

# Public Document Pack

## Minutes of the meeting of the City Council

held at the Council Chamber, Council House

on 15 January 2024 from 2.00 pm - 4.20 pm

### Attendances:

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Councillor Carole McCulloch (Lord Mayor)	
✓ Councillor Saj Ahmad	✓ Councillor Sam Lux
✓ Councillor Liaqat Ali	✓ Councillor Sulcan Mahmood
Councillor Leslie Ayoola	✓ Councillor Farzanna Mahmood
✓ Councillor Cheryl Barnard	✓ Councillor AJ Matsiko
✓ Councillor Steve Battlemuch	✓ Councillor David Mellen
✓ Councillor Graham Chapman	✓ Councillor Sajid Mohammed
✓ Councillor Kevin Clarke	✓ Councillor Fozia Mubashar
✓ Councillor Audrey Dinnall	Councillor Salma Mumtaz
✓ Councillor Michael Edwards	✓ Councillor Sana Nasir
✓ Councillor Nadia Farhat	Councillor Devontay Okure
✓ Councillor Faith Gakanje-Ajala	✓ Councillor Nayab Patel
✓ Councillor Samuel Gardiner	✓ Councillor Georgia Power
✓ Councillor Sam Harris	✓ Councillor Shuguftah Quddoos
✓ Councillor Jay Hayes	✓ Councillor Ethan Radford
✓ Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora	✓ Councillor Nick Raine
✓ Councillor Imran Jalil	✓ Councillor Eunice Regan
✓ Councillor Corall Jenkins	✓ Councillor Sarita-Marie Rehman-Wall
✓ Councillor Maria Joannou	✓ Councillor Samina Riaz
✓ Councillor Kirsty M Jones	✓ Councillor Andrew Rule
✓ Councillor Kirsty L Jones	Councillor Naim Salim
✓ Councillor Helen Kalsi	✓ Councillor Michael Savage
✓ Councillor Angela Kandola	✓ Councillor Matt Shannon
Councillor Anwar Khan	✓ Councillor Hayley Spain
✓ Councillor Zafran Nawaz Khan	✓ Councillor Maria Watson
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan	✓ Councillor Adele Williams
✓ Councillor Neghat Khan	✓ Councillor Linda Woodings
✓ Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis	✓ Councillor Audra Wynter

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✓ Indicates present at meeting

### 59 Chair

As Councillor Carole McCulloch, Lord Mayor, was absent, Councillor Shuguftah Quddoos, Sheriff, chaired the meeting.

### 60 Order of Business

**In accordance with Standing Order 12.17, resolved to amend the order of business for the meeting to move Motion in the name of Councillor Corall Jenkins to become item 3 on the agenda.**

## **61 Apologies for absence**

Councillor Leslie Ayoola – unwell  
Councillor Anwar Khan – personal  
Councillor Gul Khan - leave  
Councillor Carole McCulloch – personal  
Councillor Salma Mumtaz – unwell  
Councillor Devontay Okure - unwell

## **62 Declarations of Interests**

In relation to agenda item 11 Motion in the name of Councillor Corall Jenkins (minute reference 61), in the interests of transparency Councillor Adele Williams stated that she worked for a climate charity - Hope for the Future.

## **63 Motion in the name of Councillor Corall Jenkins**

Councillor Corall Jenkins moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Zafran Khan:

This Council recognises that we have a vital part to play in ocean recovery. The people of Nottingham City benefit from our ocean through the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the way our ocean regulates our climate. We also impact the ocean through what we put down our drains, the litter and pollution that flows into our rivers, and the carbon emissions we produce. The burden of taking care of our ocean often falls to communities at the coast; but they are at the end of the line, receiving pollution and problems from inland communities like ours. We know that many of our citizens are concerned about the future of our oceans. Nottingham City Council recognises that we have a vital role to play in recovering the health of our ocean through increasing awareness of how local actions can affect the ocean and by acting as responsible custodians of the rivers, streams and waterways that run through our city on their way to the sea.

This Council pledges to report to Full Council within [6-12] months on the actions taken as follows:

1. Grow awareness in Nottingham of how all people, wherever they live, impact and are impacted by ocean health; working with children and residents of all ages to embed understanding of the 'source to sea' approach, stopping pollution at source and enabling as many people as possible to get involved with river protection activities.
2. Write to the Government asking them to:
  - a) To put the ocean into net recovery by 2030, updating the Marine Policy Statement and produce a national Ocean Recovery Strategy which recognises the connection between river and ocean systems and enables their recovery rather than managing degraded or altered habitats.

- b) Stop plastic pollution at source by strengthening the regulations around single-use plastics and set standards for microfibre-catching filters to ensure that all new washing machines are fitted with a filter that captures a high percentage of microfibres produced in the wash cycle by 2025.
- c) To make our rivers a clean and healthy resource for our citizens to enjoy, by taking swift action to reduce the risk of sewage storm overflow discharges into our rivers and bathing waters, bringing the target dates forward, to achieve 80% reduction by 2035 and reverse the cuts to Environment Agency funding so that they can take appropriate enforcement action against polluters.

