

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL

held at the Council House, Nottingham,

on Monday 10 October 2011 at 2.00 pm

ATTENDANCES

✓ Councillor Wildgust		Lord Mayor
✓ Councillor Ali		Councillor Longford
Councillor Arnold	✓	Councillor McDonald
✓ Councillor Aslam	✓	Councillor Malcolm
✓ Councillor Ball	✓	Councillor McCulloch
✓ Councillor Bryan	✓	Councillor Mellen
✓ Councillor Campbell	✓	Councillor Molife
✓ Councillor Chapman		Councillor Morley
✓ Councillor Choudhry	✓	Councillor Morris
✓ Councillor Clark	✓	Councillor Neal
✓ Councillor Collins	✓	Councillor Norris
Councillor Cresswell	✓	Councillor Ottewell
✓ Councillor Culley	✓	Councillor Packer
✓ Councillor Dewinton		Councillor Parbutt
Councillor Fox	✓	Councillor Parton
✓ Councillor Gibson	✓	Councillor Piper
✓ Councillor Grocock	✓	Councillor Saghir
Councillor Hartshorne	✓	Councillor Smith
✓ Councillor Healy	✓	Councillor Spencer
✓ Councillor Heaton	✓	Councillor Steel
✓ Councillor Ibrahim	✓	Councillor Trimble
Councillor Jeffery	✓	Councillor Unczur
✓ Councillor Jenkins	✓	Councillor Urquhart
✓ Councillor Johnson	✓	Councillor Watson
✓ Councillor Jones	✓	Councillor K Williams
✓ Councillor Khan	✓	Councillor S Williams
✓ Councillor Klein	✓	Councillor Wood
✓ Councillor Liversidge		

53 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Arnold, Cresswell, Fox, Hartshorne, Morley and Parbutt.

54 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were made.

55 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS FROM CITIZENS

Questions from citizens

The following question was asked by Mr Steve Hughes to the Deputy Leader:

My question relates to provision of high speed internet within the Lace Market. After many years of asking, it is apparent that neither BT or cable companies have any intention of upgrading the network within the Lace Market, which is for the most part of old and poor quality. In many forums, this has also been given as a reason for demise of some businesses in the area - practically all of the creative businesses have now relocated elsewhere. Given its high residential density, and lowering popularity for small businesses, might it be appropriate for the City to step in to move this forward somehow so it can maximise its potential?

Councillor Chapman replied as follows:

Thank you, Lord Mayor, and can I thank Mr Hughes for what is a very serious question on a serious matter.

The quality of digital infrastructure is key for business growth, especially for Nottingham's digital sector which has a large cluster around the Lace Market, such as at Broadway and Antenna. As such, the Lace Market continues to be a thriving hub for creative sector businesses. The City is a leading centre for broadband in the UK and has been able to attract new businesses, and see local businesses expand, built on a relatively strong position. Nevertheless, we are aware that some parts of the City have not been as well served as others, and we are keen to keep ahead of the competition.

It is, therefore, good news that BT has recently announced, as part of its national programme of rolling out 'next generation broadband', that it is upgrading the main exchange servicing the Lace Market, the City Centre, and much of the east of the City, it also includes Sherwood. New improved services should be available by December 2011, and after that both business and residential customers should experience a significant improvement. We are meeting with BT in the future, myself and Councillor Alex Ball, who is heading up this project for the City Council.

The City Council has in fact already intervened; we will be launching the 'Ultraband' project in December, paid for by European money, which will provide superfast connectivity to small creative businesses at Broadway and Antenna, two of our key hubs in the Lace Market. This work by the City Council, and the recent BT upgrades, mean that we have every reason to believe that Nottingham, and especially the Lace Market, should see continuing growth in new digital businesses.

Finally, we have plans to increase digital capacity further still in the City and these plans will be revealed eventually. I can not say anything about it at the moment, but they are quite interesting.

Thank you.

Petitions from Councillors on behalf of citizens

Councillor Wood submitted a petition to the Lord Mayor on behalf of 1054 signatories requesting that the American Airborne 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment monument at Wollaton Park be completed.

