

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL

held at the Council House, Nottingham,

on Monday 11 October 2010 at 2.00 pm

### ATTENDANCES

✓ Councillor Grocock	Lord Mayor
✓ Councillor Ahmed	✓ Councillor G Khan
✓ Councillor Akhtar	✓ Councillor Klein
✓ Councillor Arnold	Councillor Lee
✓ Councillor Aslam	✓ Councillor Liversidge
✓ Councillor Benson	✓ Councillor Long
Councillor Bryan	✓ Councillor MacLennan
✓ Councillor Bull	✓ Councillor Malcolm
Councillor Campbell	Councillor Marshall
✓ Councillor Chapman	✓ Councillor Mellen
✓ Councillor Clark	✓ Councillor Mir
✓ Councillor Clarke-Smith	✓ Councillor Morley
✓ 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 A Khan	Councillor Wood

### **35 ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**RESOLVED** that the order of business be varied to enable the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services to present his response to agenda item 3(c), Petition regarding Top Valley and Trinity Schools, and then continue with items for business as detailed on the agenda.

### **36 RESPONSE TO AGENDA ITEM 3(C) BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Councillor Mellen, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, presented his response which supported the petition, and advised the Council that the variation to the order of business was to enable him to travel to London that afternoon for a meeting with Lord Hill, of the government, on these issues.

In response to a request from Councillor Culley, Councillor Mellen agreed to take a letter from the Conservative Group to Lord Hill.

### **37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bryan and Wood (on other Council business) and Councillors Campbell, Edwards, Gibson, Johnson, Marshall and Price.

### **38 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Clark, Foster and Urquhart declared personal interests in agenda item 7, Nottingham Express Transit System Order 2009 – application for an amending order and exchange land certificate in respect of open space land proposed to be acquired compulsorily, as Council appointed members of NET Partnership Board, which did not preclude them from speaking or voting.

Councillor Grocock declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 7, Nottingham Express Transit System Order 2009 – application for an amending order and exchange land certificate in respect of open space land proposed to be acquired compulsorily, as a Council appointed Director of Nottingham City Transport Limited, and withdrew from the Chamber during discussion of the item.

Councillors Arnold and Long declared personal interests in agenda item 3(c), petition relating to Top Valley and Trinity Schools, as they had children affected by the decision on Building Schools for the Future schemes, which did not preclude them from speaking or voting.

## **39 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS FROM CITIZENS**

### **Public questions**

The following public questions were received:

#### **Free bus passes for senior citizens**

The following question was asked by Mr Curran of the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Area Working:

I am 70 and use a Bus Pass. In the present economic circumstances, how can the universal provision of the free passes be justified? I suggest the free passes should be available only to those Senior Citizens with no income other than the basic state pension. A compromise would be for Senior Citizens to pay half fare. After withdrawal of the universal Free Pass, the bus companies would (almost certainly) make off-peak offers to Seniors. I am aware that travel does help to reduce depression amongst Seniors. Doctors could be enabled to prescribe subsidised travel passes, although this would presumably require central Government intervention. My best wishes to all of you in these difficult times.

Councillor Urquhart replied as follows:

Thank you, Lord Mayor, and thank you to Mr Curran for raising this issue and for his concern with this Council's finances. The concessionary bus scheme is administered locally, but it is a piece of national legislation. It is also something which in Nottingham we have prided ourselves on delivering concessionary bus travel for our mobility impaired and older citizens for a number of years, in fact before the national scheme came in. We had decided to do that for some considerable time, not only because it enables people to get around more easily and does combat, as Mr Curran says, some of the issues of isolation and loneliness that can be felt both by those people who are older and those who have mobility impairment, but also because it fits with our desire to encourage people to use public transport where that's available, rather than their

own cars. We have found, certainly, in the use of both our scheme that preceded the national minimum scheme and the scheme that's in place now, that we have seen considerable use of public transport by older people and, therefore, I feel that it is something that is beneficial not only for the people themselves, but also for our City's efforts to reduce congestion. So the current scheme governed by national legislation stipulates that passes must be available at no charge to all residents eligible for state pension or with a qualifying disability. So changing those eligibility rules or the national minimum set scheme details is not something that this council can do on its own. I would advise Mr Curran to lobby Government if he seeks changes. We will administer the scheme that Government has given to us and we will continue to prioritise concessionary travel as an important part of the transport offer in Nottingham, because the City Council does also give additional optional benefits to our own eligible residents which include free tram travel and free weekday peak travel for disabled residents and half fare discount on Nottingham dial-a-ride services. We also know that trips that we pay for are up 20% since the national scheme came in. Yes it does mean that concessionary fares are a considerable cost to Nottingham, but it also has considerable benefits for our citizens and for our city as a whole. People deciding to use public transport because they have the availability of a card rather than using private car transport is something that's beneficial to all of us in the city, including those of us who pay for our bus and tram travel, because it enables the roads to be clearer rather than being more clogged up with private cars. So therefore, thank you Mr Curran for your ideas, they are certainly interesting and I'm sure that this issue will continue to be one that is debated not only here, but also nationally in terms of the future of the scheme. Perhaps I would suggest that given it's a national scheme your lobby to take away benefits previously provided to people in our city would need to be aimed at the Government rather than at ourselves.