Councillor Sam Lux proposed the following amendment to the motion, which was seconded by Councillor Sam Harris.

Insert the following actions:

1. “Recognise the importance of the protection and recovery of the River Trent and its tributaries in all decision making by Nottingham City Council, especially regarding planning, regeneration and economic policy. Decisions taken by the Council should be mindful of the need to mitigate the impact of the climate and ecological emergencies and to acknowledge the various nature-based solutions in our journey towards a carbon neutral and climate resilient future.”
2. “Co-ordinate with other local authorities along the River Trent, the Trent Partnership, the Environment Agency, the Canal and Rivers Trust and other local organisations to work towards further protection and recovery of the River Trent.”

Add the following wording at the end of the motion: “Cost implications arising from this motion, including officer time, will be subject to decision making in the usual way acknowledging the Council’s current financial position.”

Councillor debated the proposed amendment.

**Resolved to approve the amendment to the motion.**

Councillors debated the amended motion.

**Resolved to carry the amended motion.**

## **64 Questions from Citizens**

### **Council Contribution to the Cultural Sector**

A citizen asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture: What detailed assessment has the Council conducted of the potential impact of the proposed ending of contributions to the cultural sector, particularly in relation to the potential limitations it may impose on the career aspirations of young people and the overall economic and cultural well-being of our community?

Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis replied as follows:

Thank you. This relates to a proposal for the ending of grant contributions to the cultural sector. At present, the proposal to end all such annual awards, a sum of £190,000 for 2023-2024, is out for consultation. This will enable us to better understand the impact and allow affected organisations to submit relevant information to us. The consultation will therefore inform councillors when they do need to take budget reduction decisions later this year to ensure that they are fully aware and appraised of the consequences. We are conscious that while Nottingham City Council's annual grant contribution may not seem large, this funding does enable many of the cultural organisations in our city to lever additional funds from Arts Council England and other trusts and societies. Nottingham is a city with a rich, diverse and uniquely vibrant culture on offer. The city is home to many creative professionals that have a thriving community of both professional and amateur-led organisations and societies which make a strong contribution to Nottingham as a place where people want to visit, live, and study. We know that in just the last financial year the work of the 14 national portfolio organisations funded and supported by Arts Council England in our city alone generated over 1.9 million visits from and across the UK into Nottingham, generating millions of pounds for the city's economy. The City Council, over and above the annual grants, also directly manages and delivers Council services of its own. We employ hundreds of people in a number of services, including the Theatre Royal and Concert Hall, events delivery, museum and gallery service, and of course our libraries throughout the city. We are therefore very aware of the role and importance that cultural provision plays within the city's wider economy, and the opportunities it offers to many young people who want to enter the arts sector. This is quite a difficult sector in terms of the security of employment and so on and so forth, and so offering entry to those sectors is very important.

Unfortunately, the city is facing a budget crisis that will lead us to take difficult decisions down the line. But it is important to add that the state of Nottingham City Council's finances and its £53 million budget gap is, in the majority, a product of a broken system of local government funding. We are in a situation whereby 1 in 5 councils in the UK are on the brink of financial meltdown. Nottingham City Council's budget gap is mostly made out of pressures in rising costs for social care of adults and children and in rising costs of homelessness provision. As you all know those are all areas that councils such as ours are legally mandated to provide, with an absence of adequate Government funding that can cover for current levels of inflation in those sectors. So times are indeed hard, and there have been a number of difficult proposals brought forward by Council officers, including of course the proposal relating to the cultural sector. Ultimately what will help us to continue delivering for our communities, and continue delivery of those valued services that may be considered discretionary by this Government but are nonetheless indispensable for our communities is a change of Government. There will be opportunities for Nottingham residents to reverse this downwards spiral. This year there will be a General Election and also a Mayoral Election. If Labour is given the mandate in a regional and national election the much needed work of reversing these 13 years of failed austere neo-liberal Conservative policymaking can start at last. Thank you.

## **65 Petitions from Councillors on behalf of Citizens**

Councillor Andrew Rule presented a petition on behalf of citizens opposing the decision by Extracare to remove the ATM cash machine from Lark Hill Village, Clifton Estate and the safety concerns posed by the cash machines on Nobel Road. The petitioners consider that the decision will have a hugely detrimental impact on the Village and call on the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health to join the residents of Lark Hill in lobbying Extracare to reverse the decision.

