by the overall financial needs of the authority.

Area Committee Structures

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

"Does the Portfolio Holder agree with me that the current structure of nine Area Committees has served the Council well and that if there is to be change in the way Area Committees are organised, then significant consultation with Councillors and the public must be carried out? Can she give me assurances that these changes will not be implemented before the Council election in 2011?"

Councillor Urquhart replied as follows:-

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Price for your question. I know you originally addressed your question to the Leader but as it is something that falls very clearly within my Portfolio, it seemed only right that I actually, I answer it.

Firstly, I would just like to say that I am so pleased, Councillor Price, that you seem to have broken with the traditions of some previous Leaders of your group who in the past have viewed our area working arrangements with some distain and dislike, in the past.

So it's pleasing that the arrangements we now have in place seem to have converted you. Having a structure of area and neighbourhood working has served us well, for some considerable time and that we, in the Labour Group, have long supported the idea of area committees, it goes back before I was on this Council, certainly, and of course at that time they have, not always been, the same areas, that we have now. The concept, however, has been one that we have known, has been right for a long time and I agree that our model that a focus at ward level with action officers working with Councillors in every ward, enabling Councillors to act as champions of their ward engaging local people at local level, so that people recognise the area that is being dealt with, at that ward and neighbourhood level, that part of the way that we have successfully improved neighbourhoods helping people to feel connected to their local area, improving the physical appearance of our neighbourhoods, has been very successful, through the area capital,

funding millions of pounds have been spent improving pavements tackling those grotty public spaces, that we know have caused problems and that spending has in many places has been prioritised by local people working with local Councillors.

Also at the local level, we have seen that neighbourhood policing, with local tasking, again involving local people and local Councillors, has enabled those very localised priorities of a particular neighbourhood to be tackled effectively. So there have been some real successes from our approach to working in neighbourhoods. So Councillor Price, yes if there were changes to be had then yes, there would need to be significant consultation and I do think that it is always right to keep an open mind and to continue to reflect on where further improvements could be made.

So to conclude, if the drive for improvement leads to consideration of changes, yes, of course, consultation will be full and will include Councillors and members of the public but no I will not give any guarantees about the timing that you suggest in your question, because I think, if there, if things are right to be done and there are improvements to be made, I would rather make those improvements than wait for a deadline that's rather more political than it is actual.

City Council Communication Campaigns

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

"What improvements have been made following the recent investigation by the District Auditor when she identified areas where the Council can further improve its processes to address the continuing borderline nature of the content and style of some of the Council communication campaigns?"

Councillor Chapman replies as follows:-

Can I thank Councillor Sutton for his question and the opportunity to emphasise the District Auditor is happy again that the communications initiative that has been the subject of challenge was lawful. Lawful is lawful, you can't have half lawful or quarter lawful, it is lawful and the concern, I think, is to do with processes and this is where he does have a point.

The District Auditor recommends that further consideration is given to the 'procedures for responding to the comments of the Monitoring Officer and the Director of Performance & Scrutiny and providing final sign-off and approval for similar campaigns in the future'.

There does seem to be some confusion here as the vetting procedures agreed previously with the District Auditor, differ somewhat.

It is not the Monitoring Officer but the Director of Legal Services that the procedures require to be consulted and there is no requirement to consult the Director of Performance & Scrutiny.

Notwithstanding this I can assure Councillor Sutton that the Chief Executive has discussed this matter with the Director of Communications and Marketing, with whom final responsibility for sign-off and compliance with the Law and Code on publicity remains.

He will ensure, whenever similar initiatives are run in the future, that more time is allowed for responding to the comments of the Director of Legal Services and any other Director, including the Director of Performance & Scrutiny, as appropriate given the nature of the initiative.

Thank you.

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

"Would the portfolio holder agree that given the cost pressures on local government, how realistic is it at this stage to be promising 0% council tax increases as many Conservative controlled local authorities are doing?"

Councillor Chapman replied as follows:-

I will start by outlining some of the pressures on our budget this year. For example, just the demographic changes, number of additional people needing support for learning disability, £450,000 pressure.

Fair price for care services for older people, £600,000; it's worth taking this down, I do hope people do. Children with learning disabilities, increased numbers, £520,000.