## **Cuts to public services**

The following question was asked by Mr Curran of the Deputy Leader:

The Council plan to consult the public re cuts by asking us to identify the important services. Is this the right question? Should it not be something like, in which the Council services would you most favour/less favour cuts of X amount? This is not the same question at all. My own view, given that the general public will have very little notion on how different levels of 'cuts' would affect the individual services, is that ALL services should

be subject to the same level of reduction, at least in the first instance. For example, I am 70, but I do NOT favour ring-fencing health spending. Best wishes to all decision makers, local and national, in these difficult economic times.

Councillor Chapman replied as follows:

Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I thank Mr Curran for his question. I don't know whether Mr Curran is in the Chamber, but if he is, thank you.

Nottingham will be setting a budget for next year in the face of what will be unprecedented Government funding cuts. We may need to find in the region of £75 million worth of savings. I'll repeat that, £75 million worth of savings over the next four years, depending on what the Government says in the Comprehensive Spending Review on 20 October. This will be on top of £10 million from our budget this year, the Government has already taken away. And it's not just Council funding that will be affected, many of the organisations we work with are likely to be hit by spending reductions and this will have a knock on effect on the delivery of our services. Finally, changes to taxation and benefit will also directly affect people in Nottingham and have consequences for services we support and we deliver, and I am particularly worried about the change from the RPI to the CPI in calculating benefits which is a stealth cut which is going to hit many, many thousands of people in the City.

To help us plan for these decisions, we are asking Nottingham people, through our consultation, to give their views on Council services they value most and their ideas on where further funding and savings can be made. In this way, we can gather information to help inform our decision making as we move towards setting the Council budget 2011/12 and beyond. Now I do understand the rationale behind Mr Curran's question, and his alternative approach, which, of course, has merit. Indeed, Councillors across the country are using a range of different methods and approaches and some will be using a similar system to the one proposed by Mr Curran. However, it is my view that simply applying the same level of reduction across all services would not reflect the reality of Council funding and the different degrees of pressure on different areas of spending we are experiencing. For example, we need to find more funding each year for things like child protection and for services for the elderly and disabled, due to advances in medical treatment and the fact that we have an ageing population. Additionally, we may be able to make a higher level of savings in other areas, for example, due to changes in

technology, without affecting delivery of services and we are looking at every corner of the Council in order to be able to do that. We also need to prioritise our resources to gain the best results for people of Nottingham. Mr Curran also makes a valid point about the level of understanding Nottingham citizens may have about how cuts would effect individual services, given the wide range of things we do and sometimes the complicated nature of the funding. He is right that a lot of people think we do nothing other than empty bins, a bit of street lighting on the side and then sometimes we fine them for parking in the wrong place. But that of course, is by no means a reflection of the reality, and the reality is that most of our budget goes into Education, child protection and care for the elderly, a vast amount. We are hoping this consultation will allow us to extend the knowledge of people in Nottingham about the range of services that we are offering. So on balance, I believe this consultation will help in providing a broad understanding of the services Nottingham citizens value and where the potential savings could be made. Finally, although we will not be applying a standard across the board cut to every service, no service will be exempt from efficiency savings. I think that is one of the principles. We won't necessarily get cuts but where any service, no matter how valuable, even child protection, can provide efficiencies, then we must look at it. And it is for this reason that I agree with Mr Curran about the Government's artificial exemption of the Health Service from spending reductions. It was in my view a political indulgence from the then Leader of the then Opposition, when he was in Opposition, he is now Prime Minister, and which actually, the Labour Party didn't agree with and I thought, on our part, was one of the things we were more honest about. So, I am in agreement with Mr Curran about that, I do think Health needs to take its fair share of the burden, because otherwise every other service, including Local Government, including Social Services, including Adult Services, which also has a health impact, will take a disproportionate hit and that is what's likely to happen. I noticed some of our Liberal Democrat colleagues nodding in support. So finally, can I thank Mr Curran for his question, it is always good to get questions from members of the public, but it's also good to get ones which are not unnecessarily hostile, but seeking proper answers.

Thank you.

## **Ban on ball games on Murby Crescent Playing Field**

The following question was asked by Mr Radford of the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Customers:

I would like to see a ban on ball games on Murby Crescent playing field, in Bulwell, due to anti-social behaviour from local kids, including smashed windows to certain flats, and there are not enough police patrols. Banning ball games will help a lot to keep things in order on Murby Crescent. Residents, I'm sure, are fed up of local youths being rowdy and abusive.