56 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2011, copies of which had been circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Lord Mayor.

57 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Chief Executive reported the following communications:

Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) East Midlands in Bloom

Nottingham won four RHS East Midlands in Bloom awards. These were:

- a gold medal award in the 'Large City' category;
- a special award for the innovative sculptural trail around the City Centre;
- a silver medal award for the Meadows Urban Community; and
- a silver medal award for the large village at Lark Hill, Clifton.

50 community groups were also recognised at the 'It's Your Neighbourhood' awards.

Distributor Takeback Scheme (DTS) Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Local Authority Project Fund

On 4 August 2011 the Department of Business Innovation Skills (BIS) notified the Council that we had been successful in our bid to the DTS Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Local Authority Project Fund. BIS reported that the fund was more than 3 times oversubscribed, so chosen projects had been subject to a very competitive selection process.

The successful bid was another step forward in maximising the amount of waste electrical and electronic equipment that was reused and recycled in Nottingham. The project also:

- targeted a, so far, untapped opportunity for working with Markets and Fairs to encourage more reuse and recycling of small electrical goods at the heart of local communities;
- further embedded the Council's partnership with one of Nottingham's leading reuse projects, Family First;
- diverted small electrical goods away from landfill and incineration;
- provided a platform for promoting the Council's wider recycling services and influencing positive behavioural change around wider household waste management.

Total project costs amounted to £38,500 with external contributions from Valpak (Compliance Scheme) and Wastecycle (Private Sector). The DTS bid contributed £29,945 to the project. In-kind contributions had come from Family First (local Third Sector reuse project) and Valpak.

Arts Award

Frances Howard, Arts Education Co-ordinator, won one of six national Adviser Inspiration Awards from Trinity College London/Arts Council for England. The winners were nominated by young people who were pursuing the Arts Award, a national qualification for young people, which carried UCAS points at Gold Level.

The College Street Centre would be mentioned in an upcoming article in the Times Educational Supplement as a leading national centre for the promotion and entry of young people to the Arts Award.

Congratulations to Frances Howard and the College Street Centre.

Care Catering Awards 2011

Sheila Minagy-Sales, of Crocusfields, The Meadows, won the Catering Team/Individual of the Year Award which recognised a team or an individual's outstanding achievement in their field, including the provision of well-balanced nutritious menus and the empowerment of customers. Crocusfields is a residential unit that provides short breaks for young people with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities. Sheila was described by the judges as a one person whirlwind and they all agreed that her dedication and hardworking, nothing-is-too-much-trouble attitude, represented all that was best of anyone working in the Care Sector.

The City Council managed Oaks Care Home in St Anns was in the top three for the Care Establishment of the Year Award. This recognised the work that the Oaks does with nutrition and the partnership working with the Community Payback Team.

The prestigious annual awards recognised, rewarded and celebrated those who had excelled in their field and made a significant contribution to catering in the Care Sector.

Congratulations to Sheila Mingay-Sales and The Oaks Care Home.

58 QUESTIONS

Tightening of ticketing competition rules

Councillor Neal asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation:

Would the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation agree that tightening competition rules used by the present government have led to Nottingham suffering short term disadvantage?

Councillor Urquhart replied as follows:

Thank you, Lord Mayor, and thank you, Councillor Neal.

The very simple one word answer to this question is yes, I would agree that some Nottingham citizens will suffer short term disadvantage, although, of course, as yet no-one has suffered any disadvantage because this is all about ticketing between trams and buses and none of the changes that I am going to go on to talk about have yet happened, but yes, some public transport users in Nottingham will suffer disadvantage because competition rules prevent ticketing arrangements that are made between two operators when those ticketing arrangements are not available for all operators, so, for example, we currently have arrangements between Nottingham City Transport and the Tram, which we will no longer be able to continue with.