Additional cost pressures emerging 2009/2010 beyond (this was up to February 9 first three figures), increased placements of children looked after £2.8million; economic downturn impact on income, for example, car parks, (although we are trying to remedy it) at this stage it is £700,000. Changes in legislation (for example changes in environmental issues, independent safeguarding authorities etc.) £545,000, which adds up at this stage to £5.615 million pounds pressure.

Under those pressures, in my view, it would be irresponsible to promise zero percent Council Tax increase but even before these pressures, I would not have agreed with zero percent Council Tax increase because I have seen the consequence with other Authorities.

I have seen what happens when they end up in a dangerous downward spiral of using reserves in order to keep the Council Tax down, using one off spending to keep the Council Tax down and then you lose the interest on those reserves and you are into a downward swing. The consequences, therefore, are quiet serious and I will cite the example of Amber Valley where the Council Tax policy over years has caused a bitter financial crisis in the end which ended up with excessive job losses.

Once your reserves, as I said, once your reserves get depleted you lose your interest but, on top of that, you have no margins for contingency because, in local government, what you will find is that something will come out of the woodwork where you need some spare cash, in order to be able to sort it out; but in addition to that you will have no opportunity to respond to the additional pressures of social need, which is an aging population, which is an increasingly disabled population, disabled people are living longer - and 'thank god' for that - and child protection, where people are not taking any risk, and you can't blame them after what happened with Baby P.

That is all stacking up to major costs, which have to be responded to. What is odd, however, is Conservative authorities promising not zero percent for one year but for a number of years and I am told that is what the County Council has promised a sequence of. Yes I know you are too sensible to do that, but this is what the County Council have promised and what is also odd is that promising to do that in October 2008, George Osborne, came up, with his 'whizz bang scheme' that if you kept your Council Tax down below 2.5% he would match it and therefore you would end up with zero percent. Well, surely the Conservatives on

the County Council are expecting a Conservative Government, therefore, you would ask why are they throwing away Treasury money by promising a sequence of zero percent Council Tax rises over the next few years.

What is even odder, however, is that this promise in October 2010, sorry October 2008, hasn't re-emerged in this round of Tory Party conference; what has emerged is a dilution, so they seem to have sidelined it, as far as I can work out, and this dilution is to give zero percent Council Tax rises to pensioners only, so what has happened to the rest of us and what has happened to the policy? I would be very interested to hear; but this, again, is all good and fine but what I am really concerned about is what this zero percent approach hides, and I think it hides an attempt by a lot of Conservative authorities to strip down social provision to its basic and then to recharge and to use a zero percent Council Tax as an excuse and this is what I call the Barnet formulae, this is what Barnet Council are doing, and I recognise that a lot of Conservative authorities are not doing that, but those that are promising zero percent may end up with that as the only option and the knock on consequences of that are people who will really suffer. Not only will you de-stabilise the income and the balances of your own authority you will end up by punishing the poor by having to charge from large numbers of services, having stripped down your services to a bare minimum, so, again, you are on another slippery path, but what is particularly interesting still, is that one of the authorities that did promise that, Barnet itself, and this is the Ryan Air authority where you have to pay probably to go to, well pay for everything, they are now calling themselves - well I think they have gone off Ryan-Air, they are now calling themselves the Easy-Jet authority as I think they realise that Ryan-Air hasn't quite got the kudos that they wanted to go with it, so let me call it the Easy Jet authority. What is quite interesting is even they couldn't deliver, the pressures on them were so much that even they would not deliver their zero percent promise and they ended up by delivering a 2.5% last year, with a deferred additional 1% which was a lot higher than Nottingham City Council, at the same time they had very, very low reserves which is causing them problems.

So on the whole, my view is we should be honest with our electorate, we will not be going for high Council Tax rises this time round but what we will be doing is drawing up a balanced budget, which allows us to respond to the pressures. I think that is the honest way of doing it, we are a Labour authority and we do want to continue to care for the elderly, want to continue to care for the disabled and we want to continue to

provide adequate child protection and we can only do that if our budget is balanced and that is the way we will be approaching the next budget.

Thank you.

Trinity School Showband

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

"Will Councillor Mellen and all members join me in congratulating Trinity School Show Band on winning the BYBA National Championships on Sunday October 4?"