Councillor Trimble replied as follows:

Thank you, Lord Mayor and can I thank Mr Radford for his question.

The playing field in question is amenity land owned and maintained by the City Council for the enjoyment of local residents.

It has long been used by children as a place to play, including ball games. Community Protection Officers have recently visited the area on several occasions following complaints by Mr Radford.

The Officers did find children or young people playing ball games but felt that they were not causing any adverse impact on local residents.

On one occasion where the children were close to residents' properties they were simply moved further down the sloped area without any further issue.

Despite speaking to other members of the community and carrying out a 'Have Your Say' letter drop, no other residents have come forward identifying ball games as an issue that concerns them.

Although Nottingham City Homes can erect 'No Ball Games' signs, these signs are not enforceable, except where ball games are being played on the highway, which this is clearly not.

The outcome of these investigations was that the young people concerned were taking part in healthy outdoor play. Something I would recommend to all children, much better than being locked away in a room with a computer screen and electronic games.

## **Petitions from Councillors on behalf of citizens**

Councillor Arnold submitted a petition to the Lord Mayor, on behalf of 463 parents with children attending Whitemoor Primary School, requesting that action be taken on congestion and unsafe parking around the school and that they be provided with details of when the 'cooking kitchen' would be installed.

## **Petitions requiring debate**

A petition was submitted by Mr Nick McDonald, Petition Organiser, requesting the following:

'We, the undersigned, believe the present Government should honour the previous Government's promise to rebuild Top Valley and Trinity Schools, and call upon the Nottingham City Council to challenge the Government's decision not to do so'.

Mr McDonald presented the petition to Council and made a statement in support of it.

There followed a debate on the petition in which contributions were made by Councillors Davie, Morely, Clark, Newton, Ibrahim, Trimble and Long, with, in the absence of Councillor Mellen, Councillor Chapman exercising the right of reply.

At the close of the debate the Lord Mayor expressed his gratitude to Mr McDonald for his work on the petition and to the contributions to the debate.

## **40 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the last meeting held on 13 September 2010, copies of which had been circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Lord Mayor.

## **41 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chief Executive reported the following communications:



## **Transport**

Nottingham had been identified as the least car dependent City in England, according to analysis carried out by the Campaign for Better Transport.

Nottingham was the best overall performer in the National Highways and Transport Survey out of 95 local authorities, which was carried out by Ipsos MORI.

## **Young People, Learning and Skills**

The City had been granted its own Operating Authority Licence for the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme to start on 1 November 2010.

## **Michael Williams Retirement**

The Lord Mayor made the following comments in relation to Michael Williams, who was attending his last Council meeting as Corporate Director of Communities, before his retirement:

What I'd like to do now, on behalf of the Labour Group, is to make a small comment on in reference to a gentleman who will be leaving this Council in the not-too-distant future; Michael Williams.

Michael joined Nottingham City Council in 1992 as Director of Leisure and Community Services. Over the 18 years Michael has been with the Council, he has held responsibility for a wide range of services and worked with 5 different Chief Executives; they come fast and furious.

He currently oversees one of the largest departments within the Council with a broad portfolio including adult services, neighbourhood management, equalities, and community safety. This is a huge portfolio, but he has relished the challenge and once again provided a steady and clear steer during many difficult times in this Council.

Very recently, Nottingham was awarded a purple flag for its City Centre night life economy, which demonstrates how far we've come over the past years from some very negative perceptions which have prevailed in the past. Michael has been a key figure in the transformation of community safety and community protection, and his ability to forge

strong partnerships especially with the police has resulted in lasting benefits for our City.

It is perhaps with his many successes, in his Leisure Services days, Leisure and Culture, he will be best remembered for, and should be rightly proud of. Most recently he was instrumental in the creation of Nottingham Contemporary which has quickly gained a reputation nationally and internationally as a leading modern art gallery.

Over the years, Michael has been associated with other iconic developments in the City, such as Nottingham Tennis Centre, the National Ice Centre and a host of international events including the Bolshoi ballet, which I had the pleasure to visit when it came to Nottingham some years ago at the Nottingham Royal Centre, the Andy Warhol exhibition at Nottingham Castle, and the women's FA Cup final at the City Ground. This month Nottingham has launched 'City for British Art Show 7', having hosted previous shows in 2006.

Improvements to Wollaton Hall and its grounds and to Nottingham Castle, attracting external funding over the years, have provided a much improved visitor experience. Michael has never been afraid to be pioneer and his professionalism has shone through as he has dealt with criticisms of the things some people might have regarded as being controversial, and on occasions he might have been very controversial himself.

Many Councillors here today might remember the shed installation at Nottingham Castle; I'm sure Councillor Unczur remembers that and I've still got pictures of that particular place in Nottingham.