Councillor Andrew Rule presented a petition on behalf of citizens calling on the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for highways, the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for the environment and the Corporate Director for Communities, Environment and Resident Services to create a working group with their equivalents in Nottinghamshire County Council, Tramlink and Severn Trent Water to look at how this can be alleviated going forward and specifically address the following issues:

- a) Why the drainage network from the junction of Ruddington Lane to the Wilford Lane tram crossing appears more susceptible to overflow, whilst the network on the opposite side of the road/ tram line does not appear to do the same.
- b) What can be done to increase the capacity of the drainage system under the Wilford Lane tram stop which has experienced an increased number of flooding incidents in recent months resulting in service cancellations causing disruption to service users, particularly commuters and school children.
- c) The impact of the recent Aldi and Lidl developments within Rushcliffe and how water run-off from those sites impact drainage capacity, together with any consequential effects this has on the carriageway, the tramline and properties in Roland Avenue, Maplestead Avenue and the allotments.
- d) The potential health risks to the general public with expose to sewage.

He outlined that, following Storm Bebet and Storm Henk, Wilford Lane has experienced increasing instances where carriageway run-off has led to flooding in residents' gardens, and in the most serious cases this has prevented elderly residents from leaving their properties; and as a result of the flooding residents are likely to face financial loss as a result of increased insurance premiums.

**66 To confirm the Minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting held on 13 November 2023**

The minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting held on 13 November 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

**67 To confirm the Minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 13 November 2023**

The minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 13 November 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

**68 To confirm the Minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 7 December 2023**

The minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 7 December 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

**69 To confirm the Minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 18 December 2023**

The minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 18 December 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

## **70 To receive official communications and announcements from the Leader of the Council and/or the Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive made the following announcements:

I am pleased to report that Nottingham was very well represented in the New Year's Honours list, and I'd like to warmly congratulate all of the recipients. Recognised this year was Eunice Campbell-Clark, who served as councillor in the city and county for 34 years and was recently made an Honorary Alderwoman of Nottingham City Council. Eunice has been awarded an OBE for services to local government. A former City Council colleague, Jackie Blake, was also honoured with an OBE for services to education. Jackie retired in May 2022 after working for the Council for 32 years in Education Catering. Elsewhere, off the back of being named BBC Sports Personality of the Year, England goalkeeper Mary Earps – who grew up in Nottingham – has been awarded an MBE for services to football, while Nottinghamshire and England's Stuart Broad, who was already an MBE, has been awarded a CBE for services to cricket. Also honoured is University of Nottingham's Professor Matthew Brookes who has received an OBE for his pioneering work on brain imaging, helping to create a new kind of wearable brain scanner. Plus, 74-year-old Ethel Gloria Anderson has been awarded an MBE for her outstanding service to the community of St Ann's. Former Nottingham Forest and England footballing legend Peter Shilton was given a CBE in recognition of his work to prevent harm from gambling, while Ellie and Becky Downie, the champion gymnast sisters who both represented Great Britain at the Olympics, have been given MBEs for services to the sport. Well done to all. We're extremely proud of you, and your connection to our city.

I am sad to report the death of former colleague Dave Pickering. Having joined the Council in 1984, Dave worked for the Council for over 22 years including as Head of the Direct Labour Organisation for Housing. Our thoughts are with his family, friends and all those affected by his passing.

Councillor David Mellen congratulated former councillor, and Honorary Alderwoman Eunice Campbell-Clark on the receipt of an OBE for services to local government.

Councillor Michael Edwards spoke in tribute to Dave Pickering and a minute's silence was held.

## **71 Questions from Councillors - to the City Council's lead Councillor on the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority**

None

## **72 Questions from Councillors - to a member of Executive Board, the Chair of a Committee and the Chair of any other City Council body**

### **Central Library**

Councillor Michael Savage asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture:

Will the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture join me in celebrating the opening of the new Central Library last year, and can he confirm how many visitors have been since it opened?

Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis replied as follows:

Thank you Sheriff, and thanks to Councillor Savage for his question. Can I start with a huge thanks to our officers and staff, and also to our partners who worked so hard to help us open this great facility for Nottingham. I'm glad to report that our Libraries and Museums Team continues to deliver for our city. Even working under really adverse financial conditions, we worked to reopen Nottingham Castle with a new and improved offer for the benefit of Nottingham residents, and that same team also delivered on the fit-out and opening of the new Central Library last year. It is that same Team that is also involved with works linked with the reopening of the new Sherwood Library, the fit-out of which will be starting very soon. It shows the resilience of our leadership, delivering for the benefit of Nottingham citizens in times of great adversity, and it also showcases the competence and the love for our city vested in our staff who continue championing and developing our public spaces.