It is, of course, interesting to me that this government, following on from the previous Conservative government who deregulated the bus industry, is continuing with such a competition policy, because, of course, by bus deregulation, what we really mean is different regulation, what we really mean is a new set of regulations that bus companies have to abide by in order to demonstrate that they are, in fact, properly competitive. So, currently, bus operators face a very large number of rules and regulations and have to conform to those, for example, bus companies have to be clear that all of the services that they run are run on a commercial basis; bus companies are not allowed, by the deregulation legislation and current competition legislation, to cross-subsidise different routes, so you have to make sure that every single route that a bus company runs is a route that can be run commercially. Clearly that is not deregulation, that is more regulation in fact, and sometimes is unhelpful to a successful public transport outcome for the City.

So, some people who currently have existing Easyrider tickets are not going to get such a good deal when that product has to be withdrawn in its current form, their only options would be either having separate bus and tram tickets or the current multi-operator Kangaroo ticket, and it is very frustrating that public transport users in a City such as ours, with its

award-winning public transport offer, have that kind of ticketing restriction imposed upon them because of strict competition rules which appear not always to be in the best interests of the users of public transport, or indeed of those people who might be attracted to change mode if things were simpler or easier for them, and, of course, making public transport choice simpler and easier is one of the things that we have spent a very large number of years attempting to achieve for our local population. I share the Campaign for Better Transport's sense of frustration on this issue.

And, of course, whilst the present government seems to feel that competition is, of itself, good and that the market can resolve almost all ills it would seem, excessive competition in public transport can often be very unhelpful, not only in the terms I have referred to above in terms of ticketing, but particularly when it can result, as it has done in some cities in over-provision of services, bunching of a vast number of bus services on the most popular routes, and poor provision on those which are not commercial. It can result in lowering of standards, over-crowding at stops, and all of that.

So, in Nottingham we have sought to use the limited powers that we do have to ensure that this does not happen, and through the only means available to us, the Statutory Quality Partnership for the City Centre, we have set standards, not only for regularity of bus services, but also for quality of vehicles, provision of vehicles that are accessible, and provision of information at bus stops, and that does avoid some of the worst consequences of a supposedly deregulated market. For us those are the only powers that we do have.

So there are rules in place that allow multi-operator tickets, and those are welcome. In Nottingham we have made some progress on improvements to the current multi-operator ticket, currently known as Kangaroo, and we do have plans in place in the longer term to work towards a Nottingham "Oyster" style multi-operator ticket on an electronic platform which will, in the longer term, be a far better product for the citizens of Nottingham and which will mean a future and a next-generation for our Citycard.

In the short term, our focus now must be to ensure that public transport users in Nottingham who are affected by these changes, are kept well informed of the options available and that they know that we, as a City Council, are seeking to minimise their impact through a range of

measures that we are currently negotiating with all operators and partners.

We will pursue those negotiations with the tenacity that we have also recently achieved agreements with our local colleges and transport partners to jointly fund the free of charge multi-operator tickets for up to 3,000 students on low income who were previously entitled to Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA), because we knew that the evidence we had when the current government withdrew the EMA, was that many students and young people used their EMA in order to get them to and from their college placements, and, therefore, to mitigate another of the current government's decisions, we negotiated that arrangement with the bus companies and college partners such that those 3,000 students are able to get free of charge tickets to get to and from their college courses and placements, and it is that kind of approach of negotiation and tenacity, that we will bring to address the current issues in terms of inter-ticketing for City residents.

Regional Growth Fund (RGF)

Councillor S Williams asked the following question of the Deputy Leader:

Would the Deputy Leader please explain what growth has so far come from the Regional Growth fund?

Councillor Chapman replied as follows:

Can I thank Councillor Williams for her question.

In June 2010, to great fanfare and trumpet sound, Nick Clegg launched the £1.4 billion Regional Growth Fund. The money will help safeguard jobs, he said, it will spread opportunity, he said, it will help rebalance the economy, he said, but what was more interesting was what he did not say. He did not say that the fund was only a third of what the Regional Development Authorities were already spending, he did not say that in the East Midlands, where we were receiving in the last year of the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) £90 million worth of investment for research and development, employment creation, energy saving, land preparation, that we would be receiving not £50 million, not £30 million, not even £10 million, but £3 million, so from £90 million down to £3 million. He did not say that. What he also could not predict was that by October 2011, which is now, not a penny would be spent, no investment

made, no jobs saved, no rebalancing. Worse still, all the investment we enjoyed from EMDA would stop, he did not say that either. No matter, Mr Clegg is a resilient politician.

