

Public Document Pack

Minutes of the meeting of the City Council

held at the Council Chamber, Council House

on 9 September 2024 from 2.00 pm - 4.35 pm

Attendances:

✓ Councillor Carole McCulloch (Lord Mayor)	
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✓ Councillor Saj Ahmad	✓ Councillor Sam Lux
✓ Councillor Liaqat Ali	✓ Councillor Sulcan Mahmood
✓ Councillor Leslie Ayoola	✓ Councillor Farzana 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 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

✓ Indicates present at meeting

32 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Saj Ahmad - unwell
Councillor Cheryl Barnard - leave
Councillor Nadia Farhat – unwell
Councillor Sam Gardiner – personal
Councillor Sam Harris – personal
Councillor Maria Joannou - unwell

Councillor Sajid Mohammed - personal
Councillor Sarita-Marie Rehman-Wall - personal
Councillor Maria Watson - personal

33 Declarations of Interests

None

34 Questions from Citizens

Management of Council gardens

A citizen asked the following question of the Executive Member for Carbon Reduction, Leisure and Culture:

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), gas-powered lawnmowers can emit as much pollution in one hour as a car driven for 100 miles. These pollutants include carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Also, gardens that are heavily landscaped are bad for the environment. Would the Council consider the way they manage council gardens contributes to global warming, or might they adopt policies, like 'wilding' or using a lawn mower that causes so much damage?

Councillor Sam Lux replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you to the citizen for your question. The Council's greenspace operations team currently do not have any gas-powered lawnmowers. The majority of our mower fleet is either diesel or petrol powered. However, as part of the Council's delivery of the Carbon Neutral 2028 strategy (CN28) over recent years the service has been moving more towards electric powered machinery whenever this is possible. With regards to the maintenance of our landscape over recent years we have developed a stronger focus on biodiversity and as part of the implementation of new Environment Act Biodiversity Net Gain legislation the service has already identified 65 sites around the city that are now managed as wildflower or meadow grass areas. The majority of these meadows are small sites located around highways verges and within parks. These small sites have been identified in order to provide linkages between a network of 63 Local Wildlife Sites that cover over 690 hectares of the city and include 19 designated Local Nature Reserves & 3 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). In addition, our Green Guardians volunteer programme delivers a wide range of environmental education and habitat management projects and has also been at the forefront of delivering the CN28 carbon reduction priority action plan that includes the planting 50,000 trees. 48,000 of these trees have already been planted to date and many more are scheduled to be planted during the coming winter planting season. In addition, the Council will soon consider the adoption of the Greener, Healthier, Happier Greenspace strategy. Once its formal adoption has been confirmed, the greenspace service will continue to work with a wide range of partner organisations within the city to continue to deliver a programme of habitat improvements and the delivery of a continued programme of urban greening projects around the City.

Social Housing

A citizen asked the following question of the Executive Member for Housing and Planning:

How can the Council justify kicking people out of their homes when they pay all their bills and don't cause trouble, and then selling the houses on. It's not their fault that the Council took money from a ring-fenced pot and spent it on something else. Where are they supposed to live when the Council sells these homes?

Councillor Jay Hayes replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you to the citizen for your question. In 2022 the Council decided to directly manage the council housing stock and this question does not involve any council houses or council tenants. This question relates to Nottingham City Homes Enterprises Limited (NCHEL), which was incorporated in 2015 as a commercial subsidiary of Nottingham City Home Group. It was set up to have a positive impact on the private rented sector in Nottingham. However, due to the financial challenges of the market rent offer provided by NCHEL, the decision had to be made to close NCHEL. The board of NCHEL and NCH Group made a regrettable decision to dispose of its assets to maximise income to make repayments of debt. NCHEL have continued to operate to ensure services are delivered to its market rent tenants, to support them while its properties are sold and NCHEL is ultimately closed. Officers have visited every tenant to explain the reason for this action needing to be taken and offered advice and assistance in securing new rented accommodation. Some tenants have been able to buy their home at market value, stay in their properties with new landlords, or have been supported into other private rental accommodation. While I know this is a challenging time for those residents affected, ongoing support will be offered to all tenants affected in finding new, secure, long-term accommodation. Thank you.

Plant-based food and drink at Council events

A citizen asked the following question of the Executive Member for Carbon Reduction, Leisure and Culture:

The science is clear that meat and dairy are major contributors to the climate and ecological emergencies. Other councils, for example Oxfordshire County, Oxford City, Cambridge City, Exeter City and Calderdale Borough, are ensuring that all food served at internal events is plant-based, and I'd like Nottingham City to do the same. Therefore, given the climate emergency and Nottingham's stated aim to reduce their emissions and be net zero by 2028, will Nottingham City Council ensure that all food and drink provided at internal events is plant-based, as other councils have done?

Councillor Sam Lux replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor, and thanks to the citizen for this question. This is a topic that is really close to my heart, and I have recently had discussions with plant-based councils and our officers to see what can be done on this topic. Our internal catering budget these days is actually really small, given the financial constraints that we are faced with. It's largely just teas and coffees and light refreshments, but I am really happy to say that after discussing with officers at the end of last week, I can confirm now that from Monday 30 September we will only have plant-based internal catering from Nottingham Catering at Loxley House. This will include plant-based milks, biscuits and other foods, and we'll also plan a week of promotion of dairy milk alternatives in October for staff to try plant-based milk in their drinks from the coffee bar at Loxley, substituting for all drinks unless specifically requested otherwise. This

obviously is to encourage our employees to try these alternatives and potentially increase their uptake.