It was such a great pleasure to see the Central Library opening as planned on the 28 November with the help of pupils from the Sneinton Church of England Primary School, pupils from Victoria Primary School, and pupils from Mellers Primary School. The library is really an offering to future generations of people, and will help boost educational outcomes for young people, improve employability and drive economic development. The Central Library is as popular as we expected and more. It was really impressive for me to hear that for the first 32 days it was open it received over 28,000 visits. We had over 16,000 books borrowed from our collection and over 3,000 hours of our computers being used by over 1,000 visitors. We have had a number of external bookings for our rooms, which are indeed very popular with organisations now, and we have received very positive comments about the coffee shop, which is a service extension of our very own in-house operator, who operates the Museum and Galleries Service coffee shops, such as the one in Newstead Abbey and the one in the Castle. Over 2,700 people got a new library card, and we have delivered over 95 events to date. We hosted our first 'Sound at Central' Music Event, which was sold out. We arranged a Community Christmas Lights Switch-On which was also sold out. We have already had conversation groups, craft and Lego clubs, as well as a number of flash mob events with the Robin Hood Youth Orchestra. The library was launched including an exhibition which constitutes a collage of photographs and narrative of memories showcasing the history of the Broadmarsh, exploring what industries and social activities took place in that space in the past, including which lost heritage sites were in that area, such as Walter's Fountain which adorned the bottom of Lister Gate. This was no accident, for as we exhibit those historical events reflecting on our past, we continue planning and building new public spaces in that location that express our love and respect for the environment. Where part of the Broadmarsh Shopping Centre once stood, there will now be a 'green heart' – a green lung for our city which is to be completed in summer this year. Where Collins Street was once full of cars and their fumes, now there is already an open-air corridor which will soon have a play area on it for kids to play on. All that right next to a brand new library, which was indeed a milestone for the development of the south side of the city.

## **Political Leadership**

Councillor Sarita-Marie Rehman-Wall asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:

Does the Leader of the Council agree that in 2024 Nottingham needs a Labour East Midlands Mayor and a Labour Government to help fix the problems caused by 13 years of Conservative mismanagement and neglect?

Councillor David Mellen replied as follows:

Thank you Sheriff, and thank you Councillor Rehman-Wall for your question. The answer is a resounding 'yes' to both. With total certainty, we need a Labour Mayor working under a Labour Government to help right the incalculable wrongs inflicted by the Tories on Nottingham and on our country as a whole. As a councillor in a city that already suffers from high rates of poverty, I and we have felt the pain of every single one of those last 14 awful years - every budget cut, every reduced council service, every packed hospital ward, every under-funded school, every hungry child, every cost-of-living increase - all carried out while the friends of the Conservatives line their pockets. It is unforgivable. Make no mistake – this is a cruel and uncaring Government that has presided over a heartless and unnecessary policy of austerity that has brought this country to its knees. The needs of the vulnerable and the poor have been secondary to the futures of the Conservative Party. The facts are stark. Around 1 in 5 of the population nationally now lives in poverty and an appalling 3.9 million of these are children. It's worth spending just a moment to spell out what this means. Poverty means not being able to heat your home, not being able to pay your rent and buy the essentials for your children. It means waking up every morning facing insecurity, uncertainty, impossible decisions about money and often feeling hungry. No-one should have to feel like this in one of the richest countries in the world. This Christmas just gone, over 300,000 people in England were homeless. In our NHS, 6.39 million people were waiting for treatment, with 3.18 million of those patients waiting over four months and a staggering 355,000 waiting over a year for treatment. The mantra established by Neil Kinnock has never been truer: don't get old, don't get sick, don't lose your job because this Government simply doesn't care. They will look the other way while you fall through the cracks and flounder without the support of services that once wrapped around those in need of help the most.

As a Council we've fared no better. In real terms we now receive £100 million less funding each and every year from the Government than we did 10 years ago. It's a startling figure that's been repeated during our consultation on our budget. Just imagine what we could do with £100 million a year for the people of Nottingham. Instead, this Government asks us to make up our shortfall by increasing the Council Tax for our already struggling citizens. It is abhorrent. The picture in the wider East Midlands is no better. Ours is the region that has been historically underfunded by this Government the most. In December, this Chamber voted to take a step to right that wrong and agree unanimously to move forward with the decision with the Devolution Deal that will bring an estimated £38 million a year for thirty years as a starting point, with hopes of a transport settlement, influence over the Adult Skills budget and other money on its way. Led by a Labour Mayor I believe that this Combined Regional Authority will be a force for good for our city. We have an excellent candidate in Claire Ward and I know she will fight for Nottingham if she is elected. It shouldn't have to be like this, of course. We shouldn't have to beg for scraps or compete with other areas for funding. We shouldn't have to contribute to beauty parades for who can get the money. Every town and every city should get the



money it needs to provide for its citizens, and while this Government protects the bonuses of wealthy bankers, too many people are struggling to make ends meet. I hope that we are not broken beyond repair. I remember, because I'm old enough to remember, the jubilation of the Labour landslide after the 1997 election when the Tories were swept away after a similarly painful and prolonged government led by Margaret Thatcher and then John Major, who began the systematic dismantling of our communities, our welfare state, our schools, our unions and our workplaces. I look forward to that feeling again this year. A feeling of optimism, of hope, of working towards a better future for all, where it's okay to be kind, where money can flow back to those who need it most rather than further lining the pockets of the mega-rich. Let me be unequivocal – I urge the people of our city and our county to vote for Claire Ward for our Regional Mayor; and I encourage everybody to vote for your Labour candidate in the General Election. Help to break this cycle of the wanton destruction of our people and their values, vote for a better future. Vote Labour this year.