So, before his party conference, with the economy bottoming through insufficient spending, he brings forward a £500 million capital spend scheme. What he did not say, again, is that this spend is the same as the RGF money that he failed to spend several months earlier when he announced it. So, in short, no growth has occurred as a result of the RGF to date, not a job has been created, not a programme has been begun, and not a building has been built, but no matter, because actually, this is not the real point. This meagre contribution to the East Midlands economy is as nothing compared with what is happening to growth nationally. The economy is flat, youth unemployment is heading for over a million, and we have borrowed a record amount in August, borrowing is actually going up. We are desperate for some demand in the economy, at the very moment when public sector cuts are to bite really deeply.

But, behold, rising over the horizon comes George Osborne, not so much with plan B, because he will not admit having a plan B, it is more a plan B-. It consists of a long term complex plan to link firms up with the bond market, which should not be sneered at because, actually, it is not a bad idea, but by the time it is up and functioning, to quote Keynes, "we'll all be dead", but he and The Bank of England have also come up with another wheeze, which myself and Councillor Collins have been predicting for months, despite the fact that everybody has been denying it, and we have been predicting that what they would do would be to come up with quantitative easing, a measure which Mr Osborne, when it was first used, called "the desperate resort of a desperate government", apart from apparently when he does it. Quantitative easing, in my view, is the most efficient way of spending money inefficiently, it is untargeted money given to bankers in the hope that they will invest, it is all supply side stuff, when the problem staring the economy in the face is lack of demand.

The solution, therefore, which the government will eventually have to get to, whether it is B+, B-, A-, C-, is to use what liquidity they have to invest in training, to invest in research and development, to invest in construction, to provide sufficient demand to get people into jobs, to get them paying taxes, to reduce the deficit. So what we need in Nottingham is the restoration of the Future Jobs Fund to get people off the dole, the

building of the A453, the extension of government supported investment in Ultraband, green energy, all schemes with economic payback. Notice I have not said schools, notice I have not actually said housing, because you do not necessarily get the automatic payback for it, but these schemes which are investing in the future which will reproduce themselves in value, are the sort of schemes which the economy needs. It is far better than the tinkering, the hesitation and the spin we have had so far. This will be decisive, effective investment in real things and real skills. That is what the City Council is lobbying for, and I tell you eventually they will have to get there, so the faster they do it the better.

Thank you.

New Council houses

Councillor Ball asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Regeneration and the Community Sector:

Could the Portfolio Holder outline the success of Nottingham City Council and Nottingham City Homes successful consultation over the building of 500 new Council Houses and decommissioning properties across the City, and how this is in line with manifesto commitments to protect the citizens of Nottingham from the worst of government cuts?

Councillor Liversidge replied as follows:

Thank you, Lord Mayor.

Councillors will be aware that the housing revenue account, the rent accounts, which runs 29,000 - 30,000 houses in Nottingham, is due to be changed from the start of the next financial year. The subsidy rules are changing and we are going to be running the housing revenue account as a purely business account, in which the rents and any income that Nottingham City Homes can generate would be to pay for the repairs and any improvements of the accounts.

One of the issues that has been set for us is that if we can actually consult with our residents and our tenants about which properties we would want to demolish in the next five years, it would actually help the level of debt that we go into the company with, and so all councils have been set with this onerous task to do this.

We actually decided that we would do a proper consultation with our tenants over a very short period during the summer, when it is quite difficult to get to people, but we actually consulted with well over 1,000 tenants in different parts of the City, at properties which we thought were better to knock down than to keep going, simply because of the cost of keeping them running for the next thirty years. We had that consultation and officers of the City Council and Nottingham City Homes worked very well together to actually have proper consultation with tenants. We listened to those tenants and, as a result, only about 900 properties are on the list for demolition. Some people were quite willing, they came with lump hammers to knock their properties down, but there were some people who thought it was the wrong thing and we listened to those and we will not be demolishing those.