I'd also like to take the opportunity to mention that our Carbon Neutral 2028 action plan includes a list of food-related actions reflecting our awareness of its significant contributions to the city's footprint, particularly the high carbon impact of meat and dairy products. Over the last few years, the Council has introduced more plant-based options in school meal menus – actually winning a national award – and we're also working on increasing plant-based choices in our external catering offers for events like weddings. The City Council became a signatory to the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration in 2021 and we have an active staff vegan network who promote and campaign for adoption of vegan principles in the Council, not only for food but for animal rights and welfare issues too. We know that the ambition to reduce the city's carbon footprint isn't just about the City Council, it's about what other organisations are doing as well, so we routinely use social media, our monthly carbon-neutral newsletter, and other communications channels to promote the benefits of more plant-based options in everyday diets. As I said, this is an area I really care about, and I encourage citizens and groups to get in touch with ideas about how we can go further as a city. Thanks.

Reopening of Sherwood Library

A citizen asked the following question of the Executive Member for Carbon Reduction, Leisure and Culture:

In a recent newspaper article, the Local Democracy Reporter revealed a total of '134' outstanding defects or snags, which still need to be rectified before the muchdelayed Sherwood Library can safely open. Given this, can the Executive Member outline what urgent actions she has taken with Hockley Developments, including the use of any redemption penalties, to get this contractual debacle resolved in the interests of local residents and families. In the spirit of transparency, can she please provide more details on the nature of the defects, an update on any progress in relation to fixing them, as Sherwood residents like me, are desperate for their local library to re-open.

Councillor Sam Lux replied as follows:

Thank you again, Lord Mayor. I'd like to thank the citizen for the question regarding Sherwood Library as part of the Spondon Street development work taking place. I want to reiterate I am very frustrated around the delay of being able to reopen Sherwood Library and very aware that Sherwood has for a long time now been without a library service following its closure in 2020. It was exciting that through an innovative regeneration scheme approach the authority did find a way in 2021 to ensure its reprovision via a wider Spondon Street retail and housing redevelopment opportunity that was tendered and won by Hockley Developments. Unfortunately, due to several factors this project was delayed and of course more recently delayed further due to a number of outstanding snags identified which were not being rectified by the developer as specified in our contract to enable the library service to be able to commence its final fit-out works. The Council is actively in correspondence with the developer to resolve the outstanding issues, but due to commercial sensitivities and the legally privileged nature of these discussions, it would be inappropriate for me to go into any further detail at this time. I can assure the citizen that the Council are exploring all avenues. On a more positive note, the developer is now engaged

and working with us to resolve the issues. Our Major Projects Team hold fortnightly meetings with the relevant actors to review progress on all of the snags identified. A programme of works has now been agreed and there is an ongoing regular correspondence and contact to check in on progress and this has reduced the list of critical snags considerably, and we hope these final works will be completed over the next three weeks. The final stage of the fit-out works can then take place. We do understand the importance of providing library provision for Sherwood so that it can once again become an important community hub that provides resources, space, and activities that so many in the area have missed since the site's closure. Thank you.

35 Petitions from Councillors on behalf of citizens

Councillor Andrew Rule presented a petition on behalf of residents asking the Council to approve a 20mph speed limit on the road known as New Rise, Lark Hill Village NG11 8DB; and a Red Zone parking restrictions or double yellow lines on the section of New Rise from the right turn before the bus stop (bungalow 421) to bungalow 438.

36 To confirm the minutes of the last Ordinary meeting of Council held on 8 July 2024

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Council held on 8 July 2024 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

37 To confirm the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of Council held on 5 August 2024

The minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of Council held on 5 August 2024 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

38 To receive official communications and announcements from the Leader of the Council and/or the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive made the following announcement:

We were proud to officially launch the Green Heart park in the city centre, which represents another important step in the regeneration of the Broad Marsh area, following the opening of Nottingham Central Library, the bus station and car park, and the pedestrianisation of Collin Street. Thank you to our dedicated council teams and partners who have made this happen – as well as the school children from Mellors Primary and the new regional mayor Claire Ward who joined me and the Leader for the opening.

39 Questions from Councillors – to the City Council's Lead Councillor on the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority

None

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

Clifton Town Board

Councillor Kevin Clarke asked the following question of the Executive Member for Skills, Growth and Economic Development:

Could the Executive Member update the Chamber on when the £20 million pledged by the last Government for Clifton will be allocated to the Town Board?

Councillor Ethan Radford replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Clarke for your question. For context, Clifton was selected by the previous government to be the recipient of funding from the Long Term Plan for Towns programme. In consultation with the community, the Council formed the Town Board with Stephen Hackney as Chair to deliver the long-term plan for Clifton by 1 August 2024. On 19 July, the Minister for Local Growth, Alex Norris, took the decision to suspend the first deadline for submitting plans and council officers were advised by officials that the Department will be in touch in due course with further details of the next steps and confirmation of the revised deadline. No such further details have yet been received, but officers remain in dialogue with Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) officials, and recently hosted a visit for the officials with the Clifton Town Board exploring the practice and community engagement. We understand the MHCLG and HM Treasury ministers are giving full consideration to matters, including the Long Term Plan for Towns, as part of preparations for the Autumn budget. However, no timetable has been provided for when the funding position will be clarified. In the meantime, the Council will continue to fully support the work that has been undertaken by the Board and remains committed to seeing this funding used to improve the lives of Clifton people.

Improvement Plan

Councillor Andrew Rule asked the following question of the Leader of the Council: Could the Leader of the Council outline what she believes the biggest challenge will be in delivering the Improvement Plan and how the Council will overcome it?

