

Public Document Pack

Minutes of the meeting of the City Council

held remotely via Zoom and livestreamed on the Council's YouTube Channel - <https://www.youtube.com/user/NottCityCouncil>

on 11 January 2021 from 2.00 pm - 7.00 pm

Attendances:

✓ Councillor Rosemary Healy (Lord Mayor)	
✓ Councillor Hassan Ahmed	✓ Councillor Chantal Lee
✓ Councillor Leslie Ayoola	✓ Councillor Dave Liversidge
✓ Councillor Cheryl Barnard	✓ Councillor Sally Longford
✓ Councillor Steve Battlemuch	✓ Councillor AJ Matsiko
✓ Councillor Merlita Bryan	✓ Councillor Carole McCulloch
✓ Councillor Eunice Campbell-Clark	✓ Councillor David Mellen
✓ Councillor Graham Chapman	✓ Councillor Sajid Mohammed
✓ Councillor Azad Choudhry	✓ Councillor Salma Mumtaz
✓ Councillor Kevin Clarke	✓ Councillor Toby Neal
✓ Councillor Audrey Dinnall	✓ Councillor Lauren O`Grady
✓ Councillor Michael Edwards	✓ Councillor Anne Peach
✓ Councillor Samuel Gardiner	✓ Councillor Georgia Power
✓ Councillor Jay Hayes	✓ Councillor Shuguftah Quddoos
✓ Councillor Nicola Heaton	✓ Councillor Ethan Radford
✓ Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora	✓ Councillor Nick Raine
Councillor Phil Jackson	✓ Councillor Angharad Roberts
✓ Councillor Maria Joannou	✓ Councillor Andrew Rule
✓ Councillor Sue Johnson	✓ Councillor Mohammed Saghir
✓ Councillor Kirsty Jones	✓ Councillor Wendy Smith
✓ Councillor Angela Kandola	✓ Councillor Roger Steel
✓ Councillor Jawaid Khalil	✓ Councillor Dave Trimble
✓ Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan	✓ Councillor Maria Watson
✓ Councillor Neghat Khan	✓ Councillor Sam Webster
✓ Councillor Zafran Nawaz Khan	✓ Councillor Adele Williams
✓ Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis	✓ Councillor Linda Woodings
✓ Councillor Rebecca Langton	✓ Councillor Cate Woodward
✓ Councillor Jane Lakey	✓ Councillor Audra Wynter

✓ Indicates present at meeting

52 Apologies for Absence

None

53 Declarations of Interests

None

54 Questions from Citizens

Parking enforcement

PN asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Highways and Strategic Transport:

During this time of lockdown and tier 4 measures when people are being furloughed, told to work from home where possible and to only go out for essential travel, how can the Council justify still proceeding to issue parking tickets to vehicles that are parked outside a residential area i.e. Plumptre Square within the City as long as the vehicle is still parked in a parking bay and not illegally?

Councillor Rebecca Langton replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and can I thank the member of the public for their question. The question asks about how we have been enforcing parking during the lockdown, and makes specific reference to Plumptre Square in the City Centre. We recognise the effects of the Covid pandemic on residents and businesses in the City, and our approach to parking enforcement has taken this into account. Throughout the pandemic, parking enforcement has followed Government advice and been in line with guidance from the British Parking Association. In line with that advice parking enforcement was reduced at the beginning of the first lockdown in March last year. When lockdown was eased we had a steady return to enforcement, targeting disabled bays and hotspots in the City Centre to ensure the safety of Nottingham people. No new guidance has been issued by Government for Tier 4 or for this lockdown, so we continue to enforce to ensure the free-flow of traffic and prevent dangerous parking. This is the primary function of parking enforcement. In the City Centre, Traffic Regulation Orders are in place to help get the balance between the many hundreds of people who live within the area and others who are visiting. Different ways of parking, including 'one hour free' bays encourage short trips to small businesses and are a key part of keeping the City Centre economy thriving at difficult times. Traffic Regulation Orders cannot be switched 'on' and 'off', which means we can't just decide they are no longer needed and turn everything over to residents' parking. As such, Parking Regulation and Compliance will continue to enforce restrictions to support the City and its desire to keep traffic moving and keep people safe. For example, during the Autumn term, the React Team, a specialist team within Parking Enforcement who deal with parking and traffic flow around schools, have been more needed than ever. With fewer people using public transport, their role in helping to ensure the safety of parents, children and local residents at drop off and pick up times has been crucial. They have continued to work on the frontline in challenging times and I am sure we would all like to place on record our thanks to them.

The question references Plumptre Square specifically. This area has a number of one-hour bays, double yellow lines and nearby pay and display parking. Although traffic has reduced, the parking restrictions in these and other areas are legal orders, which remain in place regardless of other restrictions. I am aware that the Councillors for the Castle ward, representing the City Centre, Park and Castle Marina, are taking steps to balance parking between those visiting the City Centre and those who live within it. For example, they have recently introduced extended residents' parking bays on Cliff Road and improved residents' parking on Carter Gate. Castle ward Councillors are very much willing to look at parking arrangements

where they can, so I would encourage the resident who has asked this question to contact me or their ward councillors directly so that we can look into this issue specifically. In a general sense we are seeing significantly higher traffic flow in the City Centre in this lockdown than in the first one and we will continue to enforce to encourage safe, legal and free-flowing traffic whilst making every effort to take into account the challenging circumstances facing us all. Thank you again to the resident for their question and I would be very happy to take up the specifics directly.

Decision making

TW asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:

Decisions taken by the City Council have led to the irresponsible introduction and then collapse of Robin Hood Energy (with 230 jobs lost and £38.1million down the drain), an embarrassing national government investigation into the mismanagement of the authority, one of the worst levels of Council debt in the country (over £1.1billion and counting), chaos surrounding the dilapidated Broadmarsh Centre and more latterly the ill-thought out decision to hold a Christmas market during a global pandemic. As residents of the City this has seen our money wasted, our jobs lost, our facilities left in ruin and our health put at risk. Consequently, the City's reputation nationally has suffered as a result. I am sure the Leader agrees – Nottingham deserves better. Will he therefore apologise and offer a guarantee that in the future decisions made by himself and the Portfolio Holders will be competent, transparent, and of a standard befitting the trust the people of Nottingham place in the Council?

Councillor David Mellen replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and can I thank the citizen for this question. There can be no doubt that 2020 was a difficult and extremely challenging year. The issues listed by the questioner are important and significant and, of course, have come on top of an enormous amount of work that we have had to do to support our City through the impact of the Covid pandemic over the past year. Dealing with these challenges and pressures has not been easy and, particularly where Covid is concerned, I think it is important to recognise once again the huge collective response not just from Council staff but also from key workers, local communities and businesses which has shown Nottingham at its best, stepping up to try and protect the health and wellbeing of our residents including those who are most at risk from the virus.

On the specific points raised by the questioner, I can indeed give the assurance that the Council will make changes where they are needed and will do as much as it can to address failings of the past and improve our standards of transparency and decision making. We have already begun the process of achieving this. In 2019 we took decisive action to start the process of closing down Robin Hood Energy (RHE) and to begin a controlled exit of the business from the energy market, which has seen the Company support 116 RHE staff into new jobs and given domestic and business customers choice in successfully moving their accounts to a new supplier. It is important to emphasise, however, that Robin Hood Energy did not collapse. Rather, we took the decision that in the prevailing financial climate we could no longer provide the necessary support to the Company and have worked hard over the last few months to manage the process in a way that will provide the best outcomes achievable for our customers, employees and creditors. Robin Hood Energy was set up with the best of intentions to try and tackle fuel poverty and the widespread disquiet over the way that the energy market was operating at the time.