As a result of the new company rules, we will be intending to build 500 council houses in Nottingham. We are still waiting for the final, which we will not get until the settlement in November, but we are intending to build council houses in Nottingham. These will be energy efficient council houses, these will be council houses that meet the needs of Nottingham people, they will not be the type of council houses we are knocking down, we will be building council houses, council homes, efficient council homes, which are going to help Nottingham in a difficult future, because we have got a difficult future, with the changes in housing benefit rules and the changes in the way that we are going to be held to account by the government over these, and the way that money is being taken out of the Nottingham economy in order to fund the deficit.

The problem, of course, is as Councillor Chapman said earlier, is that taking this money out of our economy actually causes poor people in Nottingham to become even poorer, but it also results in fewer opportunities for people. We are hoping these council house builds will at least provide apprenticeships, provide opportunities for people in Nottingham to get jobs in the construction industry at the very least.

Thank you, Lord Mayor.

Green Deal, Renewable Heat Incentive and Feed-In Tariffs

Councillor McDonald asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Energy and Sustainability:

Does the Portfolio Holder for Energy and Sustainability believe that we need more certainty about Green Deal, Renewable Heat Incentive and Feed-In Tariffs?

Councillor Clark replied as follows:

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

There is a great deal of concern at the moment that the Conservative/Liberal Democrat government is failing to deliver on time according to their own timescales, and that they do not know what they are doing.

There is a clear need for greater certainty around energy initiatives and in particular, the Green Deal, Feed-In-Tariffs (FIT) and Renewable Heat Incentives, and I have already asked my Officers to develop a greater understanding of current industrial and government thinking of these initiatives, as well as working alongside Government to help shape their future thinking.

The Green Deal was announced as part of the Energy Bill 2011. The Green Deal has been read in the House of Commons and is due to go to the House of Lords shortly. There will be a Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) consultation in November that will last another 3 months. They hope to pass secondary legislation in spring 2012, primary legislation is due to be enacted this autumn. So the first Green Deals could become available in spring 2012. We do not quite know what they are doing.

The Feed-In-Tariff scheme, to support installations of photo voltaic panels, was first announced by the Labour government early in 2010, yet, in less than a year, changes to feed-in tariffs were announced by the Lib Dem/Conservative government lowering the rates available to large scale investments, these rates came into force in August 2011. We currently expect rates for large and small volume generation to be lowered considerably from 1 April 2012, but, as yet, there is no clarity on by how much they will be cut and there is to be a comprehensive Feed-In-Tariff review consultation due shortly. They do not know what they are doing.

The Renewable Heat Incentive offers incentives for every kilowatt hour of heat generated from renewable resources, including solid and gaseous biomass, solar thermal, ground and water source heat pumps, on-site biogas, deep geothermal, energy from waste and biomethane. There is supposed to be £860 million available in the period 2011-14 for industrial, business, public sector and not-for-profit organisations, and £15 million (in contrast to the £860 million) for households. Now that is fair enough when the non-domestic sectors listed contribute 38% of UK carbon emissions, and there are other measures that are more focused on households. The scheme was due to start on 1 October but was pulled on 30 September, the day before we were expecting it to start, so they have let down industry and business badly. There will be a minimum delay of two months before there is a resolution to this. They are not doing what they said they would be doing.

All of these schemes have been mired to some extent in uncertainty around funding levels and timescales, this presents investors, both large and small, with little confidence that they are making the right choice to invest in renewable technologies. We need a consistent approach to this agenda to build confidence and momentum.

Only last week the City Council was invited to be amongst a select group of pioneering Councils to working alongside DECC in formulating the technical and practical elements of the Green Deal, which has been immediately accepted.