Councillor Neghat Khan replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor. Can I thank you Councillor Rule for your question. There are many challenges in delivering our Improvement Plan. I have been clear in this Chamber before that the next three years will make or break this Council. It's not going to be easy. The biggest challenge is the pace needed to make these changes. We must improve and we must do so quickly. We need to work swiftly to deliver our services differently and bring our budget back on track, so that we are properly living within our means. I believe we can meet that challenge. New political leadership is helping to drive forward these changes. We have a new Senior Officer Leadership Team, including our new Chief Executive and soon-to-start two Corporate Directors for Adults' and Children's Services. There is renewed focus from this new councillor and officer team to continue to deliver for Nottingham. Together we are working with the Commissioners to deliver our Improvement Plan and we have more than 450 Council officers signed up to be part of our Change Community. The best outcomes for Nottingham come when we work together, and I am proud that so many of our staff are to contribute their ideas and their care to our great city. They want to be part of the solution. Lord Mayor, we can do this only all together: as councillors, as a Council, as a city. We have a lot of hard work ahead of us, but I know we can make this happen and deliver change for the people of Nottingham. Thank you.

Subsidence Risks

Councillor Kevin Clarke asked the following question of the Executive Member for Housing and Planning:

Following reports in the local media regarding the condition of the former “Brass Monkey” building on High Pavement, could the Executive Member confirm whether the Council has any additional concerns about subsidence affecting any of the other historic buildings on that road?

Councillor Jay Hayes replied as follows:

Thank you Lord-Mayor. Thank you Councillor Clarke for your question. Myself, and I know a few others, over the years have spent many good nights in Brass Monkey, and we are saddened to see the current state of the bar. However, the property is privately owned and it is landlord’s responsibility to address the matters and investigate the cause of the subsidence. Whilst not directly involved, relevant teams of the Council will provide support where appropriate. Currently it only affects that one building, and at the moment there is no evidence of other buildings being affected.

Council Tax

Councillor Andrew Rule asked the following question of the Leader of the Council: The Leader will be aware that the Chancellor’s decision to remove the automatic entitlement for winter fuel allowance has caused some considerable anxiety to those pensioners in the City who be affected by it. Does she share the view of the Labour Leader of the Local Government Association that the Chancellor should, alongside this, scrap the 25% single person’s discount for council tax and remove the cap, the Council is currently subject to, restricting increases in Council tax?

Councillor Neghat Khan replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor. Thank you Councillor Rule for your question. I understand your concerns about the Chancellor’s decision to remove the automatic entitlement to winter fuel allowance. Many older residents in our city are understandably anxious about their energy bills. However, it is important to recognise that this allowance has often benefited wealthier pensioners who may not need the support. Reform is necessary to ensure that assistance is targeted where it is most needed towards low-income pensioners, with an estimated 880,000 households not being on pension credits. This is where our efforts should be focused. I encourage all members to actively work within our communities to ensure pensioners are accessing the benefits they are entitled to, particularly pension credit. It is vital to expand the safety net to include more pensioners who are struggling to make ends meet.

Due to the £22 million black hole in the national finances left by your former Tory Party, Councillor Rule, I understand why the Labour Government is not currently ruling out potentially ending the 25% discount or ending the cap on increases in council tax. I do not share the same view of the Labour Leader of the Local Government Association on scrapping the 25% single person discount and removing the cap because increases could raise revenues. These measures risk disproportionately affecting low-income and single-person households. Blanket changes to council tax would hurt those who can least afford it, especially in a city like Nottingham, which already faces significant financial challenges, compounded by a low council tax base and high levels of student housing, who do not pay council tax but still rely heavily on council services such waste collection, road maintenance, and emergency services. The lack of council tax contribution from students puts

additional strain on our already limited resources. I hope that the Government will explore alternative funding mechanisms to ensure that areas with large student populations are adequately compensated for the services they use without placing further burden on other residents, which can fuel division. What Nottingham needs is a long-term financial settlement, which the Government has promised, and equitable distribution of settlements that reflect the needs of areas like ours where the ability to generate revenue from council tax is limited. If the Government does decide to remove the discount and lift the cap, we will carefully consider the needs of our communities before making any decisions. Our focus will remain on financial stability while ensuring affordability for our residents. Thank you.

Nottingham Forest Football Club

Councillor Kirsty M Jones asked the following question of the Executive Member for Skills, Growth and Economic Development:

Could the Executive Member confirm whether or not the in-principle deal with Nottingham Forest referred to at the last Full Council meeting is dependent on the Club successfully obtaining planning permission from Rushcliffe Borough Council?

Councillor Ethan Radford replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor, and thank you Councillor Jones for your question. The Heads of Terms when disposing of the asset are being finalised between Nottingham Forest Football Club and the Council. The terms of the agreed subject and delegated approval are set out in the Executive Board papers. A recommendation will be made as soon as possible. At this stage the terms of the deal remain commercially confidential. I will refer the member to ask that question to Rushcliffe Borough Council.

Right to Buy

Councillor Anwar Khan asked the following question of the Executive Member for Housing and Planning:

Could the Executive Member explain what new Labour Government's changes to Right To Buy means for the city?

