

# Public Document Pack

## Minutes of the meeting of the City Council

held at the Council House, Old Market Square

on 9 January 2023 from 2.00 pm - 4.28 pm

### Attendances:

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

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✓ Indicates present at meeting

### 52 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Hassan Ahmed – on leave

Councillor Leslie Ayoola – unwell

Councillor Phil Jackson – unwell

Councillor Maria Joannou – unwell

Councillor Sue Johnson – personal

Councillor Rebecca Langton – personal

Councillor Dave Liversidge – personal  
Councillor Mohammed Saghir - unwell

### **53 Declarations of Interests**

None

### **54 Questions from Citizens**

#### **Housing Conditions**

LE asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and HR:  
What is the Council going to do about the damp and mould in bungalows in the Beechdale and Bilborough areas of Nottingham?

Councillor Toby Neal replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you to LE for sending in the question. Nottingham City Homes and the Council proactively use data on repairs trends, the level of properties meeting the Decent Homes Standard, housing disrepair cases and compliance to understand the extent of damp and mould issues across all of our property holdings. There is no current indication of a trend relating to damp and mould cases in the bungalows in Beechdale and Bilborough. Furthermore, I can confirm there are no Council properties failing in the Decent Homes Standard due to the presence of damp and mould hazards or which have housing, health and safety rating systems, damp and mould hazards identified. Keeping homes warm, dry, and ventilated is the most effective way of preventing the occurrence of damp and mould, and energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty are two of the three investment priorities within the capital housing programme and the asset management strategy. We will be spending over £13million during 2022/23 on a range of initiatives, ranging from providing external and solid wall insulation, additional roof insulation, new energy efficient heating systems, installing solar panels and different types of ventilation systems. A further £10million is earmarked for these types of works in 2023/24. The funding for this type of improvement has been boosted by additional external Government decarbonisation and energy efficiency funding. We have allocated a further £5million in 2023/24 for the works to external fabric of homes including works such as the replacement of roofs. Over the past few years, the properties in Beechdale and Bilborough areas have received replacement boilers, increased amounts of loft insulation and new double-glazed windows and doors. All of these improvements contribute to improving the thermal warmth within a home and subsequently reducing the occurrence of damp, condensation and mould. I can confirm that these properties meet current energy efficiency levels, although the construction date and type of the bungalows means the thermal efficiency is not as effective as, for example, a new build property. Where specific instances of damp, condensation and mould occur, we identify the cause of the damp and have a broad range of interventions including the provision of free self-help damp kits, signposting to online advice and self-help, tailored one-to-one support for customers and development of a bespoke schedule of works. Given recent events, particularly the tragic death and subsequent coroner's report on the death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale, we are currently reviewing our approach to dealing with damp and mould. This will include a review of process, how we listen and engage with customers, what solutions we put in place to reflect individual needs and the financial resources available. Energy efficiency remains a key priority and we will continue to invest to improve the thermal comfort of our tenants' homes. Over the last few years, we have

carried out a number of initiatives, where we have worked with Central Government to improve thermal efficiency on some of the older, non-traditional construction property types within the city. This has included some internal and external wall insulation, different types of heating systems and changes to internal ventilation. These initiatives were targeted at those properties with the lowest levels of thermal efficiency. During 2023, we will be doing some further work on what cost effective options we can apply over the future years to other properties including the bungalows on Beechdale. Once these plans become more developed, we will consult with tenants on these proposals. I would also add that, of course, if any resident of our properties, whether that's in Bilborough or any other ward of our city, local councillors are there to help them deal with any issues and of course they can contact me directly through the City Council website.

### **Plant-based foods**

CT asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Energy, Environment and Waste Services:

Nottingham City Council prides itself on being one of the more forward-thinking cities in the UK, putting climate considerations at the heart of governance. This awareness needs to include every aspect of council activities, including the provision of food. Nottingham City Catering is doing fantastic, award-winning work to make school food more climate friendly, which is setting an example for other local authorities and school caterers. I believe Nottingham is therefore well placed to extend this leadership beyond schools, by setting an example to the wider community regarding awareness of the climate impact of the food we eat. Other councils, for example Oxfordshire, Cambridge City, Exeter City and Lewisham Borough, have committed to serve only plant-based food at their internal events, and I'd like Nottingham to do the same. Therefore, given the climate emergency and our stated aim to reduce emissions, will Nottingham City Council commit to serving fully plant-based fare at all future internal events that are catered, as other councils have done?

Councillor Sally Longford replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you Citizen CT for the question related to plant-based food. I am really glad that CT has highlighted the excellent work already underway through the Council's School Catering Team, which won an important national award for its green menu and marketing campaign last year. The Council recognises the importance of minimising the carbon footprint of all our activities and included in the objectives of the Carbon Neutral 2028 Energy Action Plan is the need to reduce the consumption of high carbon products and encourage more low carbon cooking and meals. We have our own internal colleague vegan network which works closely with the Catering Team to improve the offer and promote vegan dishes and in the next few months, we will: review internal event catering to develop a range of high quality vegan dishes and develop a policy relating to catering at internal events and meetings; review the range of vegan options available through our internal cafes to improve the range of options available for colleagues and visitors to purchase; continue to liaise with our suppliers to ensure that we have suitable vegan products available and plant-based options with an updated recipe library for internal teams to choose from; and continue to work with partners such as Pro-Veg to explore future improvements such as carbon labelling for its food and menus.