In my view, greater clarity and certainty is required on two levels, first, long term stability in the conditions of each scheme, which is essential when raising the necessary finance and, secondly, and especially with respect to the Green Deal, early knowledge of the scheme's details, alongside certainty that these will not change in order that we can plan for implementation.

Furthermore, in order to promote a whole house approach to energy efficiency, which the City Council sponsors, it is essential that these three schemes work in conjunction with one another, and this joined-up Government thinking, is something the City Council will be promoting.

Long term stability in the operating conditions of each scheme is essential. For example, a review of, and subsequent drop in the level of, Feed-In-Tariff payments can have a disastrous effect on investors. Having put up the money based on a particular level of Feed-In-Tariff

payment, a change to the level of payments may require those decisions to be reversed, if they can be, and affect the payback time for such measures. The same principle applies to the second phase of Renewable Heat Incentive, in which consumers are paid for renewable heat generated, much like FITs. Certainty is essential to secure the long term investment that is required and to avoid unnecessary costs and effort.

Regarding the early certainty required to plan for scheme implementation, I confine my comments to Green Deal. The following aspects of Green Deal, not yet finalised, are critical to potential Green Deal Providers, of which the City Council might become one. We are there talking to government helping to ask the right questions, but it is up to the government to give the answers:

Eligible Measures - which measures are and are not eligible will affect decisions, and changes to eligibility mid-scheme could have similar financial consequences to those described earlier for FITs.

Energy Company Obligation (ECO) - for hard-to-treat houses, and to protect the fuel poor, ECO finance will be essential. Local Authorities wanting to plan interventions in the housing stock, and sections of the population that most need those interventions, need to know what overall level of ECO is available, the split between the hard-to-treat and Affordable Warmth schemes, and the system for accessing ECO funding. Only by knowing these can Councils assess their ability to effectively intervene.

The Golden Rule calculation - the Golden Rule states that the repayments for the energy saving measure that are charged to the energy bill are less than the energy saving generated. Does this rule have to apply to each individual measure in a package of proposed measures, or need it only apply to the package as a whole? This has a fundamental consequence for the application of Green Deal. Applying the Rule measure by measure will mean a different maximum repayment term for each measure. Doing so seriously limits the ability for profitable measures, loft insulation is one of those, to cross-subsidise other measures with longer pay-backs such as solid wall insulation. This would detract from the overall benefit the scheme can bring to the individual householder, and I cannot see how four separate agreements on repayment cannot be almost four times as expensive as one agreement covering four measures. They have not decided about that yet.

Energy Price Inflation - whether providers are allowed to index Green Deal repayments to an assumed energy price inflation has a direct effect on an investor's rate of return, and on financial attractiveness to consumers, and how providers explain this to potential customers makes me worry about possible mis-selling.

State Aid - the issue of whether Councils can use the Public Works borrowing in a Public-Private Partnership delivery has not yet been resolved. It is not as if that is a problem that has just emerged on these schemes. If it is not allowed, it will have consequences for the interest rate that can be achieved through a Public-Private Partnership delivery mechanism, and therefore may affect the Council's decision on which delivery mechanism to choose.

Customer protection - take up rates are critical to an investment decision of a would-be provider. However, take up rates will be dependent on adequate consumer protection, and potential providers need assurance that robust installer/advisor accreditation and strict regulation of advising/selling practices will be forthcoming. The issue of ensuring the independence of advisors seems particularly unclear, and a workable system needs to be developed that protects consumers on the one hand, but enables providers to access the market effectively on the other.

Nottingham has an enviable reputation for energy management, and here I mean the whole City, not just the City Council, with pioneering schemes at Green Street and in other parts of The Meadows, innovation in research and development at both universities, inward investment creating new jobs and practical energy measures taken by both universities and colleges.

Nottingham is already the UK's most energy self-sufficient city, generating 3% of our total energy from low carbon or renewable resources. This is something we are very proud of and will continue to develop in line with our manifesto commitments. We will use this knowledge and expertise to support Government in developing cohesive policies and packages that can benefit the people of Nottingham and help to offer some shelter from the soaring price of energy, which we know, hits the poorest communities the hardest.