Councillor Jay Hayes replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor, and thank you Councillor Khan for your question. It is true, at this time last year, councillors across the country met to discuss the ongoing homelessness and housing crisis. Since then, the election has happened, and a new Government is in place and has announced a number of changes to tackle the housing crisis and one of these is changes to the Right to Buy scheme. Councils will now be able to use 100% of the Right to Buy Replacement Fund to be able to build houses. This is an increase of 50%. Right to Buy funds can now be matched by Section 106 contributions and the cap on the percentage of replacements delivered as acquisitions each year will be lifted. These changes - in short the maximum spend, equivalent to 150% of the Right to Buy receipts, and other funding that has been generated through other means or from borrowing, to be able to build or replace the council houses lost through Right to Buy. This is good news for Nottingham. Under the previous laws, we would only be able to use 70% of the total of the resources to build or to acquire new housing. Given this, it means we will be able to look at other sites across the city and be able to put in place plans for the development of more council houses for the first time in a long time, and those houses will be funded from the Right to Buy receipts and the s106 contributions.

Alongside this, we have been able to look at increasing our capacity to buy back old council houses through the acquisitions programme. This is good news for everyone in the city because it lets us increase our housing stock, it allows us to tackle the waiting list and the people who are in temporary accommodation, it strengthens our Housing Revenue Account business plan over 30 years, and I'm really looking forward to seeing new council houses built across this city. What a difference this is. This is the Government listening to local authorities; the Government working with local authorities to address real issues that affect everybody across this country, and I am looking forward to working with the Government over the next four or five years. Thank you.

Library Consultation

Councillor Fozia Mubashar asked the following question for the Executive Member for Carbon Reduction, Leisure and Culture:

Could the Executive Member please provide us with an update on the Library Consultation, which closed on 19 August 2024?

Councillor Sam Lux replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor, and thanks to Councillor Mubashar for her question. Firstly, I want to recognise and really emphasise the important roles that libraries play in our communities – access to high-quality local library provision makes a massive difference to so many peoples' lives in a variety of ways, so their impact can't be overstated. Recently we've concluded an extensive 12-week public consultation exercise addressing and receiving feedback on ways which we might be able to better find savings as part of the budget reduction agreed in March. The pressure to change and reduce library provision isn't just a Nottingham issue – it's happening all across the UK; library services are under review as local authorities' expenditure continues to be squeezed. Derbyshire County Council are similarly undergoing consultation on library reductions, as has been Leicester City Council and Birmingham City Council. I can report that at the close of consultation we had received 5,378 official responses. That is incredible and there have also been many additional letters and emails alongside additional information from public meetings and drop-in sessions. I have also met with a number of bodies and organisations including the Save the Libraries Campaign Group and participated, with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, in a public meeting that took place in this Council House on 13 August. In the coming weeks I have meetings set up with organisations to explore creative options and ideas, some of which emerged from the public consultation. It is important that over the next few weeks we carefully review all of the feedback received in order that we are able to bring in a detailed report to Council for the final decision. I think we all agree that given the gravity of the decision we should really seek to get this right and, rather than annual pressures to cut the service, we want to establish strong, sustainable library provision and also maximise the impact of the budget that we do have to benefit communities and citizens in an optimal way. Thank you.

Household Support Fund

Councillor Georgia Power asked the following question of the Executive Member for Finance and Resources:

Can the Executive Member give an update on the extension of the Household Support Fund and what this will mean for Nottingham?

Councillor Linda Woodings replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor, and thank you Councillor Power for your question.

Colleagues, you will recall the Household Support Fund was introduced following the cessation of the £20 per week uplift to universal credit that was brought in during the COVID pandemic and ceased in September of 2021. That was to great protest from members of all parties, including the Conservative Party, who wanted the uplift to continue as a permanent measure. The Household Support Fund was introduced as a less valuable measure to essentially paper over the cracks of a decade of Tory austerity. Now, I should mention, there was a very unnerving period of uncertainty about the future of the Household Support Fund after the former Chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, failed to mention it in his 2023 Autumn Budget Statement, and that uncertainty led to great anxiety for people who received assistance from the scheme and also from the voluntary sector helpers who helped deliver it. However, in March 2024, facing the May elections, an extension was confirmed – albeit only for six months – and that was one clear sign of an early General Election that we all missed.

I can easily explain how essential this grant is to the people of Nottingham, thanks to the Nottingham Financial Resilience Partnership, who commissioned Charles Walker – a Research Fellow at Nottingham Trent University – to evaluate both the need and the effectiveness of the Household Support Fund for Nottingham residents. His final report made in January this year showed that we, as a City Council, received £15.626 million since April 2021, and we use that money firstly to support the supply of food to vulnerable households and secondly to pay for energy and supermarket vouchers to deliver in partnership with our centres, housing associations, and charities. That meant that between June and October 2023 the Council was able to support 64,741 households, and that funding was given to food banks, social supermarkets, and social eating organisations, equating to £235,000 buying essential food and essential items for food banks which is estimated to have supported 11,784 food parcels and meals. I certainly hope we'll get to a stage in this country where we don't have to have food banks. That's one thing we need from a Labour Government: no more food banks because you won't need them because you'll have a decent income. Somewhere else that Household Support Funding was used was supermarkets and fuel vouchers, and that paid for 120,000 vouchers at a cost of £2.9 million. We are uncertain exactly how much the Council will receive in the latest stretch of funding announced by Rachel Reeves for the last 6 months of this financial year up to April 2025, but we anticipate that this will be in region of £3.6 million so we can continue to give this essential support for energy and household bills, food, and essential items for vulnerable residents. That will mean the total Household Support Fund distributed to residents will be over £22 million since October 2021. Whatever the final sum is, we will seek to continue the existing model of support to residents and community-based organisations who provide that essential assistance, and that includes distribution of supermarket vouchers to children who are in receipt of free school meals to cover the October, Christmas, and February holiday periods so the total which we hope to continue with will be £1.4 million to free school meals children's support for holiday periods; £800,000 to food support for vulnerable residents, £800,000 for energy support, £200,000 to food banks funding, £130,000 to our admin and welfare advice two community organisations; and £226,000 in smaller grants and some administrative costs as well. This year's current funds still remain available for residents to apply for up to the 30 September to help with food and energy costs, and our website will be updated as soon as the final details of the scheme are confirmed.