### **City's relationship with Ningbo, China**

RY asked the following question of the Leader of the Council/ Portfolio Holder for Strategic Regeneration and Communications:

Local group, Nottingham Stands with Hong Kong, submitted a petition with over 1500 signatories in June 2022 calling for the termination of the sister city relationship with Ningbo due to the human rights abuses and violation of modern slavery associated with Ningbo and the Chinese government. Cities like Newcastle and Bath recently passed motions to cut ties with China over human right abuses. As residents of Nottingham we are concerned about our city's relationship with China, an authoritarian country with infamous human rights records. What action has been taken by Nottingham City Council in response to local concerns over our sister city relationship with China?

Councillor David Mellen replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and can I thank the citizen for their question. On 12 June 2022, the Council received a petition from 'Nottingham Stands with Hong Kong', which expressed a deep concern over the twinning relationship between Nottingham and Ningbo and called on the Council to sever its ties with Ningbo. As a result of receiving the petition, Nottingham City Council committed to reviewing the nature of all its currently twinning and international arrangements including its formal twinning arrangement with Ningbo in China. Nottingham is a place that embraces and celebrates diversity and inclusion. It is home to many communities and is a city that is welcoming and supportive to those who come here from all backgrounds. We recognise that international relationships can support important aspects of the life in an international city, promote international trade, investment, and tourism. They can also enrich the cultural offer, enhance awareness of different communities, and heighten the education and cultural experience for the city as a whole. Furthermore, such arrangements can benefit the city by opening up opportunities for sharing of ideas and innovation and opening up mutual arrangements for international training, education opportunities for residents and citizens. We also know that, as civic leaders in Nottingham, we must also ensure that any current or future international relationships are with those places that uphold the same principles in relation to diversity, inclusion and human rights as we have and that there are tangible benefits for the city and its residents. Hence, the review we are undertaking as a Council must consider both the benefits of the relationships with other cities across the world, as well as the behaviour and values of the countries' governments where the twinned cities are located. So, as part of the review of relationships with international cities, Nottingham City Council has been engaged with stakeholders and partners in the city to fully understand and assess the impacts of international links in Nottingham. Once this work is concluded, the Council will make clear its intention with regard to all existing international relationships, in particular to those who started a petition in June last year.

### **Knife Crime**

KT asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods, Safety and Inclusion:

With knife crime at an alarming rate especially in pubs and clubs, why are there not metal detectors on every alcohol establishment in the town centre at the owner's expense?

Councillor Neghat Khan replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and can I thank the citizen for the question. It is true that knife crime has increased compared to the previous two years, although some of this increase can be attributed to the removal of lockdown restrictions. Compared to other areas of a similar size and population, Nottingham knife crime figures are currently below average. Let me be clear, we absolutely acknowledge the increase and we are

not complacent in our duties or our commitment to addressing this concerning increase. Knife crime figures fluctuate over the year. December 2022 figures were 50% lower than in 2021. The recent Christmas and New Year period accounted for 13% of knife crime in December, which saw only 3 offences compared to 17 in 2021. This is a reduction of 82%. Recorded locations of knife crime show that most offences occur in public or open spaces or dwellings. The proportion of knife crime offences occurring in hospitality venues is generally around 9-14% of all knife crime. This includes robberies and the threat and use of a knife as well as offences where a weapon has actually been used. In the past 3 months, 11% of offences have taken place in hospitality venues, this is significantly lower than the equivalent figure from the winter of 2021. Nottingham City Council, as the Licensing Authority, would consider proposals from Responsible Authorities, such as the Police, to insert conditions on individual premise licenses where they thought there was evidence of needing to do so. Any conditions applied would have to be reasonable and justifiable. It would also be important to consider the wider implications for safety at venues such as how the presence of the use of knife arches may impact on crowd flow and densities so that crushing did not become a risk or that queuing areas do not result in customers being at risk of collision from live motor traffic. Responsible Authorities and venue managers would be expected to work collaboratively and agree conditions that were feasible and promoted the licensing objectives. As the appropriate Licensing Authority, we are always open to working with Police colleagues to reduce crime and improve the safety of citizens in licensed premises. At present there are currently no plans for a blanket approach to requiring knife arches all licensed venues. However, any proposals the Police have to promote safety will be welcome and considered within the parameters of licensing powers. Thank you.

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

Councillor Audrey Dinnall presented a petition on behalf of the Nottingham Council of Mosques calling on the Council to immediately review its policies relating to Muslim burials. The petition states that the new deadline for paperwork submission to the Cemeteries Office of 11:30am for same day burials has resulted in many delayed burials unnecessarily and that the current policy inhibits the Muslim community from carrying out its religious requirements, and requests that the deadline of paperwork permission is changed to 2pm (winter) and 4:30pm (summer) and that the Council upholds a commitment to ensuring all faith groups can practise their faiths freely and commits itself to the Equality Act 2010.

Councillor AJ Matsiko represented a petition on behalf of residents asking the Council to review its decision to increase the rent at The Place Activity Centre in Sherwood and support The Place to remain open as a community hub offering a range of services to the people and small businesses of Sherwood.