Along the way Michael has forged many strong relationships and partnerships with sports and art bodies, notably the Arts Council, and with arts and sports organisations in Nottingham including the New Art Exchange, the Nottingham Playhouse, and Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club. The range of events in Nottingham that involve Nottingham people at the core of the planning, have been widely developed, including Nottingham Riviera, One City One World, and the Light Night.

Michael will be much missed as a senior colleague at the Council and a friend to many of us here in this Chamber inside and outside the Council. He goes with our thanks and our best wishes for a very successful retirement. Congratulations Michael.

Councillor Culley made the following comments:

Thank you, Lord Mayor, I'd just like to add a few words to that tribute to Michael Williams. I think Michael Williams and I arrived at roughly the same time on this Council, and I spent many hours on a Tuesday morning, I think it was, with Margaret Crowe, with you and I, Michael, listening to Margaret rather than I think the other way round. We found you always very helpful and we also found you to be able to give us the support that we needed when information was required. You will be sorely missed by all the parties on this Council and I thank you very much indeed for the commitment that you have shown over the last 20-odd years. Thank you.

Councillor Long made the following comments:

Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wasn't aware this was going to happen so I haven't got anything prepared so really I'd just like to add the Liberal Democrats congratulations and best wishes. The Lord Mayor speaks on behalf of the whole Council and therefore I would just like to support everything he said.

## **42 QUESTIONS**

### **'Space Hop' Summer Reading Challenge**

Councillor G Khan asked the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Customers:

Would the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Customers please comment on how the modernisation of the Library and Information Service particularly in the Meadows, Bilborough and Wollaton have impacted on the success of the Space Hop Summer Reading Challenge and how linking with schools on an ongoing basis really makes a difference, both for starting and completing the challenge?

Councillor Trimble replied as follows:

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

The Library Service takes part in the National Reading Agency's Summer Reading Challenge. The theme this year was space, with the title 'Space Hop' being used.

Children are challenged to read 6 books during the school holidays - receiving prizes, medals and certificates as incentives to complete the challenge and get into the reading habit.

12,353 books were read by the 3353 children that took up the scheme, which is an average of 10% across the total school population aged between 4 and 11 in Nottingham. In the eleven years that the challenge has been running, this is the most children that have taken part in the City.

The top performing libraries were Meadows, 27.1% of all 4 to 11 year olds in the area. Wollaton 22.5% and Bilborough 22.2% took part. Proving that where we have invested in our modernisation programme the investments have paid off particularly with our younger people. These libraries, along with Southglade Park, a newer library in the north of the City, are part of the Library modernisation programme.

The Library service has close links with all City schools. A Space Hop promotional leaflet was produced and given out to every child between 4 and 11 via their school. Librarians held Space Hop assemblies in 44 primary schools leading up to the summer break.

At Greenfields School in the Meadows 35.1% of the children joined the Space Hop Challenge, at Welbeck School 25.8% and at Riverside School 20.5% took part. I think that's a fantastic achievement and real evidence of real community engagement.

The refurbishment programme at the Meadows has also enabled us setting a homework club, where membership is currently over 100 children.

In Bilborough - Glenbrook, Portland and Melbury Schools all enjoyed Space Hop assemblies from Librarians and above average numbers of children from those schools took part in the Space Hop Challenge. Glenbrook School where 15.3% of 4 to 11 year olds took part in Space Hop. Southglade Park Library opened towards the end of 2009. For its first summer open they attracted 144 local children – the 7<sup>th</sup> busiest in the City.

In July, Space Hop was launched at Southglade Library and children from 3 local schools attended the event and many of those children also joined the reading challenge.

This year, Nottingham City Libraries also recruited 26 young people to act as volunteers, aged between 16 and 25 to help younger kids with the Space Hop scheme.

And at Wollaton 394 children joined in. The highest number at any City library, although closely followed by the Meadows, and almost half of them finished reading the 6 books.

Encouraging our children to read for enjoyment and for the enhancement of their education, is given a very high priority by both Councillor Mellen and myself and we have had several meetings with officers from both departments. We wish to put on record our appreciation for the hard work of our library staff and for the work of those schools that took part in this fantastic scheme.

Thank you.

## **Local Economic Partnerships**

Councillor Ahmed asked the following question of the Leader:

Does the Leader believe that Local Economic Partnerships will be an adequate, timely and well-funded alternative to the Regional Development Agencies?