The big question is, of course, will that funding continue after April 2025? We are not sure yet, because our new Labour Government has set up an urgent Child Poverty Taskforce just three weeks ago, and they're urgently reviewing all benefits as well to identify both short-term and long-term measures that are needed to address the national disgrace that 700,000 more children now live in poverty since the last Labour Government in 2010. We'd like to see any support to be over a longer term so more strategic decisions can be made on how such funds are used and we know our partners in the voluntary sector would like that too so they can plan and recruit staff to support beyond a six-month window. Hopefully with multi-year settlements for councils and various reviews of support benefits we will see more sustained ongoing support for these vital services that keep poverty and destitution at bay. Thank you.

Nottingham Centre for Trauma, Resilience and Growth

As Councillor Maria Joannou was not present to ask the following question of the Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee it received a written response:

Could the Committee Chair give an update on the Committee's decision to make a referral to the Secretary of State regarding the loss of the Nottingham Centre for Trauma, Resilience and Growth?

Goose Fair

Councillor Audra Wynter asked the following question of the Executive Member for Carbon Reduction, Leisure and Culture:

Now that the Nottingham Beach has closed for 2024 and with Goose Fair returning for 10 days on 27 September, does the Executive Member agree that providing these types of events is important for Nottingham not just for local families but for the local economy too, and can they detail any steps taken to minimise disruption for those who live near the Goose Fair site?

Councillor Sam Lux replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you to Councillor Wynter for your question. I'm very proud to be at that stage for the city, and I very much agree with Councillor Wynter that our citywide programme of events, festivals, markets and fairs provides fantastic content for families in the city, right on their doorstep. As Councillor Wynter points out, there's also a wider economic benefit to such events. As the city seeks to deliver ambitions set out in our strategy for vibrant, dynamic, family friendly content in our own centres, heritage venues, open spaces and Castle these play a significant and positive step in how the city markets itself to leisure visitors, prospective students, potential employers and investors. This summer has been one of our busiest ever with events ranging from open-air Shakespeare at the Castle, to packed Tuesday nights at Old Market Square for songs and the Beach. In just the past few weeks alone, our fantastic range of parks, heritage, and public-owned spaces venues have hosted many events. Over 10,000 music fans descended upon Wollaton Park for the hall events, gold medal winning paralympic athletes competed at the archery championships and the Nottingham Beach has seen thousands of families enjoy what is widely considered to be the UK's best free-to-access urban beach attraction. These events are all staged at no cost to the council taxpayer, and any fees and charges contribute to the cost of the Council's free-to-access Culture Development Programme.

All events, not just major impact events like Goose Fair, do unfortunately encompass an element of disruption and the Council's Nottingham Events Team work really hard to minimise the disruption to residents, particularly those living immediately adjacent to the event sites. New mitigation measures are in place for this year's Goose Fair, including a revised traffic management plan, off-street enforcement operations, and various improvements to reduce the environmental impact of the event. This includes regular noise management controls via our Environmental Health Team, and residents living nearby to the events also receive numbers to contact our Events Team control room directly, should any issues arise. Members of the Showman's Guild now also contribute towards a levy to help fund future sites and environmental improvements for the Forest Recreation Grounds as well. Thank you.

Green Heart

Councillor Matt Shannon asked the following question of the Executive Member for Strategic Regeneration, Transport and Communications:

Work is nearing completion on the Green Heart at the former Broadmarsh site, does the Executive Member share my excitement for the work finishing, and do they agree that the Green Heart is only one of the many positive constructions happening in the Broadmarsh area and across the city as a whole?

Councillor Neghat Khan replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Shannon for your question. I'm proud of our Green Heart and what it represents for Nottingham. It shows we are changing our city for the better. Where we once had an ugly concrete shopping centre and three lanes of choking traffic, we now have a peaceful green space for people to enjoy. When INTU Broadmarsh went bust, we asked the people of Nottingham what they wanted to see in this space. They overwhelmingly responded to ask for an open and welcoming space and the return of nature to the heart of the city centre. You asked for a park, and I am pleased to deliver that for Nottingham. This is the first new green space for the city in over 100 years and I was delighted to be joined by children from Mellors Primary School and our Regional Mayor to officially open the Green Heart last week. The Green Heart is a hugely important part of our ambitious plans for Broadmarsh and our wider strategic regeneration of the city, providing opportunities to promote urban living with thousands of new homes and places for people to work in well-connected places with easy access to sustainable transport and green spaces. This is part of our plan for over 26,000 new homes by 2041.

As you say, it is only one of many major developments - improvements to turn previously busy, vehicle-dominated roads into new, high-quality public spaces which invite citizens and visitors to spend time in the city centre; the building of a state-of-the-art bus station, car park, and new Central Library; new Government office at Unity Square; and headquarters for Domestic and General to name just a few of the major schemes that we have supported. This area is unrecognisable from how it looked four years ago. In that short time, we have transformed this part of the city and soon we will have the new state-of-the-art NHS diagnostic centre, along with new homes and more offices. We are turning the city around and making good things happen for the people of Nottingham. It's not just the Green Heart – we are working with partners and investors on ambitious plans for the Island Quarter, East Side, Waterside, and Castle Meadow. I am passionate about delivering the best deal for Nottingham people by championing and working with our communities. Our

ambition is for urban living with thousands of new homes, well-connected offices with easy access to public transport and green spaces. We're putting Nottingham back on the map. We are open for business and investment – a destination city; somewhere that attracts people to live, work, visit, and study. As more news is able to be shared about our redevelopment of the south side of the city with new partners coming on board, I am sure you will see that Nottingham Labour is delivering on a bold vision for Nottingham, its residents, and its future. Thank you.