But we of course very much regret the past failings of the Council's governance of the Company over the several years since its formation, which I have apologised on behalf of the Council for. The subsequent Public Interest Report by the External Auditor into Robin Hood Energy clearly exposed serious issues which the comprehensive Action Plan that the Council put in place last year is already addressing. Further action will be taken to improve and transform the Council over the coming months as a result of the separate Non-Statutory Review carried on on behalf of the Government. While this work will be difficult and challenging, I am pleased that the Non-Statutory Review Report expressed confidence in the current leadership to take forward the necessary course of action required.

With regard to the Broadmarsh Centre, we were faced with different circumstances, not of our own making. At the start of 2020, good progress was being made on the redevelopment of the Centre, but the pandemic pushed former owners Intu into Administration and the site was handed back to Nottingham City Council in the present state. 2020 didn't work out how anyone planned and that was certainly the case for the Broadmarsh Centre. This has, however, presented us with an unexpected opportunity and in our consultation on the future of the site more than 3000 responses have been put forward as to how the Broadmarsh site might be reimaged. In the year ahead we want to see these ideas developed into a masterplan for one of the most significant city centre development sites in the country.

On the subject of the Christmas market, given that outdoor markets were allowed under the Covid restrictions in place at the beginning of December, a wide range of measures were put in place to follow available guidance together with plans to control access and to help monitor and manage the number of people attending the market site at any one time. We perhaps didn't anticipate how many people would be in the City Centre on a fine day at the end of the previous period of lockdown and, as things turned out, the numbers were too large to implement our planned measures effectively. Our intention was to help support the local economy and bring some festive cheer to people in the City Centre in a safe, managed, outdoor way as part of the re-opening of non-essential retail after the second national lockdown. Public safety was always first and foremost in all decisions taken and when it was clear it wasn't secure a decision was made to close the market. Councillor Trimble and his staff team took the right decision at that time and public apologies were issued.

Clearly there have been many substantial issues and challenges that we have had, as a Council, to address since I became the Leader nineteen months ago. It has been a turbulent few months, not just for Nottingham but for the country as a whole, and we are working as hard as we can to get the best possible outcomes for Nottingham. Looking ahead, there will be further difficult decisions to be made, with a tough budget to set, a Government inspection report to respond to and the need to look ahead to ensure financial stability is our biggest priority in the long term. Our main financial challenges – austerity and the impact of Covid – are shared by councils across the country. We will aim to protect key services as far as we are able, while having to rethink the scope of what the Council can provide. The Covid infection is very much still with us, with our hospitals under pressures and vaccinations only just started. Lockdown adds fear and uncertainty as to how citizens feel about the year ahead, but that doesn't mean we will lose ambition to do the best for Nottingham. We will remain absolutely committed to being a carbon-neutral city by 2028 for

example, and have made excellent progress towards this target already with our far-ranging action plan. We are really pleased to have secured £161million in grant funding to carry out major transport improvements like expanding the electric charging point network to encourage take-up of electric vehicles, promoting safer cycling routes as well as a new footbridge with cycle lane across the River Trent to encourage active travel, linking parks and communities north and south of the Trent. The development of Trent Basin in Colwick, which will be home to brand new schools, is not the only housing development we can look forward to over the coming months. We are expecting to build a further 300 council houses in 2021 and there are plenty of other developments underway or in the pipeline. The Island Quarter is an exciting scheme that brings businesses and houses together on a large site that has been derelict for years, there is further development planned in, and around Sneinton market, and new offices and houses in the South Side. Our own development schemes south of the City will continue and I think 2021 will be the year when we see how transformational they will be. The old Broadmarsh car park is being replaced by a modern building much more befitting of the City gateway. The work that will carry on in the streets around it will transform the look and feel of the area beyond recognition. At one end we have the wonderful new Nottingham College building and at the other the redeveloped Nottingham Castle attraction. 2021 is the year when many of these changes will come together and the Castle will re-open, while we plan how the Broadmarsh Centre will complement and enhance these developments. The many features which saw Nottingham named by the Sunday Times Magazine last year as one of the best cities in the country are still here: excellent public transport; popular universities; a vibrant arts and music scene; and, although severely affected by Covid, an excellent hospitality sector and Purple Flag accredited night-life; more Green Flags for our parks than nearly anywhere else, which have been vital to people's wellbeing during the lockdown; and a UNICEF-backed bid to be a Child Friendly City, which will give people in Nottingham hope for the future. With a difficult year behind us, there is much to look forward to in the new year ahead but we will, of course, use the lessons we have learnt from the events over the past year to continue to improve the way we work and have a Council that serves the people of Nottingham in a way they can be proud of.

55 Petitions from Councillors on behalf of Citizens

None

56 To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of Council held on 9 November 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2020 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

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

The Chief Executive reported the following:

Queen's New Years Honours List

I would like to extend congratulations to all those citizens recognised in the Queen's New Year's Honours List, particularly for services to health, social care, education and policing.

Local Government Information Unit Awards

Councillor Salma Mumtaz won the Covid-19 Hero Award at the Local Government Information Unit Awards in December. The Award recognises the time she spends volunteering at the Himmah Community Food Bank and Salaam Shalom Kitchen, both in Hyson Green, and Disability Direct in Basford, where she helps tackle food poverty by serving hot meals, delivering food parcels, home shopping and delivering prescriptions to local people in crisis.

Association for Public Service Excellence Awards (APSE)

The Council was shortlisted in six categories of the national APSE Awards, including three Teams shortlisted for Best Service Team; Best Climate Action Initiative; and Best Commercialisation and Entrepreneurship Initiative, in addition to Overall Council of the Year in Service Delivery. The Council won two national awards one for its Transport and Fleet Maintenance Service and one for its Parks, Grounds and Horticultural Service. My thanks to all colleagues who helped the Council achieve such creditable results.

Former Council employee John Karim

I am very sad to report the death of former Council employee John Karim. John died in December, having contracted Covid-19. John was an Assistant Facilities Officer for the Council based at the Lenton Business Centre. John worked for the Council for nearly twelve years and will be sorely missed, and fondly remembered by those who knew him.

Former Councillor Mary Bloomfield

I am sad to report that former Councillor Mary Bloomfield passed away in November. She was elected to the Council in 1991 and represented the Portland ward until 1994. She was re-elected to the Council in 2003 to represent the Basford ward, which she did until 2007, and was Leader of an Independent Group on the Council.

Former Councillor Samuel Gibbons

I am also sad to report that former Councillor Samuel Gibbons has passed away. He was elected to the Council for the then University ward between 1970 and 1974.

Councillor David Mellen spoke in tribute to former Councillors Mary Bloomfield and Samuel Gibbons and former employee John Karim.

A minute's silence was held.

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

None

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

Nottingham Christmas Market

Councillor Kevin Clarke asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and IT:

While under normal circumstances few people enjoy Nottingham's Christmas Market as much as I do, it is obvious that the decision to permit this year's one to open was a mistake. Can the Portfolio Holder please give an account of the advice that was received from the Safety Advisory Group and the decision making process that gave the green light to open the Market, based on that advice?