Councillor Collins replied as follows:

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

I think the challenge with Local Economic Partnerships is simply a straightforward one and that is that the 10 RDAs in the Country were funded to the tune of something like £6 billion and that funding went into a range of activities to support economic development, inward investment, training, and land reclamation. It is clear that that scale of funding is not going to be available for Local Economic Partnerships. At most, the Government is talking about £1 billion being allocated as a growth fund. There is no clarity about whether in fact, that sum of money will be available, what it will be available for, how it will be accessed, who will access it. It is unclear how we are going to have Central Government investing in the economy of the regions. I think the second issue is simply one of scale. So far, it appears that almost 60 bids have been

made to establish Local Economic Partnerships. I think people can see a move from 10 Strategic Organisations to 60 organisations is not a reduction in bureaucracy, it is not a more efficient way of tackling or delivering regional economic development, it is not a better way forward than the Regional Development Agencies, but it is a more bureaucratic way forward, it is likely to be more fragmented, it is likely to be less comprehensive and it is likely to be less influential. My final concern about the development of Local Economic Partnerships is simply that given the variety, given the scale, given the lack of resources, it will become increasingly difficult to ensure that senior business people will engage at that level. The Regional Development Agency has benefited from the time and energy of a number of very significant business people. People who are leaders in their field, people who have a great understanding of business and business organisation who have been able to bring their experience to bear for the benefit of the region as a whole. It is unclear whether that will continue into the future. I know that those individuals in particular, are unlikely to invest time and effort in a new structure. I see little evidence so far, of other business people being prepared to come forward and contribute their time and energy for the new Local Economic Partnerships. I may be wrong. We will, as a Local Authority, in any case invest our own time and effort working closely with our colleagues in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Derby in doing our best to take forward the Local Economic Partnership that we ourselves are committed to developing, but there a big question mark over whether or not Local Economic Partnerships as a way forward is actually an improvement on Regional Development Agencies. I believe it isn't. I believe that that will become clear as we move forward.

## **Construction employment and Apprenticeships**

Councillor Jones asked the following question of the Deputy Leader:

Can the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development explain the impact of Government proposals on construction employment and apprenticeships in Nottingham?

Councillor Chapman replied as follows:

Thank you, Lord Mayor. Historically the construction industry has been a barometer for the economy. When the economy goes down, it is the first to shed labour and disinvest. It is also the best means of getting the economy going again because it's got one of the highest multiplier

effects. That means that that investment in construction creates more wealth downstream than investment in virtually any other sector. And therefore its performance is particularly important, but also it is particularly linked to the Government's macro economic policies. Now what happened after the banking crisis was predictable. The construction industry went dead. Schemes simply stopped, the cranes didn't appear, in fact in some cases the cranes were taken away. In Oakford Close for example, 2 houses out of 30 in my ward were built, or perhaps it was 4, I think it was 4. South Reef which is on Canal Street stopped. Every time I went to the BBC I kept asking the man on the door, has there been any progress and he watched it every day and he said there have been a few blokes hanging around and nothing's happening. The Pod, on Queens Road had stopped, people were pulling offsite. Moreover, I remember a period when there were absolutely no applications of any interest coming through Development Control. There was the odd change of use from the usual from retail to pizza, very exciting, the odd extension in Mapperley, but there were no schemes of any merit. In recent months there's been a slight upturn. South Reef is finishing off and the main block is going to be turned into a hotel and work has recommenced. The Pod is almost finished by the looks of it. There are half a dozen more houses on Oakford Close and we are gradually getting some applications through Development Control. We've had the E.On building, on the former Treasury site, we have had some Council housing finished, which I visited on Friday, and there is interest in East Point where we agreed an application last week, and the Station will be happening. So there's been a bit of a bounce. There has also been some interest from the Victoria Centre in some investment and even Broadmarsh. So far, so good, but I believe a lot of this was on the back of the fiscal stimulus from the last Labour Government. From the much maligned Gordon Brown who it was said, went around spending loads and loads of money, well actually it had an impact on the building sector. And I think we should have been given credit for that because we are now still benefiting from some of that upturn. The problem is, now, that the prospects are severely weakened. The housing market, which is probably the most important element of construction, took a 3.6% dip, according to Halifax in August, a record dip. There is new legislation coming through which I think will restrict house building. I cannot envisage a lot of the authorities outside Nottingham agreeing to the scope of house building required. Depending on what the threshold is for the vote, because there's going to be public votes on it, it could actually mean that there is very little house building at all. And for any developers, so if anyone wants to report this, Nottingham is very much open for business on housing, probably unlike a lot of the