41 Decisions taken under Urgency Procedures

Councillor Neghat Khan, Leader of the Council, proposed the report informing Council that, since the last report to Council in July 2024, there had been two decisions taken under the urgency provisions within the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and no decisions taken under the special urgency provisions within the Access to Information Procedure Rules. Councillor Ethan Radford seconded the report.

Resolved to note that:

- (1) the following decisions had been taken under the Call In and Urgency provisions of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Article 11) of the Constitution since the last report to Council;**

Decision reference	Subject	Decision Taker	Reasons for Urgency
5141	Inpatient detox service 'The Level'	Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health	The new contract had to be signed before the end of June 2024 to ensure there were no gaps in service provision.
5246	Proposed Extension to the Nottingham City Council Public Spaces Protection Order Dane Court	Executive Member for Communities, Waste and Equalities	To enable the PSPO to be extended before the current PSPO expired, which would have involved a lengthy and costly process.

- (2) no decisions had been taken under the special urgency provisions within the Access to Information Procedure Rules (Article 13) of the Constitution since the last report to Council.**

42 Amendments to the Constitution

Councillor Adele Williams, Chair of the Audit Committee, proposed the report recommending that Council approve a revised terms of reference for the Audit Committee. She explained that a review had been carried out to ensure that the terms of reference are in line with CPIFA guidance and good practice and, as a

result, a revised terms of reference was proposed. The draft new terms of reference was considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 26 July 2024 and, at that meeting, the Committee agreed to recommend the revised terms of reference to Council for approval. The report was seconded by Councillor Sulcan Mahmood.

Resolved to:

- (1) approve a revised terms of reference for the Audit Committee, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report; and**
- (2) amend Article 9 Non-Executive Functions and Committees of the Constitution to reflect the changes to the Audit Committee Terms of Reference.**

43 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24

Councillor Angela Kandola, Vice Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, presented the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2023/24, which summarised the activity carried out by the five scrutiny committees during the previous municipal year, how they fulfilled their terms of reference and the recommendations that they made to the Executive and other partners. The report was seconded by Councillor Georgia Power, Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee.

During discussion the following points were made:

- a) A new scrutiny committee structure was introduced for 2023/24 and this was supported by a period of training and development for scrutiny councillors.
- b) The scrutiny function provides opportunities to look at, and shape policy proposals; review existing policies and services; and reflect on what has been done with the aim of making recommendations for improvement.
- c) It is important to balance holding to account and critical challenge, so that the process and outcomes are constructive. The culture around the operation of scrutiny is important to get right.
- d) During 2023/24 the scrutiny committees undertook important work in relation to budget scrutiny and this will be repeated in 2024/25.
- e) The scrutiny function continued to develop and improve during 2023/24.
- f) The scrutiny function was well-supported, and the Statutory Scrutiny Officer and Scrutiny and Audit Support Officers were thanked for their support to the operation and improvement of the function.
- g) The scrutiny committees benefited from contributions from a wide range of councillors, officers, partners and citizens.

Resolved to accept the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2023/24.

44 Motion in the name of Councillor Nayab Patel

Councillor Nayab Patel proposed the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis:

- (1) Nottingham City Council recognises the necessity of achieving multi-lateral nuclear disarmament and creating a nuclear weapons-free world, and resolves to engage with the government on:

- Continuing to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty terms under Article VI to *'pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control'*
 - Utilising all diplomatic avenues available to it to achieve this. Considering other international treaties that currently exist through the United Nations and whether the government would benefit from supporting them.
- (2) In furtherance of its desire to create a peaceful city, Nottingham City Council also resolves to consider carrying out certain practical actions subject to them being cost neutral, by:
- Appointing an elected member as a Peace Champion to promote peace.
 - Signing up as a member authority of Mayors for Peace.
 - Encouraging local schools to deliver peace education to students.
 - Marking the anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings.
 - Requesting seeds sourced from Hibaku trees which survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima to raise as saplings. These can be planted in public parks and places as focal points for reflection and remembrance.

During debate on the motion councillors spoke about matters including:

- a) the importance of peace and that, while the Council does not have direct responsibility in this area it can still be an advocate for peace, for example by supporting asylum seekers and refugees in the City and demonstrating the values of peace
- b) there are lots of activists in the City, and in other cities and countries, signalling the importance of this issue to citizens in Nottingham and across the world.

Resolved to carry the motion.

45 Motion in the name of Councillor Nayab Patel

Councillor Nayab Patel proposed the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Salma Mumtaz:

Nottingham City Council is deeply concerned about the ongoing conflict in Palestine and Israel which has caused suffering over the last 75 years. Whilst we are aware that as a local authority we have limited or no powers in resolving the conflict we recognise the suffering of civilians on both sides.

We acknowledge the weekly peaceful demonstrations held in the City and we would like to join our communities and other local authorities in calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza with the safe release of hostages.

This Council resolves to:

- continue working with all our communities and partners to raise awareness and challenge all forms of racism, including Islamophobia and Antisemitism;
- collaboratively work with the Nottinghamshire Police and Police and Crime Commissioner to maintain community cohesion and to ensure safety of the Muslim and Jewish communities.