Councillor Dave Trimble replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and can I thank Councillor Clarke for his question. In terms of the decision making process, Council officers put to me a much reduced event offer and I approved it. That was at a time when the Covid numbers in the City were reducing fast and Nottingham was lower than in areas that were in Tier 2. I have accepted that this was a mistake. I have publicly apologised and it certainly won't happen again. All significant events go to the Safety Advisory Group. A proposal for a significantly-scaled down Christmas Market to replace the Winter Wonderland was submitted to the Council by the event operator. It is entirely normal for members of the Safety Advisory Group to have concerns on all events. They offer relevant advice and actions needed to mitigate the concerns they have. The Safety Advisory Group met twice in the week prior to the event, where proposals for the Market were considered. Some concerns and advice were raised about the planned market and rides. After the Safety Advisory Group meetings were held on 1 and 3 December they provided full advice to the event organiser – a summary of which is as follows:

- Markets and fairground rides are allowed in the Government's guidance and legislation published on 30 November provided they are Covid-safe.
- Risk assessments for the rides required further scrutiny, and they were subsequently provided prior to the market opening.
- An updated Steward and Crowd Management Plan was requested prior to any activity being permitted and this was also provided post-meeting.
- The Public Health view was that proposals comply with the Guidance, provided they are Covid-safe but they would be dependent upon the responsible behaviour of people attending the event.
- There were some concerns about whether it would be possible to control large numbers and enforce compliance.
- The use of masks on rides and stalls should be mandatory and are a sensible precaution.
- A closely monitored phased introduction avoiding anticipated crowded shopping times following lockdown would be prudent.
- It was noted that the City Council, as the landowner, understood the event was lawful and in accordance with Government Regulations and that the prime responsibility was with the activity organisers to manage the activity in a safe manner.
- The operator completed comprehensive risk assessments for each aspect of the market, which included measures to comply with the prevailing Covid restrictions as well as mitigation plans that could be enacted if problems arose.
- The Safety Advisory Group advice concluded that risk cannot be eliminated entirely but can be mitigated in ways described, and that this risk is present in all activity taking in the City Centre, not just the Christmas market. The operator

must manage the activity and visitor behaviour in a Covid-safe way. Should this not be achievable, the Council should be prepared to enforce closure if necessary on either all or part of the activity.

Thank you Lord Mayor.

Robin Hood Energy

Councillor Kevin Clarke asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Growth and the City Centre:

In October 2020, the Government Regulator OFGEM issued Robin Hood Energy with a Final Order to pay the £12,057,879.42, (plus daily interest) it currently owes for Renewable Obligation Certificates. OFGEM has publically stated that it will “take other action” to retrieve this money if, as seems likely given the current situation, Robin Hood Energy is unable to pay. Can the Portfolio Holder explain whether, as the current “parent” of Robin Hood Energy, Nottingham City Council will be liable for this bill and will this end up being yet another multi-million pound hit to our finances?

Councillor Sam Webster replied as follows:

Thank you Councillor Clarke for the question. On 5 January Robin Hood Energy was put into Administration. This followed a period in which the customer book was successfully sold to British Gas. Administration is, of course, the next step in the controlled exit of the business from the energy market and follows the decisive steps taken last year to close the Company whilst trying to provide the best outcomes achievable for customers, employees and creditors, including the City Council and Ofgem. During the period of controlled exit, the Company has helped to support 116 employees into new jobs and given domestic and business customers choice in successfully moving their accounts to a new supplier. The Administrator will now identify the available funds, including the proceeds from the sale of customers to British Gas for distribution to creditors of the business. In terms of the funds referred to by Councillor Clarke these will be dealt with as part of the process of Administration. The cost of Renewable Obligation Certificates will be mutualised across the industry and we anticipate there will be no impact on Nottingham City Council finances. The alternative to controlled exit would have been the immediate closure of the business through the supplier of last resort process with the result that none of these benefits could have been achieved. Thank you.

Summerwood Day Centre

Councillor Maria Watson asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Adult Care and Local Transport:

Can the Portfolio Holder give us any further update regarding the Council’s stated intention of closing one of the City’s adult day centres? We, as a Group, are disappointed that any Day Centres are under threat, believing them to provide a vital and invaluable service, however understand the financial position that this Council is in. We do not however see the value in closing Clifton’s Summerwood Day Centre, which was used to full capacity prior to this pandemic and continues to be fully used now even with the much-reduced capacity. We are desperate to be able to give the users, the families and staff of Summerwood Day Centre in Clifton some good news in this difficult time. Can you help us do that today?

Councillor Adele Williams replied as follows:

Thank you Councillor Watson for your question. The review of day services, as you know, follows our Better Lives Better Outcomes Strategy and our commitment for Nottingham to be a City where people with disabilities are supported to live well in their communities. The day centres have been open for some time now to smaller numbers of people with the highest need and our staff in Adult Social Care have worked to keep in touch with citizens and families during this really difficult time. I would like to take a moment to thank staff in Adult Social Care. Long after the claps have stopped, we remember the work and kindness that they, and colleagues in the wider sector, have put in and their professional commitment to keeping our citizens safe and living as well as they can during this incredibly difficult period, and also thinking beyond that. So in terms of the future of day centres, whilst we recognise that some people will need more specialist services, we are also committed to creating opportunities where people with disabilities are able to meet their needs and personal aspirations through participation in their local communities in ways that respond to their individual circumstances. This might be, for example, taking part in community groups, support into employment or learning, spending time in friendship groups and volunteering. The review and consolidation of day services for citizens with physical, sensory and learning disabilities, including the closure of one day centre, has concluded and I am now carefully looking at the outcomes of what has been quite an extensive consultation. A decision on the review's findings will follow shortly but until this part of the process is finalised it would be premature to answer the question as posed. A final decision will be made very soon and once that has happened we will communicate further. Any centre where there is a proposed closure will be the focus of a further consultation with users specifically of that facility. I will be very happy to have conversations about that in the future. Thank you.

Covid-19

Councillor Kirsty Jones asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:

While I'm sure very few people across the country had the Christmas they were expecting, we are as always amazed at people's capacity to adapt and to do the right thing in these trying times. Will the Leader of the Council join us in thanking the citizens of Nottingham, and our local communities for the sacrifices they all made and the efforts they went to ensure this was a safe, secure but nevertheless enjoyable Christmas period?

Councillor David Mellen replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and can I thank Councillor Jones for her question. I do indeed join you Councillor Jones in thanking the citizens of Nottingham for their ongoing sacrifices and community spirit, that is helping to ensure that all communities across our City are kept as safe and secure as possible during these particularly difficult times. I appreciate that this has been even more difficult over the Christmas period, the time when we are used to spending quality time with our friends and family. However, in keeping with the rest of 2020 when other religious celebrations throughout the year were affected by Covid, the citizens of Nottingham, young and old, have demonstrated tremendous civic responsibility. The vast majority have adhered to the Covid-19 rules in order to protect our hospitals and safeguard the lives of the citizens of Nottingham over Christmas, New Year and now. During this

national lockdown I particularly want to thank our key workers who have put their own health at risk to protect and care for others. To them we all owe a tremendous debt. For this ongoing effort, I am sure that I speak on behalf of all Nottingham City Councillors to whole-heartedly thank all the citizens of Nottingham for helping to save lives at this difficult time. The onset of the vaccination programme locally and nationally provides light at the end of the tunnel for us all. We should all look forward, and take comfort that we may be able to begin to live a normal life later in 2021 as the vaccinations are rolled out. However, infection rates in Nottingham are still rising and while we wait for the vaccine rollout it is vital that every Nottingham citizen redoubles their efforts to keep themselves and others safe.

Covid-19 Vaccinations

Councillor Jane Lakey asked the following question of the Deputy Leader of the Council:

What plans are being developed with the NHS and other partners to deliver vaccinations, in terms of locations, timescale and volumes, for Nottingham City residents?