### **Flooding**

Councillor Hayley Spain asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Energy, Environment and Waste Services and Parks:

Can the Portfolio Holder for Energy, Environment and Waste Services and Parks inform Council of the impact of flooding in Nottingham City following Storm Henk, as well as confirming what support affected residents can access? Are further improvements to the flood prevention infrastructure still needed, and is more finance required to manage the existing infrastructure?

In the absence of Councillor Corall Jenkins, Councillor David Mellen replied as follows:

Thank you, Sheriff. Can I thank Councillor Spain for her question. I'm happy to pick up this response on behalf of Councillor Jenkins. Nottingham City Council, as the lead Local Flood Authority, has not received any reported incidents of internal property flooding during Storm Henk. However, significant rising water levels of the River Trent meant that the Queens Road Park and Ride Facility was impacted again, and the tram was partially suspended due to flooding around the Wilford Lane area as you said and I'm sure there are other areas as well where people were concerned. I know Councillor Spain that you had a number of constituents in your area worried that the water was dangerously close to their houses and both ward councillors I know were involved in responding. Due to the lack of properties being flooded – there need to be 50 or more affected – the City Council and the residents are not able to access grant funding that has been set up by the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities. Government and Environment Agency websites provide detailed advice and guidance for residents and property owners adversely affected by flooding. The City Council does not have any flood prevention infrastructure as these are either privately owned by residents, Severn Trent Water or the Environment Agency. We do own and operate surface water management assets such as our gullies, highway drains, drainage, culverts, grills, telemetry systems. Our Highways Services Teams regularly inspect and maintain most of these highway drainage aspects including certain strategically important grills on the water courses within the restrictions of a very limited maintenance budget. The fact that the River Trent was higher than anybody can remember for a number of decades just emphasises the points made earlier in the meeting about the need to take climate change seriously. It's not just something that is a long way away, it is something that

affects everyday peoples' lives and we need to take it seriously and respond appropriately as individuals and as a Council.

### **Highways Funding**

Councillor Michael Edwards asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport and Planning:

Does the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport and Planning agree that the allocation of £235 million of Network North money used to fix potholes in London and the celebration of it by the Department for Transport is a clear indication of the national government's failure to value The Midlands and The North?

Councillor Angela Kandola replied as follows:

Thank you, Sheriff. For those of you who did not see it, following the announcement by the Prime Minister in October to cancel the high-speed rail north of Birmingham, a graphic appeared in December on social media pages of the Department for Transport boasting about £235 million for road surfacing in London, which it said to have been taken from rerouted HS2 funding. Featured on the graph was Network North branding right. Anyone who has an eye for detail may notice that London is not actually in the north of England. It definitely is north of France, Spain, Italy and other places, but that is little comfort to us in Nottingham. As Labour's Metro Mayor for Liverpool, Steve Rotheram, joked, perhaps Network North is shorthand for "Network North Circular". In isolation, you could dismiss this as a mistake from an overworked civil servant or special advisor, coupled with the error-riddled 40-page prospectus for Network North. However, you cannot help but conclude that the Conservatives continue to prioritise wealthier areas at the expense of areas like ours. The front cover of the prospectus thinks Manchester is located in Preston. It highlights projects which are not in The Midlands or The North, including projects in Plymouth and Bristol. It promises new funding to Greater Manchester Airport, even though The Link opened in 2014. Many will remember the reference to Nottingham in the prospectus, promising a tram extension to Clifton South, even though that has been opened since 2015. Analysis shows that 85% of proposed funding in the document had already been promised or committed to them during the last 13 years of the Conservatives. Transport spending continues to be spent disproportionately in London at the expense of the East Midlands. In 2022-23 transport spending in London was £1,272 compared to £361 per head in the East Midlands. The plans set out in Network North will do little to impact that unfairness and imbalance. People in Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds and I were deeply disappointed when the Prime Minister made his announcement to cancel high-speed rail north of Birmingham. We are missing out on the biggest and most important infrastructure project in a generation that would have increased capacity on our railways as well as create much-needed jobs and opportunities for people in The Midlands and The North. Last week, The Times newspaper published leaked documents from the Department for Transport showing that the new plans will worsen rail capacity between London and Manchester due to the new trains being 60 metres shorter than the existing Avanti Trains currently operating on the line. The line between London and Birmingham likewise continues to balloon in price with warnings that the scaled-back project could cost more than £65 billion, nearly £10 billion more than originally forecasted, meaning we are paying more for less, and for a project that doesn't even come to the East Midlands or The North, despite those areas being the ones that need the investment the most. After 13 years of Conservatives, the North/South divide is worse than ever. We need a General Election now to get the country back on track. Thank you.