The Council further demands action from the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary to:

- support the UN General Secretary's call for an immediate ceasefire;
- demand removal of blockages that are hindering delivery of humanitarian aid;
- further increase UK's contribution to provide humanitarian aid for Gaza;
- take steps to ensure that arms and military aid built in the UK is not used in acts that amounts to war crimes under International Law and cease arm sales to Israel;
- bring a resolution to the United Nations Security Council to immediately recognise an independent and viable state of Palestine.

During debate on the motion councillors spoke about matters including:

- a) People are affected on both sides on the conflict.
- b) Local Muslim and Jewish communities in the City are coming together and it is important to support this.
- c) Support for an immediate ceasefire and aid for those who need it.

Resolved to carry the motion.

46 Extraordinary Council Meeting

Resolved to hold an Extraordinary Council meeting on 30 September 2024 at 6pm to consider the East Midlands Combined County Authority (Borrowing) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.

The Meeting concluded at 4.35 pm

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**Responses to questions from councillors requiring a written response
9 September 2024**

CQ9

Question asked by Councillor Maria Joannou of the Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee

Could the Committee Chair give an update on the Committee's decision to make a referral to the Secretary of State regarding the loss of the Nottingham Centre for Trauma, Resilience and Growth?

As Councillor Joannou was not present at the Council meeting to ask this question, it received the following written response:

Councillor Georgia Power replied as follows:

Regulation 23 requires relevant NHS bodies and health service providers to consult a local authority about any proposal which they have 'under consideration' for a substantial development of or variation in the provision of health services in the local authority's area. The closure of the Centre for Trauma Resilience and Growth (CTRG) came to the Committee's attention when looking at an ongoing item on the provision of psychological therapy. When questioned about this a Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) representative said the CTRG had closed because "some people received a very good service but those who didn't access the CTRG don't". It is the Committee's view that all patients deserve to receive the best service and this is not an acceptable reason for closure. The ICB asked to meet with me, as Chair, and the Vice Chair of the Committee before referring it to the Secretary of State, which we offered to do on many occasions. However, whilst we have now met with them, it took four months to arrange that meeting due to the ICB's failure to respond to multiple letters. Having had conversations with people who knew the services offered by the CTRG well, we were able to provide the ICB clear evidence of how this has changed. It is also clear that there is a significant gap in provision for trauma support, with the ICB offering that there is a two year waiting list for sexual violence counselling in Nottinghamshire due to the increasing needs of patient to receive longer treatment packages. It is the Committee's view that this is not the fault of patients who need longer treatment, but inappropriately commissioned services which are not meeting the needs of Nottinghamshire residents. The ICB does not accept the Committee's view that there has been a substantial variation in service and we do not accept the ICB's view that there hasn't. As the ICB has closed the CTRG without consultation there was no room for us to negotiate further therefore the Committee agreed to make the referral. Other issues have been identified as a result of this work, including provision for victims and survivors of sexual violence and domestic abuse, refugees and asylum seekers, veterans, people who experience traumatic loss or those who witness or experience traumatic events - though this list is not exhaustive. The Committee is considering how it can look at the provision for people who need trauma related support in Nottingham City further.

Question asked by Councillor Andrew Rule requesting a written response from the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education

Could the Executive Member provide a breakdown of the total fines for unauthorised school absences imposed by the Council over the last three years and confirm how these penalties have been utilised by the Council?

Councillor Cheryl Barnard replied as follows:

Fine income breakdown for the last three years:

Year Total

2021/22	51,267.84
2022/23	127,629.00
2023/24	148,260.00
2024/25	65,100.00

The Education Welfare and Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) Service provide the statutory function of administering, processing and enforcing fixed penalty fines for unauthorised absence from school. The money collected from these fines is restricted to 'The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 Item - 23.—(1) The functions of a local education authority specified for the purposes of section 444A(6)(1) of the 1996 Act and section 105(5) of the 2006 Act are issuing and enforcing penalty notices, and prosecuting recipients who do not pay.(2) To the extent that sums received by a local education authority are not used for the purposes of the functions specified in paragraph (1), they must be paid to the Secretary of State.

The Council's transformation team designed a new system which makes the issuance of penalty notices much more efficient and also increases the ease of payment, which has increased the payment rate to 83%. Because of this, the income from penalty notices significantly increased in 2022/23 and this has been sustained.

Overachieved income from penalty notices has been placed in reserves which allows it to be used retrospectively by Education Welfare for duties around the issuance of penalty notices and prosecution of parents for non-payment.

An increase in the number of fines issued means the current legal team in the service are unable to manage the increased workload and the reserves will be used to increase the size and capacity of the team. An additional Legal Intervention Officer has been recruited to the team. An additional Education Welfare Specialist role is also being recruited to, with a specific focus on preparing the legal documentation required for prosecutions.

In an attempt to address the national decline in school attendance, the Department for Education has recently increased the fine amounts and also made it easier for schools to pursue a fixed penalty notice for poor attendance. If the team see a sustained level of income this financial year, the Council will follow the same process where funds are put in reserves and then used to staff the team. This will be a balance between ensuring the legal team are sufficiently staffed, and undertaking more proactive work with families to reduce persistent absence and engage children in learning.

WQ2

Question asked by Councillor Kevin Clarke requesting a written response from the Executive Member for Finance and Resources

Could the Executive Member provide a breakdown of the total number of calls to the Council's customer service hotline by month over the last three years; together with the average wait time for a call to be answered, the number of calls that led to a successful outcome and the number of aborted calls?