Councillor Sally Longford replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Lakey for raising this important issue. As Chair of the Nottingham Outbreak Control Engagement Board, I have been taking an active interest in the availability of vaccinations for our citizens, and we have discussed the issue at previous meetings with colleagues from the NHS. The rollout of the Covid-19 vaccine in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is underway. My priority is in ensuring all Nottingham citizens, particularly those in the priority groups, receive their vaccine in a timely and equitable way and that as many local people as possible take up the offer. The Council is working with NHS colleagues to achieve this, with a particular focus on addressing health inequalities within the City. Vaccinations will be administered across different types of sites: firstly, from hospital hubs, one of which has operated from the Queens Medical Centre since early December and now from the City Hospital as well; there are local vaccination centres which are community and primary care-led, the first such site within Nottingham City boundaries went live on Friday at the Cripps Health Centre on University Park and will be followed this week and next by two additional City-based sites; Nottingham residents need to know that they are also able to book vaccinations at nearby sites, such as the Richard Herrod Leisure Centre in Gedling if this is convenient for them; and there is also a roving service which is taking the vaccine into care homes for staff and residents and will deliver the vaccine to house-bound individuals. This is already underway and we hope will be able to provide a good service for our citizens who are unable to easily access the other options. I am hoping that local GPs and pharmacies, which are facilities that our citizens are familiar with, will come into use in the future and we have suggested additional venues for 'pop up' vaccination centres in the future, such as Bulwell Riverside. I would like to reassure Council and citizens that myself and the Leader of the Council are pressing NHS colleagues to ensure that our most vulnerable citizens get access to this vital public health programme at the earliest opportunity. We are keen to ensure the vaccination facilities will be available in convenient locations across the City to encourage the greatest uptake of the vaccine. We are reassured that our Director of Public Health is now on the Board overseeing the rollout knowing that she knows our communities

and their vulnerabilities however, at present, I am unable to provide information about the volume of vaccinations that have been carried out on our citizens as I understand that our NHS partners are not allowed to share this information with us. However, I have been assured that we will receive regular updates on progress. This is very disappointing because without this detailed data I cannot reassure councillors that good progress is being made in their areas or who is actually getting the vaccine. Anecdotally I know that some local people are accessing vaccinations not because they have been invited, although they are in the priority groups, but because they have somehow been made aware of the booking number and are taking action themselves. This is clearly not how it is supposed to be done but who can blame them when they see friends in other areas getting their vaccination early. This is a snapshot of the current situation and is liable to change. We expect further national announcements and probably additional delivery mechanisms in the coming weeks. As we know from experience, the Government response to the pandemic has lurched from one decision to another and unfortunately I suspect the vaccination programme might pan-out in a similar disjointed fashion. I really hope that this will not detract from the success of it. All City residents who are 80 or over should be receiving a letter inviting them to make an appointment for a vaccination in the coming days, some may have already received it. This will include all the information required to book an appointment and explain how transport can be arranged if required. We know that the NHS has a team of volunteers standing by to provide transport for citizens who cannot access the current vaccination facilities easily and there will be public transport options. We also know that many people regard this vaccination programme as a route back to a normal life and that people are understandably anxious to get their vaccination as quickly as possible. The Government has set out the priority groups who will receive their vaccination as it gets going. At a meeting on Friday we were reassured that the number of vaccinations being carried out in the City will quickly increase and the NHS is confident that the top four priority groups will be vaccinated by the middle of February, vaccine supply permitting. To reiterate, that means that all over 80s, older care home residents and staff, everyone over 70, all NHS and care home staff and all those who are clinically extremely vulnerable should be able to access the vaccination. As I have said, this is a fast-moving programme and I will continue to work with Public Health, NHS colleagues and others to ensure that we are doing all we can to push the programme forward in Nottingham City, and I would encourage any citizen who is invited to make an appointment to do so as soon as possible to reduce their risk of contracting the worst symptoms of the disease. As someone who recently lost a friend to Covid, I have seen the tragic consequences of the pandemic and I want to ensure that we keep our citizens safe in these worrying times. Thank you.

Bed and Breakfast Accommodation

Councillor Georgia Power asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Heritage:

Can the Portfolio Holder for Housing confirm how many homeless families in Nottingham were in Bed and Breakfast accommodation over Christmas?

Councillor Linda Woodings replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor. It was back in January 2018 that my predecessor Councillor Urquhart passed a motion through this Full Council meeting to promise that by the

end of the year Nottingham would have no homeless families staying in Bed and Breakfast accommodation. After a gargantuan effort that year we managed to achieve this on Christmas Eve, and we managed to repeat that in 2019. So I am pleased to be able to tell Full Council that once again in Nottingham, on Christmas Eve in 2020, no child from a homeless family woke up in a hotel room. Right throughout the year my Homelessness Team, our partners and volunteers have worked tirelessly to find short, medium and long-term solutions to keep these figures as low as possible and to provide a better standard of emergency accommodation, which at least has its own self-contained kitchen and bathroom. Dignity for Nottingham children, dignity in Nottingham for those made homeless over the last ten years of pitiless austerity and a housing market which is broken with little or no attempts to mend it.

However, 2020 was an unusual year and it is only right to identify one of the key factors that has helped us to achieve this feat again; the temporary ban on issuing Section 21 Short Notice Evictions. Throughout most of this year, because of the pandemic, the Government has stopped the issuing of Section 21 Eviction Notices, something that we have long called for. This isn't a panacea because people still give up their properties even though they don't have to because if they wait for Section 8 Eviction Orders they can incur court costs; and Section 21 evictions have been replaced by homelessness from relationship breakdowns, an exponential rise in domestic violence and people asked to leave properties where they have been 'sofa-surfing'. 'Sofa-surfing' is the iceberg of hidden homelessness, which frankly we don't have the resources to help to cope with. The courts have been ordered to give consideration to those in rent arrears who have lost their jobs or who have been ill because of Covid before they issue eviction notices. Unfortunately for us, working in Homelessness, the court backlog is substantial so banning Section 21 eviction notices hasn't stopped the numbers of households presenting to Housing Aid each week, still more than 100 each and every week. It has merely stopped the upward spiralling of numbers of those homeless or at risk of homelessness. In fact, as the Labour Leader Kier Starmer highlighted this morning, the Government announced only four days ago the extension of the eviction ban again from this Monday, when it was due to expire, through to 21 February – too late and typical of the last minute approach of this Government throughout the pandemic, but better late than never and welcome news for families at risk of homelessness in Nottingham. So no respite in 2020 I am afraid for the dedicated team of people working in Housing Aid, but it did have the effect of reducing the number of families with children becoming homeless. I do want to thank the decent landlords out there who gave their tenants leniency in paying their rent and who have reduced the levels of rent in recognition of the dreadful economic circumstances this year. Once again I will use the analogy that in homelessness we constantly feel as though we are running up the 'down' escalator, working hard throughout the year to merely stand still. However, this year has given us a glimpse of what can be achieved if renters were given more rights, more security in their homes. So although this is a remarkable achievement and this is a day to pay tribute to the Council teams working in this area, we call once again for the Government to introduce permanent protections for renters and to address the structural inequalities and underlying issues affecting homelessness. Firstly, more security of tenure, and that means medium-long term leases, minimum three-year leases; secondly, an end to no-fault evictions entirely and much longer notice periods of when you have to quit your home – at least six months; thirdly, protection against rent rises, it can't be right that a landlord can simply price their tenants out of the

property by raising the rent to a level they know that their tenants will be unable to afford – cap rent rises to the rate of inflation; fourthly, more affordable homes, especially Council houses, the lack of supply of housing is what is driving up rents and house prices in the UK and in Nottingham. Council houses are still the most popular and most wanted form of housing. The latest research suggests there are more than £2million people currently on the Council house waiting list across the UK and why is this? The rents are lower, any rent increases are limited year-on-year and linked to the CPI rate of inflation, the landlord has to treat you decently and fairly and it gives security of tenure and an individual can't be chucked out of their home just because they have asked for a repair. In fact, revenge evictions should be made a criminal offence and I pay tribute to my fantastic officers working in Safer Housing and the Nottingham Law Centre who prevented and enforced against the increasing number of illegal eviction attempts last year. One Nottingham landlord is spending the next six months in prison because he broke a court injunction preventing him from throwing out a family on the street, and we will be prosecuting him on his release. Finally, an end to the right-to-buy – something that actually hinders councils from building new homes and properties. We cannot build them fast enough and year-on-year we lose much needed housing stock. At the very least this Government should make sure that councils can recover their full build costs before they have to sell on properties, with a moratorium on the right-to-buy until at least 15 years after any new build. So colleagues, much done and much more that can be done. I cannot praise highly enough my fantastic team of officers and colleagues working in this area and given the chance I will try my upmost to keep on achieving this landmark – no children waking up in a hotel room on Christmas morning in Nottingham each and every year. I don't know about you, but it brings a lump to my throat every Christmas Eve, and in that moment I know that it is worth putting in the hours, day by day week on week year on year, a badge of honour for this City that I will be loath to lose but to maintain this we need a decent Government, a Labour Government, to do more than put a sticking plaster on this issue. This Conservative Government needs to take steps, urgent steps, to address homelessness nationwide and I urge them to do so, all be it more in hope than in expectation.