## **56 To confirm the Minutes of the last meeting of Council held on 31 October 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2022 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**

Councillor David Mellen, Leader of the Council, paid tribute to citizen David Bishop, who died in December 2022, for his contribution to political life for over a quarter of a century in Nottingham and other parts of the country.

The Chief Executive reported the following:

I would like to extend my congratulations to all those citizens recognised in the Queen's New Year's Honours List, including Clive Foster and Natalie Gasson-McKinley.

It is with great sadness that I pay tribute to Fatoumatta Hydera and her two daughters Fatimah and Naeemah Drammeh who tragically died in a fire in Clifton in November. My thoughts are with their family, friends and all those affected by their loss.

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 Castle**

Councillor Kirsty Jones asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Planning:

Could the Portfolio Holder please inform the residents of the City when the Castle grounds will be open again to the public, after another Council failure and further losses in public funds?

Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and can I thank Councillor Jones for the question. On 30 November last year, following the formal notification of the liquidators appointed to close down the independent Nottingham Castle Trust and its associated companies, the Nottingham Castle site formally came back to the direct control and responsibility of Nottingham City Council. In the last four weeks, which has included the festive break, a number of immediate actions have had to be undertaken by officers in the Museum Service. This has involved a number of things including ensuring that correct arrangements are put in place to safeguard the site, the buildings and the collections displayed within the Castle. I have visited the site myself to ensure all of the collections are safe and I am pleased with the work done by the Museums Team. The Council has also undertaken the necessary collection audits, and from speaking with Arts Council England and National Lottery Heritage Fund was able to assure them of the care of collections taking place. The Council undertook necessary work with the liquidators to ensure assets purchased or owned by the Council on the site were safeguarded and, as part of that work, made arrangements and facilitated site visits from creditors of Nottingham Castle Trust to reclaim assets and stock items agreed with the liquidators for release. The Council has also called coordinated meetings with other funding stakeholders and parties to discuss implications around

the collapse of the Trust and the future management of the Castle. In addition, a transitional project board has been set up to accelerate processes and fast track proposals to enable the Council to reopen Nottingham Castle as soon as possible. This is our key priority. As part of the work, we have already seen the development of an emerging new plan and proposals for operating the Castle and the Council has undertaken an in-depth consideration around the reasons why the independent Trust established to operate the castle site failed and what lessons need to be learnt to avoid similar mistakes again in the future. Whilst I cannot give you a definite date today for when the site or its grounds will reopen, I can assure you that work is taking place and I will be in a position to make further public announcements, including when the Castle will open its doors, later this month. We all recognise the fundamental importance the Castle plays, not just as an important culture asset for the city but as an integral part of conveying the story of Nottingham and Nottingham's rebellious history globally. The contribution it makes to the wider visitor and leisure economy annually to the city is also of great significance. This is why the Council led the project to successfully deliver the £31million redevelopment of the site. That money hasn't been lost, more put to work to deliver the revamp of the building and the grounds improvements which are here to stay. I believe it is also vitally important that we challenge the assertion made by Councillor Jones that this is a failure. It is deeply regrettable that the independent Castle Trust had to contend with difficult conditions created by the pandemic and cost of living crisis, but there were also issues with the way the Trust operated the Castle, which contributed to it ultimately going into liquidation and there is no denying of that. The Trust was an independent company and, along with other organisations, the Council did what it could to help them operate through the summer and the hope was, with all this support, they would improve their operating model but that didn't happen. This is not where we wanted to be. It is, however, where we are and museums up and down the country are faced with a similar harsh reality. Theatres, museums, castles and other heritage sites are laying off staff and shutting rooms and turning down their heating. The finding of one poll shows that ten sites in the UK have serious concerns about their future and 84% of them had to slash their costs to survive. The same study found 9/10 heritage leaders are concerned about their organisations' future and, whilst some major organisations were able to secure funds using the Council recovery fund during Covid and more recently received the Arts Council England funding, I have to say that the situation remains difficult and the Government needs to significantly expand its support for cultural venues if they are to thrive which is what is deserved in a civilised society. Going back to the Castle, I would like to acknowledge and place on record my thanks to many of the former staff who previously worked at Nottingham Castle Trust and who lost their jobs when the Trust went into liquidation. I understand how hard they worked to deliver for the city, and I hope by working quickly and seeing the site reopen soon, we will once again be able to provide opportunities for local employment and become a quality heritage site. Whilst the closure of the Trust is a great disappointment to all of us in the city, it also presents an opportunity to do things better, improving the accessibility of the Castle for all the people of Nottingham. Thank you.

### **Libraries**

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

Would the Portfolio Holder please like to explain why it is taking so long for them to come to a decision in respect of the three proposed library closures, and when our new Central Library will be ready for reopening?

Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis replied as follows:

Thank you Councillor Clarke for your question. As I have said on previous occasions, I, like many people across the city, value the services provided by libraries. It was therefore very important we carefully listened to all views made and considered alternative options available prior to making any final decisions on this particular issue. I appreciate this matter has had a lot of attention and of course we want to conclude this matter in a timely manner. In doing so we must also ensure decisions are taken appropriately having considered all relevant information. I am therefore pleased to say that the final decision is scheduled for discussion at the Executive Board meeting on 17 January. The papers for this Board meeting will be released later today and I hope, in light of the savings required to be found, you will appreciate the approach I am recommending. Myself and people in the Department have worked tirelessly to arrive at those recommendations. The final decision, however, will be a matter for the Council's Executive Board so formal presentation of the proposals and the discussion should happen then.

In terms of the other bit of your question about the Central Library, I am pleased to report work is progressing well and our plan is progressing as expected to reopen in summer, which will be linked with the completion of external public realm works happening in Broadmarsh at the moment.

### **Council finances**

Councillor Kevin Clarke asked the following question of the Leader of the Council: Would the Leader of the Council agree with me that if we had held back on the new senior officer posts and perhaps waived councillors' allowances next term, we may have been able to save some of the 100 job losses they are now proposing?

Councillor David Mellen replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and can I thank Councillor Clarke for his question. In light of the Council's challenging financial position, the revised management structure was established following careful consideration and advice from the Improvement and Assurance Board and was subject to significant challenge, scrutiny and amendment before it was approved by the Committee that you sit on Councillor Clarke. A significant proportion of the additional posts are in areas where there is potential for the Council to transform and provide better services for residents at a lower cost, most notably in procurement and commissioning. It should be noted in these two areas there is an investment in a range of posts, not just senior officer posts and this additional overall capacity will help enable the Council to develop a strong mid-term financial plan. Whilst deletion of any post is regrettable, it is sadly a necessary part of the budget process that the Council needs to go through. It is positive that the vast majority of the posts being deleted are vacant and there are only three posts affecting four members of staff potentially facing redundancy. The Council will work hard with these employees to determine if they wish to take voluntary redundancy or explore the option of being redeployed to alternative roles within the Council.

Balancing budgets always involves difficult decisions, at least it has particularly in the last 12 years when local government has been significantly underfunded by the



Conservative Central Government, but I believe the budget proposals that we are currently consulting on represent a responsible course of action for any Council seeking to become financially stable. I do not accept the argument that councillor allowances should be waived next term. You changed the way you read that question Councillor Clarke to say, 'a little' but the question submitted in writing that I have therefore prepared an answer for says, 'waived allowances'. I am not sure what you mean by 'term'. As a former teacher I think of three terms a year. Does Councillor Clarke mean we should not have allowances for the next three months or is it as a politician that he thinks of a term as four years? Is Councillor Clarke suggesting that Members of this Chamber should somehow forgo their allowances until 2027? This would serve no other purpose than to make becoming a councillor financially unviable for most people in our city. Councillors have to heat their homes and pay their bills like anyone else. An allowance does not only recognise the time councillors devote to work on behalf of their constituents, and many in this Chamber devote considerable time to that cause both in the Council and in outside bodies where they represent the Council, but also it allows people from all backgrounds to become councillors. That is what we want for Nottingham, people in this Chamber from all walks of life, from every background regardless of their financial status. It should not be the case that just people with other financial means can become councillors. Being a councillor is not just a pastime or a hobby but a privilege and a responsibility and, in this Group, we are serious about delivering on the promises we have made. Waiving the allowance would be the same as asking Council staff to work for free. It would not be acceptable and is frankly a ridiculous suggestion. Every councillor has the option to not take their allowance. Councillor Clarke is like any other member who has the ability to do that, but that is a private decision for councillors and not one that anyone should feel under pressure to take.

### **Knife Crime**

Councillor Maria Watson asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods, Safety and Inclusion:

After yet another spate of knife crime throughout the country again over the Christmas period, with this City included, is it not time to make all public venues install metal and weapon detection units?

Councillor Neghat Khan replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and can I thank Councillor Watson for her question. As I reported earlier in my response to a citizen question, it is true that knife crime has increased compared to the previous two years, although some of this increase can be attributed to the removal of lockdown restrictions. It is also worth noting that in comparison to other areas of similar size and population, Nottingham's knife crime figures are below the average. I want to take the opportunity to reiterate here this afternoon that we are committed to working alongside our partners in the Police to address this concerning increase. Nottingham City Council is committed, as a Licensing Authority, to consider any proposals from Responsible Authorities such as the Police, to insert conditions on individual premise licenses where it is felt there is of need to do so. However, any conditions applied would need to be reasonable and justifiable. Whilst I acknowledge the point Councillor Watson is making about having a weapon detection unit at all public venues, we should also acknowledge that recorded locations of knife crime show that most offences occur in public open spaces or dwellings. I would also like to reiterate again that the proportion of knife crime offences occurring in hospitality venues is generally around 9-14% of all knife

crimes, this includes robberies, the threat and use of knives and offences where a weapon has actually been used. In the past three months, 11% of offences have taken place in hospitality venues which is significantly lower than the winter figure of 2021. At present there is currently no plan for a blanket approach to requiring knife arches at all with licensed venues. However, when necessary, we have intervened and hospitality venues like Dogma in 2014 and BZR in 2015 were closed because they were a risk. I would also like to say that I am not sure how this suggestion by the Nottingham Independents would sit with the public and businesses in Nottingham, especially the businesses of Clifton, because you are actually saying a blanket approach, whether there is knife crime incidences in neighbourhoods or not, and I would also look forward to hearing how they think this would be costed. The Nottingham Independents run with national headlines or local headlines but the difference is you are elected councillors and not here just to raise problems. It is about solutions and what I would really like is, rather than raise these kind of issues just to make a little headline, if Councillor Watson had approached me and actually asked me for the figures. My door is always open and I have never refused to give information. Let's not play cheap politics here, lets actually make a difference and at a time when businesses are struggling I do not actually appreciate these kind of questions from the Nottingham Independents.