Councillor Linda Woodings replied as follows:

Below is three years' Customer Hub phone data on a month by month basis.

Our strategy is to convert traditional telephony contact to digital wherever possible and whilst customers are on hold, a message is played advising that the process they are waiting for can be managed online. We therefore encourage call abandonment so do not use it as a performance metric as call abandonment rates can be seen as a positive performance indicator as well as a negative one. Any comparison would be drawn against our channel shift data which for general transactional services is currently 82%. What this means is that only 18% of our contact into the Customer Hub is through telephony. This is a positive indicator because our digital processes run end to end – requests go straight into the back office system – and therefore are much more cost effective to deliver. Additionally, satisfaction rates with our online processes are extremely high, averaging 91%.

Demand peaks in the summer months generally, and historically in the Hub a flexible staffing model has been operated to accommodate managing peaks and troughs efficiently. However, there is a staffing saving for 2024/25 which has been achieved, but which required the service to reduce numbers within a short time frame to meet the budget reduction. This coincided with the introduction of the new Garden Waste scheme and the additional demand had not been accounted for. This resulted in a significant increase in telephone demand into the Hub which the newly reduced team could not meet. However, channel shift for the Garden Waste subscription scheme is 92% so only 8% of our customers subscribed by telephone (to date 30644 online subscriptions compared with 2672 telephone requests). Customers who called were directed to our online provision and this will account for a large number of abandoned calls.

The AI telephony solution will go live in October and in the interim period, additional resources have been redirected to support the telephone provision.

Year	Month	Total Calls	Answered Calls	Abandoned Calls	Average Wait Time
	Sep	17419	11222	6197	00:04:48
	Oct	12742	11270	1472	00:01:16
	Nov	12143	11355	788	00:00:37
	Dec	11521	10394	1127	00:01:11
2022	Jan	12192	10919	1273	00:01:08
	Feb	13317	11498	1819	00:01:37
	Mar	14834	12486	2348	00:01:42
	Apr	12783	10971	1812	00:01:32
	May	14106	11993	2113	00:01:35
	Jun	13980	10719	3261	00:02:48
	Jul	13989	10499	3490	00:03:14
	Aug	14755	10581	4174	00:04:08
	Sep	13451	11057	2394	00:02:12
	Oct	11613	10873	740	00:00:37
	Nov	11947	10644	1303	00:01:13
	Dec	9410	8460	950	00:01:10
2023	Jan	11722	10111	1611	00:01:41
	Feb	11052	9305	1747	00:01:54
	Mar	13835	10982	2853	00:02:23
	Apr	11293	9442	1851	00:01:59
	May	13725	11801	1924	00:01:34
	Jun	16971	13060	3911	00:03:13
	Jul	13281	11169	2112	00:01:58
	Aug	13234	11507	1727	00:01:39
	Sep	14094	10456	3638	00:04:01
	Oct	14056	11007	3049	00:03:01
	Nov	13266	10755	2511	00:02:37
	Dec	10310	8228	2082	00:02:35
2024	Jan	14262	9911	4351	00:04:22
	Feb	11537	8813	2724	00:03:06
	Mar	14033	7741	6292	00:06:50
	Apr	21680	7027	14653	00:15:49
	May	22646	7122	15524	00:19:03
	Jun	19442	6446	12996	00:19:23
	Jul	19577	8347	11230	00:13:39
	Aug	14960	7239	7721	00:10:50

WQ3

Question asked by Councillor Kirsty M Jones requesting a written response from the Executive Member for Housing and Planning

Could the Executive Member provide the total number of calls to the Housing Services Repair Line broken down by month, over the last three years and provide the average wait time for a call to be answered, the number of calls dealt with successfully and the number of aborted calls?

Councillor Jay Hayes replied as follows:

Please find attached repairs calls data.

Abandoned call data – It is important to consider that not all calls that are abandoned are so due to the amount of time a tenant has had to wait, very often a tenant will abandon very quickly and for various reasons, such as listening to our recorded message, then deciding very quickly that they have called the wrong line as an example. The second and important aspect to bear in mind is that the majority of the abandoned calls present themselves to us again and are subsequently answered (telephony reporting provides such data).

Average wait time – these vary by day and by hour and unfortunately the data is corrupted to the extent that we cannot extract situations where we experience telephony system outages which can leave tenants calls in queue with the Customer Service Advisor unable to take the call and the system unable to abandon the call automatically.

Point to Note - The average handle time (AHT) for call centres can vary widely depending on the industry, the complexity of the inquiries, and the specific metrics used by the call centre. However, as of recent industry reports:

- Average Handle Time (AHT) in the UK typically ranges from 4 to 6 minutes for many industries. This includes the time spent speaking to the customer, as well as any after-call work (ACW) required to complete the interaction.

In more specialized or technical sectors, such as IT support or financial services, the AHT can be higher, often exceeding 10 minutes due to the complexity of the issues addressed.

Keep in mind that these numbers are averages, and individual call centres may have significantly different AHTs based on their specific operations and customer needs.

Calls dealt with successfully – having asked for clarification of the question I can update that this would be classed as First Call Resolution. This measure is one we aspire to have in place as our key Contact Centre KPI and work is currently underway to identify how we can best measure this.

Various ways of measurement of First Call Resolution include:

- how many times the same number has had to call into the service within 4 weeks of the first call
- Customer Service Centre call quality monitoring
- Analysis of Complaint/Compliment data
- Analysis of Tenant Satisfaction Measure verbatim feedback
- Introduction of post Customer Service Centre call satisfaction survey asking the tenant if their needs were met on the first call