Voting in Local Elections

Councillor Michael Edwards asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Energy, Environment and Democratic Services:

What more might be done to boost the number of people voting in local elections?

Councillor Sally Longford replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Edwards. It is important that we think seriously about this issue as we head towards the Police and Crime Commissioner elections, which are due to take place this spring. It won't come as a surprise to colleagues that I am unapologetic in my belief that it is not just everyone's right to vote but it is also everyone's responsibility. It is very disappointing for us as councillors, obviously more interested than most in local politics and participation. We know that the proportion of local people voting in local elections in Nottingham City has remained at around 30% for approximately 20 years. Police and Crime Commissioner elections are infamous for low turnout across the country, with only 21.4% using their vote in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire in 2016. The only significant increase in turnout has been when local elections have been combined

with general elections. During the run up to the general elections, the number of people registering to vote increases and we currently have approximately 23,000 people less on the City register than we did in December 2019. Demographic factors have a part to play in turnout figures, for example we have a high number of students in our local population and they do not necessarily engage with local politics in the same way as permanent residents. We are pledged to increase student registration and progress has been made by working with the universities who now share more information with us to assist with student registration. The first thing to do to encourage people to vote is to get them on the electoral register and over the last 20 years there have been a number of reforms to change both the electoral registration system and the voting process. Some of these have had a positive impact on the number of people participating in local elections. A major improvement was made with the introduction of postal voting on demand. This has made it easier for people to participate in the election process and, despite 'fake news' from the outgoing President of the United States of America, I am confident that our system is well-managed. I know that Councillor Edwards and representatives of other political parties in the City have witnessed the verification of our postal votes in recent elections and it is secret, it is safe and people should be confident in it. Turnout amongst postal voters is always significantly higher than by others.

I would like to thank the Elections Team for their hard work, including the annual canvass which includes personal visits and contacts by email, text or telephone, to encourage greater take-up of voter registration. Polling cards now include maps of polling stations and advice on how to apply for postal or proxy votes and they are on hand on the day to deal with issues that occur and support electors in the local voting process, such as obtaining emergency proxy votes for people who become ill. The Council will continue to encourage registration and voting, including marketing campaigns through social media, registration events in a wide variety of settings and promotion through partner organisations such as Nottingham City Homes, the universities, student unions, schools and colleges, youth organisations and community and faith groups. Our Electoral Services Team constantly review best practice and adopt new practices and procedures where possible. They are currently developing plans for the Police and Crime Commissioner election in May, including planning for Covid-safe polling facilities. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage residents to register to vote if they haven't already done so and think about applying for a postal vote, which could reduce the number of people visiting polling stations during the current public health crisis. I think the importance of the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner is not well understood, but it is an important role which has an influence over all our lives. That person is responsible for appointing the Chief Constable, for setting the Police and crime objectives for the area and holding the Chief Constable to account for running the Force. Paddy Tipping is up for re-election in May and I would just like to mention his record of prioritising crimes that affect our local people, such as burglary and robbery and developing the only knife-crime team outside London. He has also championed a model of proactive approach to neighbourhood policing, including Operation Reacher and Operation Graduate as well as victim support and a focus on reducing hate crime, including misogyny.

I am afraid, however, that I have to end on a negative note. Despite all the hard work of our officers there is a looming threat to participation coming from the Conservative Party Manifesto, including a pledge to introduce compulsory photo identification to be

shown at polling stations by 2024. We know that it will be our citizens in more deprived communities who are less likely to have photo identification, with 3.5million people in the country in that situation. This would clearly disenfranchise many of our local citizens and in order to maximise participation all such barriers should be strongly resisted by all City Councillors. So we will continue to work hard to ensure maximum voter registration and to encourage people to participate in all local elections but, in particular, in the short-term we have to work towards encouraging people to participate in the local Police and Crime Commissioner election, which in the light of the pandemic raises additional issues which may put voters off. Thank you.

Nottinghamshire Pension Fund

Councillor Angharad Roberts asked the following question of the Deputy Leader of the Council:

What actions would the Deputy Leader like to see the Nottinghamshire Pension Fund take in order to ensure the long term sustainability of the Fund and to play its part in addressing climate change?

Councillor Sally Longford replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Roberts for your question, which comes to me in advance of the Nottinghamshire Local Pension Fund Annual General Meeting on 21 January. As you know, the City Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency and is committed to being carbon-neutral by 2028. To achieve this, it is vital that all businesses, organisations, employees, residents and visitors play their part to reduce their carbon footprint as much as possible. Fossil fuel companies contribute to one of the major causes of the climate emergency as the burning of fossil fuels creates carbon dioxide and accelerates heating in the atmosphere. The City Council's Carbon Neutral Action Plan includes a specific action to review its current asset portfolio and work with partners towards divestment from any fossil fuel related investments and campaign for divestment of the Nottinghamshire Local Government Pension Scheme. We are aiming to achieve this by 2022. Currently, the Nottinghamshire Pension Fund holds at least £170million in fossil fuel company shares and has no investment in sustainable, low carbon or renewable energy equity funds. Although they are making gradual progress, that is just not good enough to tackle the growing environmental crisis we are facing. We know that the primary responsibility of the Pension Fund is to protect the financial benefits of the Scheme and now that there is growing evidence that fossil fuel investments are performing less well than their comparators it is the time to grasp the divestment nettle. Nottingham City Council is encouraging all its employees and citizens to do what they can to reduce their carbon footprint in both their home and work lives and many of those people are members of the Nottinghamshire Pension Fund. Despite this the City Council has no voting rights on the Pension Fund, a legacy of historic links with the County Council. This means that we are dependent on the votes of County Councillors only to make the decisions. The fact that the Leader of the County Council recently identified herself as a climate sceptic does not bode well for their commitment to reducing our carbon emissions. However, I am asking for them to act now. Over 1,300 institutions worldwide have committed to divestment, including at least ten UK Local Government Pension Funds and a large number of UK university funds and faith organisations. So I have submitted a

question to the Pension Fund Annual General Meeting (AGM) asking them to agree to consult with their members on a divestment strategy and timeline before the next AGM in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the fund and to play its part in the prevention of catastrophic climate change.

Covid-19

Councillor Andrew Rule asked the following question of the Deputy Leader of the Council:

Does the Deputy Leader share my frustration regarding the disinformation being shared on social media and elements of the broadcast media around the pressure critical care teams in hospitals are under at present, and does she agree with me that an effective way of countering this would be to allow the media, in a Covid secure way, into hospitals to show how gravely serious the present situation is and to that end will she raise this with partners from Nottingham University Hospitals at the next Outbreak Control Engagement Board meeting to see if this can be carried out locally?

Councillor Sally Longford replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you to Councillor Rule for his question. I do share his frustration about fake news and disinformation surrounding the current pandemic. It is very worrying to see and hear that people do not believe that Covid is a serious threat to our well-being, that the threat to NHS capacity is a hoax and campaigning against the vaccination. It all puts lives at risk. I would like to take the opportunity to publicly thank Nottinghamshire Police for taking action against the organisers of the recent anti-lockdown march in the City last week. Hopefully it will deter them from returning to spread their lies and the virus to our citizens in the future. Their poisonous demonstrations have recently included anti-Semitic banners being placed outside our Council House, which I reported to the Police, clearly demonstrating their extremist roots.