### **Central Library**

Councillor Andrew Rule asked the following question of the Leader of the Council: Could the Leader of the Council provide an estimated opening date and final projected costs (including holding costs) for the Central Library and tell the Chamber what lessons have been learnt to ensure capital projects are properly budgeted for, so similar delays to projects are not encountered in the future?

Councillor David Mellen replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Rule for his question. We have already had some discussion of this this afternoon and I think there are further questions on it. I can confirm that the final projected cost for the library remains as forecast when the decision to proceed with the fit out for this new facility was confirmed by the Council and the Executive Board on 24 May last year. The total cost of the scheme including holding costs relating to the Woodfield Industries to store decanted stock from Angel Row Central Library Building is £11.6million. This figure also includes £2.2million reserve funding to be set aside for the new Central Library to assist with its future maintenance and repairs so the library can be maintained to a high standard following its completion, in line with the best practice when developing new facilities. Whilst delays in being able to instruct these works certainly took place, delays from our original intention, prudent management and careful value engineering of this scheme has to date ensured costs have not increased despite high inflation costs across the construction sector. In addition, through following the principles of the new capital strategy adopted in February 2021, the Council was able to ensure the scheme was affordable within the financial considerations that the Council needed to follow. As with every project, there are certainly lessons to be learnt. This will form part of the evaluation that understandably will take place once the scheme has been completed and the library open. However, the delay in commencing the work in the library demonstrated good financial practices: not starting something until you have identified how it can be paid for and not borrowing additional funds unless there is a clear pay back plan and this is what we did. It has led to a delay of a few months but the work underway is now based on a solid

business base and planned for in the city's finances. To conclude, work on Nottingham's new Central Library is progressing well and our plan, as previously stated, is to see it reopen later this year, linking with the completion of the external public realm works also taking place around Broadmarsh, which are also on timetable.

### **Nottingham Castle**

Councillor Andrew Rule asked the following question of the Leader of the Council: Given the Leader's ambition to transform the visitor experience of the Council, can the Leader confirm what steps he took to monitor the financial performance of the Castle Trust and when he was first made aware of its financial difficulties?

Councillor David Mellen replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and can I thank Councillor Rule for this question. As I am sure many of you will be aware, Nottingham City Council handed over the operation of Nottingham Castle to Nottingham Castle Trust in June 2021, although as Councillor Trimble has mentioned the Trust was in place before that. That followed the completion of the £31million transformation project on the site, money that came from the National Lottery Heritage Fund but also from the D2N2LEP, ourselves and various foundations. The improvements were funded largely by external grants and fundraising. It is, of course, a matter of enormous disappointment to me and for the city that the Trust was unsuccessful after such a short trading period. It is of course a major setback to the city and a significant blow for businesses and we are all disappointed about that. However, I am confident that this is only a temporary pause and there is a real commitment from this Council and all parties to see this important cultural asset fulfil its potential in the city and the wider region as a successful visitor attraction both to Nottingham people and to those coming from further afield, playing a key part in our plans to bring investment, jobs, visitors and growth to Nottingham and its residents. It is important to emphasise and remind people that the Castle, its contents and collections, as Councillor Kotsonis has already reported this afternoon, have always remained in the ownership of the City Council and the Trust liquidation poses no threat to our history and the heritage of the city, despite the huge amounts of disappointment. We remain steadfastly committed to restoring the Castle as a vibrant national attraction and, given the significance of the site, I can confirm to Councillor Rule that the Council has been in direct and regular discussion with the Trust for a significant amount of time. As I and others have made abundantly clear, we want to reopen the Castle as soon as possible but we will of course want to learn lessons from this experience for future developments. As Councillor Kotsonis has reported, a new Nottingham Castle Transition Board has been established under his stewardship and this will review these issues much more fully over the next few months. As a vital part of our cultural heritage, the Council, alongside other funding partners, were of course monitoring the performance of the Trust through various channels and appreciated some of the unique and unprecedented trading conditions the Trust was seeking to operate within due to the pandemic. As Leader of the Council, I was made aware of the trading difficulties however I will add that alternative options were exhausted after considerable deliberation with all parties before the Trust entered liquidation. The Trust had valuable contributions from two Members in this Chamber, Councillor Roberts and Councillor Webster, but they were in a minority on that Board. We were not in a position to intervene and take over its running because, as Councillor Trimble has already explained, it was a condition of the funding that it was an independent trust. Along with other organisations, we did

what we could do to help them operate through the summer with a view for them beginning to improve their operating model which sadly didn't happen in time to avoid liquidation.

### **Carbon Neutrality**

Councillor Eunice Campbell-Clark asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Energy, Environment and Waste Services:

Would the Portfolio Holder for Energy, Environment and Waste Services please update the Council on the progress made towards carbon neutrality across the City?