### **Local Government Funding Settlement**

Councillor Fozia Mubashar asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Finance and HR:

What does the recent Local Government Settlement mean for the Council's budget and the essential services, such as libraries?

Councillor Audra Wynter replied as follows:

Thank you Sheriff and thank you Councillor Mubashar for your question. The initial analysis of the Local Government Funding Settlement is very disappointing. Why would we expect anything less from this Government? In fact, far from closing the budget gap for next year, our early analysis suggests an additional £1-2 million budget pressure for next year's budget over which we predicted in our December Executive Board Forecast. This is simply a continuation of the failed approach which has defined the Conservative Government over the last 13 years. December's Funding Settlement cut service grants by 85%. Nationally, we have been reduced from £483.3 million in 2022-23 to £76.9 million in 2024-25. That is £3.2 million less for Nottingham, wiping out any gains from any from other grants such as New Homes Bonus, Market Sustainability Improvement Fund and Social Care Grants. The Settlement continues the Government's decision to put the burden of service provision on local taxpayers, with much of the Settlement expected to be funded through Council Tax rises. This approach is insufficient and is also unfair, because the poorer areas like Nottingham are unable to raise money despite the greater demand. The Local Government Association in its response to this Settlement on 18 December was clear that the Government has not provided enough funding to meet the severe cost and demand pressures which have left councils run by all political parties warning of the serious challenges faced to set balanced budgets next year. Just this morning, The Daily Telegraph reported that 4 in 10 councils in England are at risk of going bust over the next five years as the local authority funding crisis spirals out of control. Surging social care costs mean that 40% of councils face issuing a Section 114 Notice according to the research by Grant Thornton, who warn that the situation could trigger a significant jump in Council Tax bills.

Councillor Mubashar, you are right to ask what this means for services. In Nottingham we are still working hard to set a balanced budget for next year, but are facing harder and harder decisions about essential services which we value in Nottingham. As we approach the setting of the budget next month it is essential we use our remaining time to continue to work to reduce the gap for the next year's budget as we mean to protect as many services as we can for our citizens of Nottingham.

### **Ernst Young Report on Controls**

Councillor Kevin Clarke asked the following question of the Leader of the Council: Will the Leader of the Council express his gratitude to the efforts of the Local Democracy Reporting Team who have now secured public access to the full version of the much-requested Ernst Young report as I'm sure he's dying to read it as much as we are?

Councillor David Mellen replied as follows:

Thank you Sheriff, and can I thank Councillor Clarke for his question. I've been clear in previous responses in this Chamber that the Ernst Young Report was

commissioned by our Corporate Director of Finance and Resources to look at the Council's compliance with accounting controls for ringfenced funding. I am told that it is a lengthy technical report that was commissioned by officers. A full report has not been shown to me as yet, nor to any councillor, but the Finance Director has produced an executive summary of the report that was presented to senior councillors as well as to the Audit Committee. The rationale behind the decision not to publish the full report was technically supported by the Information Commissioner. However, given our financial challenges currently, I agree that there is an overwhelming need for total transparency, for everyone to have access to the information in the original report. I am also of the opinion that too much time has been spent discussing whether report should be shared or not, both in this Chamber and in other places. I am certain that everyone in this Chamber shares my commitment to openness and transparency. We face many challenges as a Council, but as public servants it is right that we answer questions from our citizens, from our fellow councillors and the media. I've never shied away from being honest and upfront. I've never ducked an interview or been anything less than open as far as I am able. I look forward to receiving the report.

### **Loxley House**

Councillor Andrew Rule asked the following question of the Leader of the Council: Given the Council is proposing to remove the customer facing function of Loxley House in the forthcoming budget, given the overhead cost of Loxley House, can the Leader of the Council outline what purpose is served by retaining it, rather than deploying Council staff into vacant council buildings within the Community, thus generating a saving from its disposal?