There is a great deal of evidence that Covid is threatening the ability of our hospitals to provide a good level of service to our citizens, whether they are suffering from the most serious effects of Covid or whether they are needing admission for a serious injury, cancer treatment or routine treatment. We know that during the first surge of the pandemic many people were disappointed to have hospital appointments cancelled and it is clear that this is happening already, particularly in the south-east of England. We must try to stop the tide of infection and I must reiterate that the best way to do this is to follow the guidance – cover your face when in an enclosed space, including public transport, inside shops and public buildings; keep your distance from other people, 2metres where possible; wash your hands regularly and use sanitiser where it is not possible to wash your hands. It is also important to encourage people who receive an invitation to go to have a vaccination to act swiftly, all the evidence suggests this could be the key to changing all our lives for the better, reducing the number of people developing the most serious symptoms. We must all try to do what we can to stop the spread and that is why the Government, all be it belatedly, introduced the lockdown we are now experiencing.

I would not feel qualified to recommend to Nottingham University Hospitals Trust that they should admit the media to observe and record the situation. Clearly they are

operating under huge pressure and any additional exposure has risks. I believe many of the decisions about whether to admit the media to NHS premises are made nationally by your Government, however I am happy to raise the idea with our health partners to find out their views and I do sympathise with the idea, although recently it has been clear that there has been more reporting from inside hospitals in the national media.

Council debt

Councillor Andrew Rule asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Growth and the City Centre:

Over the next five years around £303million of the Council's debt will mature. Given the Council is unable to repay this debt, it will need to refinance it, however given the debt is largely historic the Council will be able to refinance it at a lower rate of interest to that it was originally paying which will result in a saving to the Council. On that basis, does the Portfolio Holder agree with me that it would be prudent to use this saving to pay off the Council's debt?

Councillor Sam Webster replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor. Around half of the Council's maturing debt over the next five years is short-term borrowings with interest rates of less than 1%. The other half is long-term borrowing, money which was borrowed, often decades ago, at higher interest rates. Re-financing at the historic low interest rates that we have today will, therefore, make a saving for the Council. As a large organisation with long-term service commitments, assets and borrowings, the Council plans its budgets over the medium-term so as you would expect our Treasury Management Team has anticipated this saving on maturing debt. Councillor Rule's question today isn't the first our Treasury Management Team have heard of this issue, they have been planning for it for some time. You will be able to see the full details of this in the Treasury Management Report, which I will be presenting at the next meeting of the Council's Executive Board next Tuesday and subsequently in the Medium Term Financial Plan report. Thank you.

Broadmarsh Shopping Centre

Councillor Andrew Rule asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:

Given the number of inventive and visionary proposals that propose the greening of the Broadmarsh site, how will the Leader balance the public's enthusiasm for these suggestions against making up the income gap the Council has experienced from the loss of rental income following the closure of the Broadmarsh Shopping Centre?

Councillor David Mellen replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you to Councillor Rule for his question. The enthusiasm, thoughtfulness and quality of the huge number of responses to the Big Conversation has been simply fantastic. I can't thank people enough for the effort and time that has been put into sharing their ideas with us. I am also grateful for the working group of Labour Councillors, chaired by Councillor Roberts, who led and supported the consultation period. We will now read through and consider all of the responses we have received. We have received over 3000 individual responses,

almost 30,000 individual comments and a number of more detailed proposals, so this will take time to do properly. To help with this we will set up an independently chaired advisory group who will work with the Council to reflect on what has come forward in the Big Conversation and advise on the way forward. I think it is entirely proper that one of the key principles people will want to see delivered in any redevelopment plan is a much greener approach, both in line with our carbon-neutral ambitions and also in creating much better green space. There is also a desire for much more city-living to be present in the plans for the area. A balanced approach across this large site could incorporate a number of the ideas put forward although it is too early to say whether the ideas we have seen represent everything that could be included and importantly what can be afforded and realistically delivered to re-imagine the Broadmarsh site, we are excited about what the consultation has brought forward. We need to take the time to reach the right decisions. In the meantime, we are working with the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership to secure the funds required to ensure that the site is secure and prepared for future development. I have been absolutely clear that the development of the Broadmarsh site cannot be done by the City Council alone. We have a large capital programme already and need to work in partnership with others who will want to invest in this unique city centre development opportunity. Perhaps Councillor Rule will talk to his Conservative colleagues in Government about their much-heralded rebalancing ambitions to try and invest in regions other than the south-east to look at this as a further opportunity for Government investment which will create jobs and develop our City further.

The meeting adjourned at 15:49 and reconvened at 15:59.

60 Amendments to the Constitution

Councillor Rosemary Healy, Lord Mayor and Chair of Council, proposed the report proposing a number of amendments to the Constitution. The report was seconded by Councillor David Mellen.

Councillor David Mellen proposed the following amendment to the proposed Protocol for Councillor/ Officer Relations:

Amend paragraph 5.12 of the Protocol for Councillor/ Officer Relations as follows:

Officers, may attend group meetings to provide briefings on Council business. With the exception of Political Assistants, officers below the level of Head of Service should *not only* attend group meetings *when accompanied by a senior officer*. *Officers attending group meetings should usually be accompanied by another officer and* must respect the confidentiality of information disclosed at group meetings.

Resolved to approve the amendment.

Councillors then voted on the amended report.

Resolved to:

- (1) amend the Terms of Reference for the Greater Nottingham Light Rapid Transit Advisory Committee to add the Nottingham City Disability**

Involvement Group as a co-opted member of the Committee, and amend the Constitution accordingly;

- (2) adopt a revised Terms of Reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in Appendix A to the report, and amend the Constitution accordingly;**
- (3) amend the Terms of Reference for the Nottingham City Governance Improvement Board to enable any member of the Executive to attend as a substitute for the Leader of the Council, and amend the Constitution accordingly;**
- (4) note changes to the levels of basic allowance and special responsibility allowance in the Members Allowances Scheme, as set out in Appendix B to the report, and amend the Constitution accordingly; and**
- (5) adopt a revised Protocol for Councillor/ Officer Relations as set out in Appendix C to the report, and amend the Constitution accordingly.**

61 Governance Improvement Programme - Progress update and lessons learnt

Councillor David Mellen, Leader of the Council, presented the report updating Council on progress in delivery of the Governance Improvement Programme, approved by Council in response to the recommendations of the External Auditor in the Report in the Public Interest on Robin Hood Energy in August 2020. The report was seconded by Councillor Sally Longford.

Resolved to note:

- (1) the progress update, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;**
- (2) the comments of the newly established Governance Improvement Board on the progress to date and the lessons learnt, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report;**
- (3) the comments of the Audit Committee on 18 December 2020 on the review of the appointment of Councillors as Directors on Boards of Council Owned and Controlled Companies, as set out in Appendix 4 to the report; and**
- (4) that the amended draft Terms of Reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were included for approval in the Amendments to the Constitution report on this meeting agenda.**

62 Decision taken under Urgency Procedures

Councillor David Mellen, Leader of the Council, presented the report detailing urgent decisions that Council is required to note, which have been taken under provisions within the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and Access to Information Rules. The report was seconded by Councillor Sally Longford.