Councillor Sally Longford replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Longford for your question. I am very glad to report that the latest carbon dioxide emissions data, published by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy last year, showed that in 2020 Nottingham has reduced its overall CO2 emissions by 50% since 2005 and reduced its per capita emissions by 58%. This reduction was above the national average and a significant improvement in our previous performance. I am proud to say we are now in the top 120 cities in the world for climate action. This is not just about what the Council has achieved. Our target to be the first carbon neutral city in the country is for the whole city and, in order to achieve this, the Council has to work in partnership with a wide variety of organisations. We benefit from having two of the top five universities in the world for sustainability as partners in this project. I have enjoyed collaborating with enthusiastic people from all walks of life from faith groups, environmental pressure groups, including our own branch of Extinction Rebellion, businesses, volunteers and not forgetting our outstanding Council Officers, who provide so much expertise and commitment to this vital work. Everyone in the city has a part to play. We have a thriving Green Partnership which celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> birthday last year and consists of nearly 30 city organisations and businesses including both universities, Nottingham University Trust, Nottingham Wildlife Trust and the Business Improvement District (BID). I would particularly like to thank Richard Barlow of Brown Jacobson who, as Chair, been very supportive and proactive in strengthening this Partnership and encouraging businesses and organisations to work together to deliver carbon reduction across the city. Members of the group have recently agreed to routinely report on their progress towards CN28 and are working together to develop a Nottingham Climate Assembly, which will represent the views of a diverse range of our citizens. The collaboration has many practical benefits, for example free carbon literacy training is being offered to Nottingham City businesses as part of a collaboration between Nottingham BID and Nottingham Trent University. I would like to congratulate one of our partner organisations, Left Lion, who have today announced they are carbon neutral. In 2020, the Carbon Reduction Team at the Council started a 'We Support CN28' network, which allows any Nottingham based business or organisation to show its support for the CN28 ambition. By signing up to the pledges outlined in the city's Carbon Neutral Charter we work with them on an ongoing basis to help them explore ways they can reduce their carbon footprint and visibly promote them as a supporter of CN28. Over 40 organisations are signed so far, including Boots Walgreen, the Canal and River Trust, East Midlands Ambulance Service, Nottingham College, and a number of small and medium sized enterprises such as Romano's Caterers. Shortly, we will be delivering a series of informative seminars on carbon reduction, especially for our 'We Support' partners as part of the development programme. Despite the challenges of dealing with the aftermath of the Covid pandemic, there

have been many notable achievements, too many to mention, which have helped to continue our downward trend of CO2 emissions: over 50% of the Council's fleet is now ultra-low emissions vehicles and 30% of buses in the city run on low carbon, biogas or electric with 78 new electric buses on the way for Nottingham City Transport; several traffic calming and road closure schemes are now in place to encourage more walking and cycling, particularly close to schools; a city-wide streetlight replacement programme started in April 2022, estimated to save 850 tonnes of CO2 a year once completed; 94% of new social housing build properties are now Energy Performance Certificated A-C and 1200 older homes have received energy efficiency or renewable installations in the last couple of years; 24,000 trees have been planted since 2019, across the city with the help of numerous volunteers; and, very importantly, Nottingham University Hospitals Trust launched their NHS Green Plan to become net zero by 2040 in April 2022 and are making significant progress. The monthly CN28 newsletter now has over 1800 subscribers, providing news, tips, and advice on reducing carbon emissions in the workplace and at home. Our CN28 social media presence is growing, and 1200 citizens are signed up to the sustainability and wellness app called 'Green Rewards' which is designed to encourage carbon reduction behaviours through a rewards scheme. Their actions have saved nearly 70,000 tonnes of CO2. Overall, progress is good but we can't be complacent. Much more needs to be done to continue to encourage everyone in the city to play their part to maintain our city's reputation as the national leader on environmental issues. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank all those who care deeply for the climate emergency, for their support to me personally over the last few years and their encouragement to continue with this project.

### **Fire in Clifton**

Councillor Leslie Ayoola asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods, Safety and Inclusion:

Would the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods, Safety and Inclusion please update the Council on what steps have been taken following the tragic fire in Clifton that saw the death of a loving mother and two precious children, and how has the Council worked with communities to address their concerns?

As Councillor Ayoola was not in attendance at the meeting, the question received a written response after the meeting from Councillor Neghat Khan. That written response is attached to these minutes.

### **Nottingham Castle**

Councillor Sam Webster asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Planning:

Can the Portfolio Holder tell councillors when Nottingham Castle and the Nottingham Castle grounds will reopen to visitors?

Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis replied as follows:

I thank Councillor Webster for his question. I will have to refer to the previous answer I gave to Councillor Jones' question, and I would like to reiterate that there will be further news later this month about the reopening of Nottingham Castle.

### **Budget Consultation**

Councillor Michael Edwards asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Finance:

Could the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance tell councillors how citizens are able to take part in the ongoing budget consultations, and explain what the proposals mean for Nottingham residents?