area outside. So if you can report that in the Evening Post, I would be very grateful. We are open for business. They are closed for business. Please get that added. Retail is also dipping, the yields on retail have gone down to about 3%, compared to about 5% for equities. There has been a decline in retail rents nationally, and the 15% rise in commercial property, which happened last year, there was only a 1% rise in August, which is a downturn on the monthly average. In the public sector the stimulus is likely to be capped off. There will be no more Council housing. There is a risk to decent homes, we don't know about the A453 and the Tram, but we sincerely hope that the Liberal Democrat Minister will see the light of day, and keep to the true faith which is Keynesian, but on the whole the prospects are damn bleak at the moment, and it's not just my view, I'll quote from the Financial Times "Financial Advisors warn that the recent recovery in the UK commercial property has seen values rise 15.6% in the last 13 months appears to have come to an end. The recovery has run its course and capital values are once again, close to their peak". And another one from a different article "It appears that the tide of growth seen in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter is ebbing in the 3<sup>rd</sup>". And another one, which is even more precise "Indeed, a leading business consultant warned it has not yet dawned on many companies just how the Government's impending cuts will affect them". Much more business is outsourced to the private sector today than in previous recessions. The link between public and private sector is absolutely essential, is absolutely relevant, there is not this gap that many people think and it will have an impact on the building sector and construction in Nottingham, right across the board. It won't just be the public sector, the private sector will suffer. But as for Apprenticeships, which is something we are particularly interested in, we are encouraged that the Government has stated that it supports Apprenticeships. And we know that at national level, the Construction and Skills Board is active in its support to companies to help them take on Apprentices, providing of course, there are jobs for them to go into, providing there is work for them to do. We are concerned however, that there may well be a privatisation of the Construction and Skills Board and what impact that may have. I would also point out that one of the priorities for this Labour Council, even under the cuts, will be training and Apprenticeships. One of our top priorities for defending against the cuts will be Apprenticeships, so we are very, very committed, but I remind people that, without Government stimulus, there is a danger that our construction industry will go into freefall. All the indications are there. The Government is depressing expectation with its talk about cuts, it is depressing expectation by carrying out cuts. And we know that the Government's beginning to lose



its nerve. Certainly the Liberal Democrat Minister over the weekend was talking about not cutting steeply as they were intending to do, and I absolutely agree with him and I am sure the Liberal Democrats here will support him, but also the Tories are talking about quantitative easing; and I would say I agree with quantitative easing for the short term fix, but rather than quantitative easing which, again, is built by buying back Government bonds. In order to put money back into the economy, far better to stimulate through the building sector. You get a far better multiplier putting it in the hands of builders than you do putting it in the hands of bankers. So I would hope that if you are going to lose your nerve, which you may well be doing, that you do it by economic stimulus by putting money into the public sector building programme and the start off is giving us the Tram and giving us the A453. Thank you very much.

### **A453 scheme**

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

Can the Portfolio Holder for Transport explain why the A453 scheme depends on the Tram?

Councillor Urquhart replied as follows:

Thank you, Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Packer for your question, which I know is something of particular importance to the ward that you represent in Clifton, and also some thanks to Councillor Chapman for answering some of my answer in his previous answer to the question. Thank you very much.

Of course both the A453 improvements and Phase 2 and 3 of the Tram are crucial transport schemes for our City, improving our economic wellbeing, reducing congestion, increasing sustainability, and enabling more people to move from roads onto public transport. Both schemes which will be built, of course, by the private sector, giving jobs to local people, working for the private companies who will be constructing both of those schemes. There could of course, as Councillor Chapman has alluded to, be a temptation in difficult economic times to think that perhaps we would get one scheme, but not the other. The reality is that these 2 schemes are closely interlinked and for the A453 to be successful, it does need the Tram. NET Phase 2, the Tram, includes over 1000 park and ride spaces at its Clifton terminus, adjacent to, and

connected to the A453, attracting commuters and visitors, and providing an attractive alternative to continuing by road into the City Centre, reducing traffic volumes, therefore, on the A453 as it goes through Clifton. Without the Tram, the A453 improvements could bring about short-term congestion relief, but that increased capacity would be swallowed up by traffic growth very quickly. However, if the A453 is improved alongside Tram expansion, then the number of passenger journeys across that extended Tram system would increase, to over 20 million a year, as well as reducing by over one third the predicted increase in peak time car journeys to and from the centre of the City. Upgrading of the A453 is considered by local businesses to be vital to the regional economy to support East/West regional movements and in connecting Nottingham to key markets in the South and West Midlands and beyond. And of course the A453 is one of the most congested inter-urban routes in the country and it has a difficult safety record. But in planning for the improvements to the A453, the Department for Transport carried out multi modal studies, examining travel demand in the A453 corridor and concluded that a preferred strategy would be substantial investment in public transport, i.e. including Lines 2 and 3 of the Tram, and policies to influence travel demand and behaviour, i.e. the Workplace Parking Levy and the various smarter choices measures that we are involved with, combined to reduce the overall demand for movement and therefore bring about increased use of public transport, walking and cycling, resulting in lower traffic forecasts and the opportunity, therefore, to implement a scheme for the A453 of lesser impact than had been previously proposed, which still tackles congestion, but with less impact on both the community and the environment. So if we remove car based journeys onto the Tram, from the A453 at Clifton, this would improve the road even without the improvements that are currently proposed. With the A453 improvements and the Tram, the difference would be considerable, but without the Tram, the difference would be short-lived and would not have the impact that we know our businesses need. A City with all 3 of its motorway junctions served by fast, reliable Tram based park and ride is the outcome of the two new lines of the Tram and it's the vision that I hope this Council shares for Nottingham. Junctions 23 and 24 to the A453 at Clifton linked with Tram based park and ride, Junction 25 and the A52 also served by the Beeston and Chilwell route park and ride, building on the success already found at Junction 26 Phoenix Park park and ride that is operating so well on Line 1. This is the kind of joined up transport strategy that ensures that Nottingham has a well deserved reputation, as mentioned at the beginning of the meeting, as a leader in transport. You