Councillor Mellen replied as follows:-

Thank you Lord Mayor, can I thank Councillor Arnold for her question.

I am sure we all would today join in congratulating this group of young people on their success. Here is a story that should be a lesson to us all.

This organisation began as the idea of a committed teacher some 12 years ago; he was encouraged and supported by his Headteacher and the school, to create as many opportunities for young people to get involved as possible. That teacher has moved on but the legacy today is the Trinity School Show Band, made up of 60 young people, winning the First Division of the British Youth Band Association National Championships in Coventry. A first-rate achievement and I would be grateful, Councillor Arnold, if you would pass on my congratulations to your daughter and her fellow band members for this fantastic victory for which we are all proud of.

In Nottingham we want there to be as many opportunities as possible in all fields of interests and activities for our children to get involved to achieve, to excel, to win and to represent their City. We all have a part to play in helping our young people succeed because all children and young people need directing to the multitude of opportunities available in Nottingham and encouragement, whether from their teachers, their school, their parents, their youth worker, even their grandparents, or indeed from their local Councillor.

I am sure fellow members would be interested to know that at the same time as the Trinity School Show Band was winning National Championship, a group of young people from Nottingham Youth Theatre were performing on the bracing sea front at the International Festival, Skegness at last weekend, or the weekend before, sorry. A performance which, I believe Lord Mayor, you not only supported but took part in. This is a good example of the kind of leadership we as Councillors can offer to our young people, which we should do, wherever and whenever we can.

Thank you.

44 AUDIT COMMITTEE – 2008/09 ANNUAL REPORT

The report of Councillor Williams as set out on pages 237 to 256 of the agenda was submitted.

RESOLVED on the motion of Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Aslam that the Annual Report of the Audit Committee for 2008/09, be noted.

45 APPOINTMENT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The report of Councillor Ahmed as set out on pages 257 and 258 of the agenda, was submitted.

RESOLVED on the motion of Councillor Ahmed, seconded by Councillor Collins that Ian Curryer be appointed Corporate Director of Children's Services on the terms and conditions approved by the Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee at its meeting held on 30 September 2009.

Councillors Akhtar, Foster, Long, Marshall, Oldham and Sutton requested that their abstentions from voting on the above resolution be recorded.

46 CHANGES TO THE MEMBERSHIPS OF COMMITTEES

RESOLVED that the following changes to the memberships of Committees be noted:-

- (i) the appointment of Councillor A Khan as a member of n the Audit Committee;**
- (ii) the appointment of Councillor D Smith as a member of the Joint City and County Health Scrutiny Committee in place of Councillor Johnson.**

**47 MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR KLEIN
- SURE START CHILDREN'S CENTRES**

MOVED by Councillor Klein, seconded by Councillor Mellen:-

"This Council notes the improvement in life chances for Children brought about through Sure Start Children's Centres and supports universal coverage of this service."

After discussion the motion was put to the vote and was carried and the Council RESOLVED that this Council notes the improvement in life chances for Children brought about through Sure Start Children's Centres and supports universal coverage of this service.

The meeting concluded at 4.45 pm

Council Question requiring a written response

The following response was circulated to all members on 4 December 2009:

Councillor Price asked the following question of the Chairman of the Police Authority:

“Considering the incidents of Far-Right violence, that happened in various Cities this summer, and the recent BBC ‘File on Four’ programme identifying new Neo-fascist groups in Britain, can the Chairman assure us that his service is aware of these dangers, and is sufficiently prepared to deal with a potentially resurgent Far-Right?”

Councillor Clarke replied as follows:

Organised crime mapping which has identified over 600 people identified is organised crime much of which is drug given.

All this put together ensures we make best use of our intelligence to target those individuals involved in drugs.

Hence the rise is drug crime. Positive drug testing within our custody suites are reducing which may indicate our activity is having some success.

As regards the resurgent far right. We have dedicated resources under my control within special branch. We pro actively target all forms of extremism including that of the far right.

Extremist activity and intelligence is monitored through our force contest coordination group, which I chair. Contest is the HM government 4 pronged strategy for tackling terrorism and extremism.

We are also supported by the East Midlands counter terrorism intelligence unit in this regards.

We have in addition extensive links into the national public order intelligence unit who monitor this kind of activity nationally.

We are very proactive in this regard and alive to changing offending behaviour.