Councillor Adele Williams replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Edwards for your question. I encourage people to take part in the budget consultation which is now open. This Council has shown by its actions previously that we are absolutely serious about taking consultation on board and that we recognise proper consultation is a really important part of good decision making. We are all the experts in our own lives aren't we, and we therefore really encourage people to take part so that we can hear their perspective, whether it is as individuals or the organisation that people work with or for. An important part of that consultation will be the online survey. The link to the survey can be found on the homepage of the City Council website. The consultation is open until 5pm on Wednesday 25 January 2023. Importantly though, with a mind to making sure that people aren't excluded from this process, there will also be a hard copy available in city libraries so people can take part in that way. As well as the online consultation, there will be a number of in person events at various community venues so you'll be able to find out more about the budget from senior councillors and senior officers. There will be in person events at Bulwell, Hyson Green and Sneinton, with online public events taking place on MS Teams Live as well. There will also be targeted events for voluntary sector organisations and we are working to talk to trade unions, businesses, young people, and hold specific events around the impact on disabled citizens. You can get all of the details of that on the Engage Hub on the City Council's website and you can also find information there about the budget proposals in detail, including a Frequently Asked Questions sheet and the Equality Impact Assessment. All of these responses will be anonymous and information used just for the budget consultation. If there is any help needed for translation that can be requested. I would like to give people absolute assurance that we will carefully consider what we get back from the consultation and it will be used to inform our decision making and thinking around our Executive Board report that comes to Full Council in March.

So, what would the budget mean for Nottingham? Well in every year of Tory austerity we have worked really hard to try to limit and mitigate the impact on Nottingham people, to protect the things that we know that Nottingham people need and value. The Council, as people will be aware and will remember, was on track to set a pretty much balanced budget over the MTFP but, in a way that Nottingham families will absolutely recognise, that was blown out of the water by the same cost of living crisis issues that everyone is feeling in their own lives. So, the ramp-up in inflation, fuel and energy costs that are hitting homes and businesses across the city have also hit the Council alongside a higher than expected, but absolutely richly deserved, cost of living pay increase for our hardworking council staff, who we all clapped for and recognised during the pandemic. It actually doesn't keep up with the cost of inflation, we all know that and, alongside that, it is also not funded by Central Government so that has to be found within Council budgets. This is impacting Council budgets up and down the country. This all takes place in a trajectory of plummeting funding that we've seen since the start of Tory austerity. The Central Government's revenue support grant fell over the course of austerity up to last year, from £127million a year to £27million a year, so a really significant impact on our budgets. You can see where the hole comes from and I probably don't need to remind any of you about

Rishi Sunak boasting at a Tory garden party being absolutely gleeful about the way that he lifted the funding formulas away from, as he described it, deprived areas like ours to the sorts of areas he was celebrating in the garden party. He said he started the work for doing that but he didn't, he just continued it. But look, that's what levelling up looks like doesn't it, we recognise it, we've seen it before. The Tory Towns Fund goes to Tory towns. We get people actually posting about taking money from our city. Also, I just want to say our city is not deprived, we are held back. We are absolutely held back by years of Tory austerity and we need to let our city thrive and develop as it should do based on the talents and the abilities of people here. We need a Labour Government to do that don't we? We saw the reign of Liz Truss and Kwasi Kwarteng absolutely battering ordinary families, exacerbating what has been a long-term decline in people's prospects in all walks of life. What we need is a change. The cost of living crisis has now seen more and more people falling into hardship and we are seeing that exacerbated still further by the way that the revenue support grant is going down, which means Council Tax, the amounts we are looking to fund locally from local people, is going up. A uniquely difficult situation in Nottingham, where 80% of our households are in bands A or B, which means though it is welcome that the increase won't hit those 80% of people more than £1.46 a week, we still know that that will be absolutely unwelcome. It means that it is uniquely difficult to raise funds and that defunding of cities has disadvantaged local people. We know that when the Conservatives failed to fix adult social care, what they did instead is sneak the bill into our pockets in the form of adult social care precept. It doesn't work, it isn't enough, its not fair but it costs people in Nottingham dear and we absolutely need a change. It is an unacceptably unfair system that is hitting Nottingham people hard. So, faced with this, we know we are going to have to put difficult decisions out to people in the city. We have got the increase in Council Tax. We have got some good transformation proposals built into the budget that we've been working on and that is our long term plan is to improve the way that we deliver services so there is better value that delivers good outcomes to people, but we have also got a number of consultation areas where people will be able to find the detail of on the Council website. I would encourage people to take part and respond to the consultation.

### **Affordable Housing**

Councillor Corall Jenkins asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and HR:

Could the Portfolio Holder for Housing and HR please provide an update on the Council's progress in building affordable Council housing for Nottingham residents, something which is increasingly important during this prolonged cost of living crisis?

Councillor Toby Neal replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Jenkins for your question. In 2019 the Labour Party offered a far-reaching and wide manifesto looking at the issues that were of concern and would help our citizens lead the best life that they could. Fundamental to that is the ability to have somewhere you can call home and to provide housing for this. So part of our manifesto was to commit to building and delivering, and supporting the development of 1000 affordable homes across Nottingham. After the election it became part of the city plan and the Council has prioritised the investment in the delivery of these homes. This included homes for homeless people, temporary accommodation and new builds, as well as acquisitions of properties. So, our commitment was for 1000 properties, I am happy to say by the end of this term we will have exceeded that and it will be a minimum of 1049 units.