Councillor David Mellen replied as follows:

Thank you, Sheriff. Can I thank Councillor Rule for his question concerning the future of Loxley House, the Council's Headquarters. Given the changes to the customer facing function are, at this stage, one of many budget consultation proposals which are being consulted on, it would be too early to comment on the impact that this would have in relation to Loxley House. But you are right Councillor Rule to ask about the future of Loxley House, as with all Council buildings, to ensure that we make the most of our space. In these difficult financial times, we must operate Council services from our buildings as efficiently as we can. The question is clear: do we have the right buildings with the right space for our staff to serve our citizens at a time when working patterns are subject to change? We know that during the Covid pandemic, of necessity, the way that people worked changed. With greater capacity for hybrid working it is clear that Loxley House, and indeed other administrative offices, is underutilised particularly on a Monday and a Friday, but if you do come in on the middle of the week it is much more like it used to be, with difficulty getting into the car park. What was once a packed and bustling building is quieter on those days in particular, as people embrace remote working. So, it's only right that we review the way that we can both optimise our space and make savings. That being said, there is a great value in staff and elected members being in the same building for meetings, both formal and informal. Informal conversations are essential for teamwork and creativity in the workplace, and they do not happen on Teams calls. Having been a councillor in the time when we were placed in many different buildings across the city centre, a lot of time was wasted travelling from one to another building, which were difficult to heat and to insulate, to meet with colleagues. Moving to Loxley House a decade ago was the right decision for the Council. We are

currently reconfiguring Loxley House so that the top two floors are cleared and the remainder of our Council staff and those from other organisations who work here can be consolidated across the three lower floors. Parts of Byron House and our Eastcroft Depot are also being reconfigured. Where possible we have closed smaller satellite buildings and brought people back into our headquarters. All of these moves make better use of the available space and will lead to revenue savings from reductions in lighting and cleaning, as well as giving us the opportunity to explore renting that space to other people. We know we're in the middle of a budget crisis and we continue to review the buildings we operate in. Going forward, it will be essential to ensure that the Council's operational estate is fit for purpose, located in the right places, affordable and compatible with service delivery. We also need to ensure that however we reorganise the way that we work, we keep our citizens, those that we serve here, at the forefront of our mind and priorities. We owe this to our staff and to our citizens.

### **Flooding**

Councillor Andrew Rule asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Energy, Environment and Waste Services and Parks:

The Portfolio Holder will be aware that following the flooding caused by Storm Henk Wilford Lane was closed for 4 days leaving some residents trapped inside their homes. Will the Portfolio Holder commit to undertaking a review of drainage capacity to ensure that everything that can be done to prevent a future occurrence of flooding on Wilford Lane is being done?

In the absence of Councillor Corall Jenkins, Councillor David Mellen replied as follows:

Thanks Sheriff and thank you Councillor Rule for your question. This is a similar question to the one asked by Councillor Spain but I'll answer it nevertheless. Nottingham City Council, as the Highway Authority and the Lead Local Flood Authority, will liaise with Severn Trent Water, the Environment Agency and Nottinghamshire County Council to better understand why the public highway flooded during Storm Henk, particularly along Wilford Lane. As you are aware some of Wilford Lane is in the city and some of Wilford Lane is in the county and we need to work together on that. These discussions among the various risk management authorities will include investigations into the surface water management, sewer and drainage capacity and asset maintenance at Wilford Lane. The outcome of these discussions and investigations will determine if suitable mitigation actions can be undertaken to prevent an occurrence of the flooding in this location. We are always, always, up against climate change. If it's not Wilford Lane, it will be somewhere else unless we as a country, as a world, do what we need to do to tackle the changes in climate.

### **Tramlink Restructuring**

Councillor Kirsty M Jones asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport and Planning:

Following recent reports in the media that the tram has undertaken a financial restructure to ensure its long-term future, how far does the Portfolio Holder see this contributing to the tram reducing its considerable operating loss?

Councillor Angela Kandola replied as follows:

Thank you, Sheriff. The delivery of the second largest tram system in the UK is one of the Council's finest achievements, but the effects of the pandemic, the energy crisis and the inflation of finances have brought severe strain in recent years. However, Tramlink, its shareholders and lenders, the Council, and the Department for Transport have agreed a restructuring which should stabilise the finance going forward. This is a tremendous achievement and is a testament to the strong partnerships and collaborative working that exist within the project. Securing the restructuring is great news for the city and its residents and meets one of the instructions sent down by the Improvement and Assurance Board. The contract is run through a private finance initiative, PFI Contract, where private investors put money into public projects with the promise of making a return over the contract period. Recent accounts published by Tramlink report a significant financial loss for the year 2022-23, but the restructuring has now created a financial position which keeps all stakeholders at the table and committed to the project, with an expectation that investors will get a return on some or all of their original investment. This lays the platform for Tramlink to renew their focus on the remaining ten years of their contract and to continue to grow patronage through delivering a good and reliable service and investing in new technology. This will allow NET to continue to offer a green, convenient and affordable way to travel through the city and surrounding areas, providing the people of Nottingham with reliable and sustainable travel for many years to come yet.

### **E-Scooters**

Councillor Kevin Clarke asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport and Planning:

The Portfolio Holder may recall our objections to the introduction of e-scooters in this Chamber when they were first introduced in the City, given the concerns expressed by a number of residents, will she reconsider any reintroduction of another scheme?