Agency staff

Councillor Culley asked the following question of the Leader:

The Leader of the Council will recall that this time last year, when I asked the then Portfolio Holder for Employment and Skills about increasing costs on agency staff; he promised the “delivery of reduction of the overall expenditure in this area”.

With this in mind, can he explain why expenditure on agency staff has risen yet again by a further £4m to nearly £21.5m during 2010-11?

Councillor Collins replied as follows:

Thank you, Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor, when Councillor Ahmed was asked this question at Full Council on 11 October last year, Councillor Culley is right, he promised the “delivery of a reduction of the overall expenditure in this area”.

In the year ending 30 September 2010, so that is last year, the Council spent £8,764,663 on agency staff, while for the year ending September 2011, that is this year, the same figure was only £4,840,860, a reduction of 45%.

With this in mind, can I now assume that Councillor Culley would like to offer her congratulations to the Labour Group and former Councillor Ahmed for keeping that promise?

Loxley House Christmas tree

Councillor Steel asked the following question of the Leader:

Would the Leader of the Council take this opportunity to apologise to the citizens of Nottingham for the use of their money to rent a giant Christmas tree for the enjoyment of City Council staff based at Loxley House, where there was already a tree on each floor, despite assurances that this would be paid for by incoming sponsorship?

Councillor Collins replied as follows:

Lord Mayor this is probably the most pathetic and stupid question I have ever been asked in Full Council. Councillor Steel has not even managed to get his facts straight.

It is actually, frankly, the kind of question that I would only expect to have been asked by a Conservative Councillor that knows the cost of everything, but the value of nothing, a sad blogger who has nothing better to do in life than sit in front of a computer screen criticising others who try and do something more useful with their time, or indeed a newspaper that seems long ago to have forgotten what serious journalism is all about.

As for apologising, I think you and your colleagues have got rather a lot of apologising you should be doing to the people of Nottingham. You should be apologising for your party's decision to cut £60 million from public spending in Nottingham last year, for the £90 million stolen from the parents and children of Nottingham who now will not get the school improvements that they had been promised, for the government's mismanagement of the country's finances that has seen a growing economy, with declining unemployment and a falling deficit when Labour left office, transformed today into a stagnant economy with soaring unemployment and rising debt, for trebling of student fees and the abolition of EMA for our teenagers, and of course you might also like to apologise for the broken promises to protect the NHS.

When you and your colleagues start apologising for the massive damage your party is doing to Nottingham then maybe, maybe, I will take seriously any suggestions on such matters you might want to make to me.

What I will not do, however, is criticise officers for spending money on a Christmas tree that helped encourage staff to donate over 2,000 Christmas presents worth more than £10,000 for our children in care. That is the kind of giving and initiative I would have thought we would all want to encourage and we would want to see again this year.

Icelandic banks

Councillor Steel asked the following question of the Deputy Leader:

Of the £41.6m Nottingham City Council had invested in Icelandic Banks before their collapse, can the Deputy Leader update the Council and the citizens of Nottingham on the amount that has been returned to date and the amount still outstanding?

Councillor Chapman replied as follows:

Thank you, Lord Mayor.

The City Council has received to date £9.4 million, plus £202,000 interest from Heritable Bank deposits. For deposits in Landsbanki and Glitnir, which are the other two banks, Nottingham is part of a consortium of UK authorities and other public and charitable organisations who have co-operated in taking legal action to recover their deposits and interest. A range of test cases have been taken in respect of each bank and we are awaiting the judgements in the Icelandic Supreme Court, which should be happening in weeks, if not days.

Thank you.

59 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2011/12 – REVISED INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The report of the Deputy Leader, as set out on pages 181 to 185 of the agenda, was submitted.

RESOLVED that on the motion of Councillor Chapman, seconded by Councillor Collins, the revisions to the 2011/12 investment strategy, detailed at section 6.6 of the report, be approved.