Resolved to note:

(1) the following urgent decisions (exempt from call in) taken:

Decision Reference Number	Date of Decision	Subject	Value of Decision	Reason for Urgency
4059	28/11/2020	Financing Arrangements	Exempt	Delay would have exceeded the external funding deadlines set and jeopardise the options related for a wholly owned company.
4060	28/11/2020	Allocation of Adult Social Care Infection Control Grant funding Round 2	£2,818,193	To enable the funds to be allocated as quickly as possible to care providers, in accordance with the grant conditions which stipulate tight timescales for the funds to be used. This reduced the risk of clawback. Payment of the second instalment of grant is contingent on funds in the first instalment having been fully transferred to providers and reported in November 2020.
4063	04/12/2020	Covid Winter Grant Scheme	£1,414,274	The use of part of the funding for food vouchers required this to be put in place as rapidly as

Decision Reference Number	Date of Decision	Subject	Value of Decision	Reason for Urgency
				possible to ensure that schools have the ability to distribute the vouchers to parents of eligible pupils with enough time prior to the Christmas break.
4066	04/12/2020	Broadmarsh Car Park Development Contract Extension	£2,995,627	Delay would have resulted in an elongation of the contract timetable with Galliford Try, with an associated increase in costs.

(2) the following decisions taken under the Special Urgency Procedure:

Decision reference number	Date of Decision	Subject	Value of Decision	Reason for Special Urgency
4059	28/11/2020	Financing Arrangements	Exempt	Delay would have exceeded the external funding deadlines set and jeopardise the options related for a wholly owned company.
4060	28/11/2020	Allocation of Adult Social Care Infection Control Grant funding Round 2	£2,818,193	Funding in Round 2 is expected to be fully spent on infection control measures by 31 March 2021. Allocations to care homes and other providers must be made within tight timescales of

Decision reference number	Date of Decision	Subject	Value of Decision	Reason for Special Urgency
				receipt as claw back provisions enable the funding to cease or be recovered by the Department for Health and Social Care if not fully used on eligible measures and reported upon at reporting points between November and April.
4063	04/12/2020	Covid Winter Grant Scheme	£1,414,274	To prevent the ability to mobilise and deploy sufficient resources being severely restrained; to prevent the period for which the support is available to citizens in need being reduced by 25%; and to enable free school meals vouchers to be given to schools in time for distribution prior to the Christmas break.

63 Nottingham City Hate Crime Strategy

Councillor Rebecca Langton, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Highways and Strategic Transport, presented the report proposing the adoption of a Nottingham City Hate Crime Strategy. The report was seconded by Councillor Neghat Khan.

Resolved to adopt the Nottingham City Hate Crime Strategy, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

64 Motion in the name of Councillor Clarke

Motion proposed by Councillor Kevin Clarke, and seconded by Councillor Maria Watson:

Fireworks are used by people throughout the year to mark different events. While they can bring much joy to many, they can also cause significant problems, fear and distress for other people and for animals. Affected animals not only suffer psychological distress but can also cause themselves injuries as they attempt to run away or hide from the noise.

The RSPCA publically believes that the current law is failing and does not prevent or sufficiently reduce the risk of distress, injury or anxiety in either people or animals. In October 2019, they submitted the *Bang Out of Order* report to Westminster, which states that 62 percent of dogs, 54 percent of cats and 55 percent of horses show signs of distress as a result of the use of fireworks. This means thousands of animals are affected by unplanned and random fireworks each year.

Sadly, it's not just household pets who are affected by fireworks. Wild animals, such as hedgehogs, are also at risk of being burnt alive after making their homes in bonfires. Additionally, fireworks can be highly disturbing to some birds, occasionally causing the abandonment of nests or even whole colonies. As custodians of Wollaton Hall's 200 or so deer, Nottingham City Council has a duty of care to protect these animals from this threat.

The RSPCA recommends the following regulation changes to ensure the safety of pets, wildlife and people nationwide:

- Introducing a limit on the public use of fireworks on or close to specific dates and times.
- Tightening restrictions on the sale of fireworks in the run up to Bonfire Night.
- Reducing the maximum noise level of fireworks sold to the public and ensuring they are labelled accurately.
- Licensing all public firework displays and ensuring displays are better advertised to the public.

The Council therefore resolves to:

- require all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people;
- actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks;
- write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays; and
- encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display.

Resolved to carry the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 17:42 and reconvened at 17:52.

65 Motion in the name of Councillor Kandola

Motion proposed by Councillor Angela Kandola, and seconded by Councillor Neghat Khan:

Nottingham City Council recognises the rights of citizens to stand shoulder to shoulder with our Indian Communities, in support of farmers peacefully protesting in response to farming reform in India. Nottingham has a large community with Indian heritage, many of whom have friends and family currently living in the Punjab.

Nottingham City Council recognises that events abroad can lead to anxiety and concerns here. Nottingham is a diverse city where people from different backgrounds get on with each other and we reaffirm our commitment to community cohesion in our city. This Council recognises the rights of individuals to demonstrate peacefully, standing shoulder to shoulder with the 250 million workers currently striking against the Indian government.

Nottingham City Council notes and recognises that a recent Sikh Council UK survey reported that 84% of Sikhs living in the United Kingdom are personally concerned about the impact of the laws and 93% feel that human rights violations in the region will increase.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. call on the Foreign Secretary to make representations to the Indian Government about the impact of the new farm laws on British Sikhs here in Nottingham, including those with significant and lasting ties in Punjab;
2. write to the Foreign Secretary, raising concerns regarding the deteriorating situation in the Punjab;
3. seek an update on any communications the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has had with the Indian Government on the issue, including with Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla, who visited the UK on 4 November 2020; and
4. reaffirm Nottingham City Council's commitment to community cohesion.

Resolved to carry the motion.

66 Motion in the name of Councillor Chapman

Motion proposed by Councillor Graham Chapman, and seconded by Councillor Audra Wynter:

This Council urges the Government to retain the £20 a week increase to Universal Credit made at the beginning of the pandemic but which is due to end in April. It also urges the extension of the payment to claimants of legacy benefits who are currently excluded from the additional support.

Resolved to carry the motion.

67 Committee membership changes

The following committee membership changes were noted:

- (1) Councillor Steve Battlemuch had been appointed to fill a vacancy on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
- (2) Councillor Neghat Khan had replaced Councillor Leslie Ayoola as a member of the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Panel.

68 Extraordinary Council meeting

In accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Lord Mayor added an urgent item of business to enable the Council to schedule an Extraordinary Meeting within the timescales necessary.

Resolved to hold an Extraordinary meeting of City Council on 25 January 2021 at 2pm to consider the Recovery and Improvement Plan, developed in response to the findings of the Non-Statutory Review of Nottingham City Council.

The Meeting concluded at 7.00 pm

Questions from Councillors

Responses to questions requiring a written response

WQ1

Written question asked by Councillor Clarke of the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and IT at the meeting of the City Council held on 11 January 2021

Can the Portfolio Holder please inform us whether or not there were financial implications to Nottingham City Council in the decision to close Nottingham Christmas Market after one day, and if so how much these totalled?

Councillor Dave Trimble replied as follows:

No costs were incurred by the Council following the decision to close the Christmas market. Charges for mains power and waste management have been met in full by the market organiser.

WQ2

Written question asked by Councillor Rule of the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Heritage at the meeting of the City Council held on 11 January 2021

Could the Portfolio Holder provide a breakdown of the number of complaints in relation to construction related traffic from ongoing developments and how many of those related in enforcement action being taken against developers?

Councillor Linda Woodings replied as follows:

For major developments the Planning Authority normally seek Construction Traffic Management Plans as a means to require a developer to plan ahead and encourage good practice. Enforcement of the conditions within these plans, given they relate in the main to the public highway outside of site boundaries, is most appropriate under highways legislation where powers exist to respond directly and effectively to address complaints.

When complaints are received relating to construction traffic the general approach taken is for Highway Authority colleagues to investigate the complaint and work with the developer and their contractor to respond promptly to the complaint and put in place actions to resolve them. Given time and cost implications formal enforcement action would normally only be considered if the developer failed to comply and put in place the remedial action necessary.