do not become the least car dependent City in the country for nothing. It's a long term vision and it's a strategy we have rightly pursued over a number of years. Dealing both with the needs of road users, public transport users, pedestrians and cyclists in a way that balances these things and makes sure that Nottingham's infrastructure is fit for economic growth, job creation, and copes with reducing dependence on cars to make us a sustainable City for the long term, and of course, this afternoon, public sector infrastructure projects have become a bit of a theme. These two that I am talking about this afternoon are additional examples of the type of construction which should go ahead. We cannot afford not to proceed with these projects, so we need 2 more lines of a Tram to enable that joined up network and to make the much needed improvements to the A453 really produce the benefits that Nottingham needs economically, socially and environmentally. For me, the A453 alone does not make sense, either economically, socially or environmentally.

### **Agency staff cost increases**

Councillor Culley asked the following question of Councillor Ahmed:

Given that over the last financial year the Council was reducing its workforce, can the Portfolio Holder justify an increase of £4m in, agency staff costs since 2008-09, resulting in a total expenditure of over £17m in 2009-10?

Councillor Ahmed replied as follows:

Thank you, Lord Mayor. May I thank Councillor Culley for her question. Just to give some background to the City Council's payroll, in 2008/09 the Council's payroll cost, excluding agency staff, totalled £198 million. In 2009/10 through the use of vacancy management, flexible approaches to resourcing and ongoing improvement agenda the Council's payroll cost reduced to £190 million. This shows a like for like year on year payroll cost reduction of close to about £8million. Most of the increased costs in the agency staff, around £3.5million, was due to recruitment and retention challenges within Children's, and to lesser extent, Adult Social care. The main areas of agency spend and the change compared with 2008/09 were: the vacant posts, additional work, project work, secondment and redeployment and some others. As the figures show the overall spend including agency cost reduced by over £3 million justifying the investment made in the area of agency staff in order to both ensure

continuity of critical services and to achieve the larger overall spending reductions. There have been significant external pressures, particularly in the ability to attract and retain the social care workforce, both adult and children's, the latter being further impacted upon by the Baby P case. As examples in 2009/10 the number of looked after children increased by 7%, the number of protection plans by 14%, as compared with 2008/09. Both Children's and Adults faced significant resourcing challenges resulting in an increased use of agency staff. This increased the spend on vacant posts: Children's by £1.945m, Adults by £0.675m, and these two areas combined representing 73% of increase in vacant posts agency spend. Allied to flexible resourcing the scale of the wider public expenditure challenges further reinforced the need to maintain high levels of flexibility, plus resource investment in planning and implementing fundamental changes such as the move to Loxley House, the Putting People First agenda, initiatives that will deliver significant savings. However, both require resource investment in terms of planning and delivery and have, therefore, significantly contributed to the increase in project work and additional work. Lord Mayor, I have commissioned a review of the use of external agency and interim workers. The objectives of this are to produce a set of recommendations to enable (a) clearly established increased controls to be in place for the use of agency and interim support staff and (b) delivery of reduction of the overall expenditure in this area. This initial work is now near to completion and I intend to bring a report to ACOS within next couple of months.

Thank you very much.

### **Expenditure on consultants and Executive Councillors**

Councillor Culley asked the following question to the Leader:

Could the Leader detail how much time and expenditure has been allocated by this Council, through training programmes and the employment of consultants for its senior management and Executive Councillors?

Councillor Collins replied as follows:

Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am sure Councillor Culley can recall having attended the ACOS meeting on 5 October where these issues were discussed, asked questions on 8 March and 13 September about Executive Support, and sat through nearly 6 hours of Call-in meetings on

8 and 9 September about Portfolio Holder decision 738. As a result I am pretty confident she already knows the answer to this question.

## **Bulwell market**

Councillor Davie asked the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change:

Could the Portfolio Holder explain what the Council is doing to help Bulwell Market in the light of high pitch costs, increased parking charges and the need for investment in facilities such as lighting?

Councillor Bull replied as follows:

Thank you, Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Davie for your question and for your concern for those traders in Bulwell and for issues that are not necessarily within your ward. Thank you for your concern.