60 MOTION IN THE NAME OF COUNCILLOR COLLINS

Moved by Councillor Collins, seconded by Councillor Piper:

“This Council is committed to reducing unemployment amongst Nottingham’s citizens by a quarter over the next four years and supports the implementation of the Working Nottingham partnership action plan to address this.”

Contributions were also made to the debate by:

- Graham Sheppard, District Manager for Job Centre Plus;
- Cath Lee, Federation of Small Businesses;
- Anna Mimms, Chief Executive of BEST (Broxtowe Education, Skills and Training);
- Lauren Davey and Uzair Hashmi, Youth Parliament.

Moved by Councillor Culley by way of an amendment and seconded by Councillor Steel that:

After “action plan to address this.” insert:

“Furthermore this Council resolves not to implement the Workplace Parking Levy, including Workplace Parking Charges for Council employees, that will have a detrimental impact on jobs in Nottingham and also resolves to financially support work to improve the City’s access from the A453.”

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

After discussion, the substantive motion was put to the vote and was carried.

RESOLVED that the substantive motion be carried.

61 EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL IN DECEMBER 2011

RESOLVED that an Extraordinary meeting of Council be held at the rising of the ordinary meeting on 12 December 2011 to appoint Honorary Aldermen/Alderwomen.

The meeting concluded at 5.20 pm

COPY OF WRITTEN QUESTION TO BE ASKED BY COUNCILLOR MORLEY OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR LEISURE, CULTURE AND TOURISM AT THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 10 OCTOBER 2011

Will the Portfolio Holder join me in congratulating the Nottingham Arkwright Society for their working hard to ensure that the industrial museum at Wollaton Park can open again as a valuable asset to the people of Nottingham? Does he also agree that this is exactly the type of Big Society scheme, as championed by this government, that we need to see more of across the City?

Councillor Trimble responded as follows:

Firstly, can I thank you for your question.

I will indeed join you in congratulating the Arkwright Society in ensuring that the Industrial Museum remains open. One member of the Arkwright Society has worked particularly hard to achieve this.

When the decision was made on the Industrial Museum the Secretary of the group came to the Council House for a meeting with myself. I agreed to give him officer time in order to try and help them succeed. Although I understand there is still some work to do before any formal agreement is brought forward for my approval, I am though, hopeful we will get there.

Officers of this Council put in enormous amounts of work to develop a successful £30,000 bid for Renaissance funding for display improvements and to develop the volunteer base. In addition, officers submitted a successful bid for £66,000 from the National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education. On top of this, local Councillors provided £30,000 through the Area Committee.

I don't believe we would have got to this point without the substantial Council officer support that I approved. I am also not aware that any of this money is from the Big Society Bank, unless of course the government are double counting.

So, I think we have got to this point in spite of the Big Society.

The Big Society has had three re-launches and most people still do not know what it means. The Chair of the House of Commons Treasury Select Committee, Andrew Tyrie, Member of Parliament for Chichester, said that the “Big Society was irrelevant to the task in hand if not downright contradictory to it”.

That task in hand is cuts. Cuts that are too fast and too deep for any chance of growth in the economy. We know that, charities know that and the voluntary organisations know it too, even if the public don't. Charities and voluntary organisations are having their budgets and programmes slashed. Huge cuts in direct grants, Future Jobs Fund, Area Based Grant and Supporting People have all hit voluntary organisations and charities hard. They have been hit to the tune of £4.4 billion pounds in the first year of Big Society replacing it with a sprinkling of patronage. With up to 40% of jobs at risk in the near future.

Oxfordshire, Somerset and Gloucestershire Conservative County Councils under the guise of cuts are using Big Society to decimate their Library Services. That was until Gloucestershire was taken to Judicial Review which will cost them in legal fees the same as it costs to keep two libraries open.

The policy think tank “Young Foundation” said “that the Big Society was 50% the right idea and 100% wrong time.” I think they were being generous. Big Society is, I'm afraid, all about cuts in public services, cuts to charity and voluntary organisations. I wish it wasn't and if that was the case we would support it. Nottingham has a very large and very varied voluntary sector and I am proud of that, I hope we still have it at the end of this parliament.