In the last twelve-month period the number of recorded complaints relating to construction traffic from developments is 2. A breakdown is as follows:

- January 2021 – domestic development in Wilford Village where complaint received was about a contractor's vehicles blocking driveways in a residential area. Highways staff visited the site and addressed the issues with the contractor.
- February 2020 – major City Centre development where a complaint was received about a construction vehicle parked on Collin Street blocking a lane. Highways staff attended site, dealt with the contractor and resolved the issues.

On both occasions the complaints were resolved by giving the developer and their contractors directions, advice and guidance. Formal enforcement action using statutory legal powers was not deemed appropriate.

WQ3

Written question asked by Councillor Rule of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Growth and the City Centre at the meeting of the City Council held on 11 January 2021

Can the Portfolio Holder confirm how many citizens were subject to enforcement action for council tax arrears and housing benefit overpayment for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020 compared to the period 1 April 2019 to 31 December 2019; and can he confirm on average how much the costs of such enforcement action add to the initial debt?

Councillor Sam Webster replied as follows:

Number of citizens subject to enforcement action for council tax arrears and housing benefit overpayment for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020 compared to the period 1 April 2019 to 31 December 2019

	1 April 2019 to 31 December 2019		1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020	
	Council Tax Arrears – No of citizens	Housing benefit Over Payment – no of citizens	Council Tax Arrears – No of citizens	Housing benefit Over Payment – no of citizens
Summons	22,613	N/A	10,388	N/A
Liability Orders	21,771	N/A	10,125	N/A

For Housing Benefit Overpayment reclaim there is no enforcement or charge, debt is recovered from either on-going housing benefit payments or through a collection agency (with no cost to the citizen) but no summons or court orders are issued.

The average costs of such enforcement action add to the initial debt is as follows:

For Council Tax it is: There is not an average cost, the enforcement action and associated cost is dependent on the value of the debt. For both date ranges:

The summons costs are:

- for debt lower than £285 - £20
- for debt higher than £285 - £47.50

The liability order costs are:

- for debt lower than £285 - £0
- for debt higher than £285 - £20.00 on top of the summons cost

WQ4

Written question asked by Councillor Rule of the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Highways and Strategic Transport at the meeting of the City Council held on 11 January 2021

Can the Portfolio Holder provide a breakdown of the number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) and Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) which required formal enforcement action for the periods 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020 compared to the period 1 April 2019 to 31 December 2019; and can she confirm on average how much the costs of such enforcement action add to the initial debt?

Councillor Rebecca Langton replied as follows:

FPN/PCN	April 2019-Dec 2019	April 2020-Dec 2020
FPNs issued	2436	1351
FPN taken to court	9	0
Penalty Charge Notices issued	49437	35040
Cases exported to the Enforcement agents	13046	9903

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)

As FPNs are a criminal matter, they are taken to the Magistrates Court in the event of non-payment.

Our procedure from the back office end is that we pass on the case to our Legal Department once we have selected the case for prosecution. Our Legal Team review the case and it is then heard at the Magistrates Court. Once the case is heard and we receive correspondence from Legal with information on whether the defendant was found guilty and how much they have to pay, we amend our system to reflect this. The debt is then written off from our end.

Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs)

Penalty Charge Notices are at a value of £83 or £113 depending on the contravention when we instruct the Enforcement agents to commence enforcement due to non-payment of the notice.

Nottingham City Council does not receive any additional fees added by the agents, they will only pay the original value of the Penalty Charge Notice to us. If they are unable to collect any fees then the warrant will be returned to us and the Penalty Charge Notice is written off.

Enforcement Agents are in old money Bailiffs. Approximately 20% of cases are referred to Enforcement Agents, of those 20% approximately 10% are written off due to not being able to trace the owner of the vehicle.

We only proceed to Enforcement Agent when all other avenues to trace the owner have been exhausted or there is no response to the Notice to Owner (NTO) which is sent if the PCN isn't paid.

The Enforcement fees are below:

Stage of process	Fixed fee
Writing to you about your debt (called 'compliance')	£75
Visiting your home (called 'enforcement')	£235
Taking and selling your belongings (called 'sale')	£110

WQ5

Written question asked by Councillor Rule of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Growth and the City Centre at the meeting of the City Council held on 11 January 2021

Will the Portfolio Holder provide a breakdown of lending to all Council owned companies, showing its current level, any increase or decrease over the last year, the annual interest received and the date the lending is due to be repaid by?

Councillor Sam Webster replied as follows:

Schedule of loans to NCC group companies as at 31 December 2020

Schedule of Loans to NCC companies	balance 31.03.20	New Drawdown in 2020/21	Loan Repayments in 2020/21	Current balance 31.12.20	Interest Rate	Forecast Interest 2020/21	Maturity Year
	£m	£m	£m	£m	%	£m	

NCH loans - Lenton 1	1.443	-	-0.007	1.436	3.71%	0.053	2065
NCH loans - Radford 1	5.817	-	-0.025	5.792	3.65%	0.212	2066
NCH loans - Lenton 2	5.210	-	-0.023	5.187	3.19%	0.166	2068
NCH loans - Radford 2	0.517	-	-0.002	0.515	3.19%	0.016	2068
NCH loan - Homelessness 1	4.547	-	-0.051	4.496	3.12%	0.141	2048
NCH loan - Radford Allotmts (Martins Reach)	1.115	-	-0.004	1.111	3.35%	0.037	2070
NCH loan - Church square	2.212	-	-0.009	2.203	3.21%	0.071	2069
NCH loan - Vehicles	0.679	-	-0.337	0.342	2.77%	0.014	2021
NCH loan - Homelessness 2	5.221	-	-0.057	5.164	2.87%	0.149	2049
NCH loan - Homelessness 3	0.000	4.810	-	4.810	3.03%	0.067	2060
NCH EL loan - Arkwright Walk	0.000	1.992	-	1.992	4.94%	0.041	2060
NCH EL loan - Market Rent Properties	0.000	9.142	-	9.142	4.94%	0.189	2060
NCH EL loan - Clifton Triangle	0.000	3.228	-	3.228	4.94%	0.067	2060
Robin Hood Energy loan 1 **	7.099	-	-	7.099	11%	0.000	TBC
Robin Hood Energy loan 2 **	4.539	-	-	4.539	7.54%	0.000	TBC
Robin Hood Energy loan 3	5.563	-	-	5.563	7.54%	0.000	TBC
Robin Hood Energy loan 4	3.000	-	-	3.000	7.54%	0.000	TBC
Robin Hood Energy loan 5	9.436	-	-	9.435	7.54%	0.000	TBC
Robin Hood Energy loan 6	2.700	-	-	2.700	7.54%	0.000	TBC
NIC flexible loan facility	2.385	4.999	-	7.384	4%	0.267	2035
Bridge Estate	2.344	-	-0.181	2.163	2.70%	0.061	2033
Blueprint 2	0.000	1.661	-	1.661	4%	0.049	2024
TOTAL	63.827	25.832	-0.696	88.962		1.601	

The following table shows the equity in Nottingham City Council group companies as at 31 December 2020. The £7.5m shares for Robin Hood Energy were impaired to nil in the 2018/19 accounts.

Equity in NCC companies	balance 31.03.20 £m	New equity in 2020/21 £m	Repayments in 2020/21 £m	Current balance 31.12.20 £m
Nottingham City Transport	4.532	0.000	0.000	4.532
Robin Hood Energy (*1 - Impaired to nil)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
BluePrint (shares)	7.550	0.000	0.000	7.550
Blueprint (Loan notes)	0.000	0.802	0.000	0.802
Thomas Bow	6.671	0.000	0.000	6.671
TOTAL - at 31 December 2020	18.753	0.802	0.000	19.555

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