Obviously Councillors here will understand that Bulwell market is the largest district market we have got in the City, and it runs on a Tuesday, Friday and a Saturday, with a private operator running a flea market on a Wednesday. It takes up the area around the market place in Bulwell Town Centre and is really well located for lots of footfall and people walking by, who are, hopefully, able to go in it and spend some money. It's well located in cases of public transport as well and parking. On average the market attracts around 50 stalls with a large range of goods. Despite this, it is recognised, and obviously the national climate has got a lot to do with this, that traditional markets have been for sometime been struggling alongside the growth and popularity of supermarkets and discount stores and Bulwell is no exception. Presently, the occupancy is around 57% which represents a decline of around 9% looking at figures from 3 years ago. But this is in line with national trends. And Nottingham is trying really very hard to undertake a range of initiatives to help raise the profile of our markets and encourage new local stall holders and certainly Victoria Centre market and the City Centre markets have contacted me and their own local Councillors on a number of occasions to help to try and address issues, so I would recommend that if there are particular traders that require some advice, that they contact first their local ward Councillors, the Councillors for Bulwell and also myself as well to see if there is anything extra that we can help with. I just want to list: in 2008 following improvements of the Bulwell Town Centre works, we put a new market stall layout in, we made investment to improve the

appearance of the market stalls. To try and lower their costs we allowed the stall traders to erect and dismantle their own stalls; since 2007/08 costs per footage for stalls have increased by just 34p, going for from £2.06/ft up to £2.40/ft now, which is fairly average, and in fact, perhaps on the lower side, so I'm not sure where you are getting your high costs from. We are aware of course, that we have just come to the end of a consultation period on the possibility of introducing parking charges within Bulwell and I know that Councillor Urquhart will be coming to a decision after looking at the views and opinions of the consultees very shortly. I really do hope that the traders themselves have put in some formal representations to that, and I am sure in your discussions with them that you would have encouraged and urged them to put in a consultation for those parking, and I know that they have spoken to their Bulwell Councillors as well who have urged them to put in some consultation responses and I really hope they do. We have already had discussions with them to try and come to a discounted rate for parking for trading for 1, 2 or 3 days a week, and in terms of the lighting issues, we have had some issues with lighting around the market in the autumn and winter evenings and this was because of the works that were done in 2008. Now at the moment we have got a costed scheme to improve the lighting for Bulwell market, but in the current circumstances, which unfortunately are wholly down to the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Government, we probably won't have the investment needed to put that Capital Investment in for the lighting unfortunately, unless you want to have a word with your friend the Chancellor and perhaps send some money our way. So I do hope I have answered all of your question and I would again urge the traders to contact myself or indeed the Bulwell Councillors to get any further advice and support. Thank you.

**43 NOTTINGHAM EXPRESS TRANSIT SYSTEM ORDER 2009 – APPLICATION FOR AN AMENDING ORDER AND EXCHANGE LAND CERTIFICATE IN RESPECT OF OPEN SPACE LAND PROPOSED TO BE ACQUIRED COMPULSORILY**

The Deputy Lord Mayor took the Chair for this item as the Lord Mayor vacated the Chamber due to his personal and prejudicial interest declared earlier on the agenda.

The report of the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Area Working, as set out on pages 260 to 264 of the agenda, was submitted.

**RESOLVED** on the motion of Councillor Urquhart, seconded by Councillor Clark, by a majority of the Council, as required by section 239 of the Local Government Act 1972, the City Council confirmed its decision taken on 12 July 2010, as follows:

- (1) that an application be made by the Council for an Order (“the Amending Order”) to be made by the Secretary of State for Transport under the Transport and Works Act 1992 to amend the Nottingham Express Transit System Order 2009 so that (i) the City Council can acquire compulsorily open space land in Chilwell required for the purpose of NET Phase Two (“the Open Space Land”); (ii) the exchange land (“the Exchange Land”) intended to be provided in place of the Open Space Land (and other land) has to be laid out to the satisfaction of Broxtowe Borough Council; and (iii) the Exchange Land will vest in The Nottinghamshire County Council rather than in Broxtowe Borough Council;**
- (2) that an application be made by the Council to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for a certificate to be given as to the suitability of the Exchange Land (“Exchange Land Certificate”) under section 19 of the Acquisition of Land Act 1981;**
- (3) that subject to the above, the Director, NET, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Area Working, may take all such steps as may be necessary to carry the above resolutions into effect, including all those steps required for the Council to apply for and thereafter promote its applications for the Amending Order and an Exchange Land Certificate, including dealing with any objections to the applications, entering into agreements or commitments in relation to them and conducting any public inquiries that may be called; and**
- (4) that the corporate seal of the City Council may be affixed to any documents required to be sealed in connection with the applications for a subsequent promotion of the Amending Order and an Exchange Land Certificate.**

The Lord Mayor resumed the Chair.

#### **44 AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10**

The report of the Chair of the Audit Committee, as set out on pages 265 to 267 of the agenda, and pages 268 to 297 of Appendix 1, which was circulated separately to the report, was submitted.

**RESOLVED that on the motion of Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Aslam, the Audit Committee Annual Report 2009/10, be noted.**

The meeting concluded at 4.20 pm