Councillor Angela Kandola replied as follows:

Thank you, Sheriff. E-scooters are a mode of transport that the Government expects to legalise in the near future. We are already seeing increases in the use of illegal, privately-owned e-scooters in our streets, with very limited control over their enforcement. Rental e-scooters present a safer way to provide e-scooters which the Council can control through influencing the operations of the service provider. It was disappointing to hear that the operator Superpedestrian went into liquidation in December. Their hire e-scooters were used by over 20,000 residents every month, typically carrying out 3,000 journeys per day. E-scooters provide a clean, green and affordable means of travel for many of our citizens and help to reduce carbon emissions and car trips for short journeys. As the Government has extended the duration of the trials to 2026 in order to gather more data, the Council has approved the procurement of a new e-scooter operator to provide its services across the city later this year. The comments from Councillor Clarke are noted, and the Council is fully aware of the issues that e-scooters pose for pedestrian safety. I would like to reaffirm that improper use takes place by a minority of users and does not reflect the overall benefit that e-scooters provide. Work continues to introduce more infrastructure to support more orderly parking, and the tender specification has been strengthened to seek an operator with tested approaches to reducing pavement riding. Thank you, Sheriff.

### **Clean Champions**

Councillor Maria Watson asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Energy, Environment and Waste Services and Parks:

Would the Portfolio Holder join our Group in thanking the Nottingham Clean Champions for their efforts in keeping their communities clean, however can she provide reassurance to them that in spite of budget pressures Clean Champions will continue to be supported by the Council in tackling fly-tipping within the City?

In the absence of Councillor Corall Jenkins, Councillor David Mellen replied as follows:

Thank you, Sheriff, and can I thank Councillor Watson for her question. I'm happy to respond on behalf of Councillor Jenkins, and indeed I would like to pay tribute to our Clean Champions, who work tirelessly in their own time to help keep our city and neighbourhoods clean. This is a successful scheme that has continued to grow in strength and is driven by the wonderful team of volunteers, many of whom went out over Christmas, including the bank holidays, in spite of the cold weather. Many of our volunteers also aid the Council alongside by reporting fly-tipping in their communities and are a valuable partnership in supporting the cleanliness of the city. We see the role of Clean Champions, and more recently the development of Ward Co-ordinators as a way for residents to support the Council in its ambition to keep the city clean. I would like to confirm that no budget-saving proposals have been put forward for this scheme to discontinue or reduce the waste and cleansing service that administers and manages this scheme. In 2023, we saw the future development of the scheme with Ward Co-ordinators and we now have four of those in the city. These volunteers provide local support to new and established Clean Champions and work closely with the Council staff to handle cleansing issues across the city in order to provide engagement and feedback which contributes to the development of positive improvements to the scheme. This is a Nottingham success story, long may it continue.

### **73 Decisions taken under Urgency Procedures**

Councillor David Mellen, Leader of the Council, presented the report informing Council that since the last report to Council no decisions had been taken under the urgency provisions within the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Article 11) or the Access to Information Procedure Rules (Article 13) of the Constitution. The report was seconded by Councillor Audra Wynter.

The report was noted.

### **74 Polling District & Places Review 2023**

Councillor Audra Wynter, Portfolio Holder for Finance and HR, presented the report of the (Acting) Returning Officer setting out proposed changes to polling districts and places, following a review carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006. The reasons for each of the proposed changes was set out in the report. The report was seconded by Councillor David Mellen.

Councillors debated the report.

**Resolved to approve the amendments to the Council's scheme of polling districts and places as set out in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 to the report for the reasons in each case set out in those appendices.**

#### **75 Committee Membership Changes**

It was noted that Councillor Graham Chapman had resigned as a member of the Audit Committee.



The Meeting concluded at 4.20 pm

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**Responses to Questions requiring a Written Response**

**WQ1**

**Written question to be asked by Councillor Kevin Clarke of the Leader of the Council at the meeting of the City Council to be held on 15 January 2024**

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Could the Portfolio Holder tell the Chamber and the citizens what was the final cost of installing the fountains in Market Square in 2007?

Councillor David Mellen replied as follows:

Records retained by Nottingham City Council in relation to the Old Market Square water feature indicate a final cost of approx. £1m and this work was part of a much larger project funded by the East Midlands Development Agency, Greater Nottingham Partnership, the Government Office for the East Midlands and the European Commission. It should be noted this value stated is as of 23 July 2008. There are no further records on this item.

**WQ2**

**Written question to be asked by Councillor Andrew Rule of the Portfolio Holder for Finance and HR at the meeting of the City Council to be held on 15 January 2024**

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Could the Portfolio Holder provide details of discretionary grants over £5,000 provided by the Council to organisations in the sports, leisure and culture sectors since 2021, together with the individual organisation to which they were provided?

Councillor Audra Wynter replied as follows:

Response not yet provided

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