There are more but they will not be quite complete by that time so we have left them out. What does that mean in terms of newly built council houses? We have already completed 151 new council homes and are on site currently building a further 351. There are 24 more homes that have just been granted planning permission on the Oakdean site, but they are not part of the 1049 - they'll be added in later. A further 52 new build affordable houses have been completed on private sites through our planning agreements, with some of those properties being acquired by the Council and being added to our housing stock. The Council has also converted 9 upper floors over council-owned shops into affordable flats for rent, and has purchased 162 properties from the private sector market to further increase the number of council homes. Our housing association partners have also been providing new affordable housing in Nottingham, which is available to people on the housing waiting list through the HomeLink Partnership. Between them, housing associations have built 76 new affordable homes, with 182 currently being built on new sites across the city. As well as general affordable housing, a further 142 units of homelessness accommodation have been provided across Nottingham with an additional 13 in development. I am pleased to say in relation to our commitments that we are over target. It has become increasingly clear that the pressure on housing has gone up significantly in the last couple of years and we will be looking at all opportunities to make further developments as we go forward.

## **60 Executive Amendments to the Constitution**

Councillor David Mellen, Leader of the Council, presented the report notifying Council of amendments that he had made to the Executive Scheme of Delegation and that Articles 10 and 13 of the Constitution had been revised accordingly. The report was seconded by Councillor Adele Williams.

**Resolved to note the amendments to Articles 10 and 13 of the Constitution, as set out in Appendices A and B to the report respectively.**

## **61 Members' Allowances Scheme – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel**

Councillor David Mellen, Leader of the Council, presented the report setting out the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, that met in December 2022. Councillor Adele Williams seconded the report.

**Resolved to:**

- (1) approve the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, as set out in Appendix A to the report;**
- (2) adopt a revised Members' Allowances Scheme, incorporating the amendments recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel; and**
- (3) note that the Governance Framework Document C will be updated accordingly.**

## **62 Audit Committee Annual Report 2021/22**



Councillor Sajid Mohammed, Chair of the Audit Committee, presented the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2021/22 summarising the work undertaken by the Committee during the year, how it fulfilled its designated role within the Constitution and how this work relates to its core responsibilities. The report was seconded by Councillor AJ Matsiko.

**Resolved to:**

- (1) note the work undertaken by the Audit Committee during 2021/22; and**
- (2) accept the Audit Committee Annual Report 2021/22.**

**63 Motion in the name of Councillor Georgia Power**

Councillor Georgia Power proposed the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Cheryl Barnard:

Nottingham City Council resolves:

1. that when making any decisions in relation to its policies or formulating its Council Plan it recognises that Care Experienced people are a vulnerable group who face discrimination;
2. that it recognises that councils have a duty to put the needs of vulnerable people at the heart of decision-making through co-production and collaboration;
3. that in the delivery of the Public Sector Equality Duty the Council includes care experience in the publication and review of Equality Objectives and the annual publication of information relating to people who share a Protected Characteristic in services and employment;
4. that this Council will treat care experience as if it were a Protected Characteristic so that future services and policies made and adopted by the Council should be assessed through Equality Impact Assessments to determine the impact of changes on people with care experience, alongside those who formally share a Protected Characteristic;
5. to formally call upon all other bodies to treat care experience as a Protected Characteristic until such time as it may be introduced by legislation;
6. to formally call upon all other bodies to adopt corporate parenting for children in care and care leavers until such time as it may be introduced by legislation;
7. for the Council to proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people when developing new policies based on their views.

**Resolved to carry the motion.**

**64 Committee Membership**

It was noted that:

- a) Councillor Sam Gardiner had been appointed to fill a vacant seat on the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee; and
- b) Emma Howard, Head of Nottingham University Samworth Academy, had been appointed to fill a vacant seat on the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Partnership.



The Meeting concluded at 4.28 pm

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**Responses to questions from councillors to a Member of Executive Board,  
Chair of a Committee or Chair of any other City Council Body requiring a  
written response**

**CQ8**

As Councillor Leslie Ayoola was unable to attend the meeting to ask his question, it received a written response.

**Question asked by Councillor Leslie Ayoola of the Portfolio Holder for  
Neighbourhoods, Safety and Inclusion at the meeting of the City Council to be  
held on 9 January 2023**

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Would the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods, Safety and Inclusion please update the Council on what steps have been taken following the tragic fire in Clifton that saw the death of a loving mother and two precious children, and how has the Council worked with communities to address their concerns?

Councillor Neghat Khan replied as follows:

Can I thank Councillor Ayoola for his question. First of all, I would like to pay my deepest condolences to the family and friends of the victims of the tragic house fire in Clifton.

As this is part of an on-going criminal investigation, with the trial in May, it is important that we do not prejudice the criminal proceedings with speculation.

On 20 November, Community Protection activated it's on call procedure to task Community Protection officers to Clifton to provide high visibility reassurance patrols, in response to reports of an active house fire. The Community Protection teams liaised with Nottingham City Homes to make emergency accommodation arrangements for those living within the vicinity of the scene and Lord Mayor I'd like to share my appreciation to Nottingham Trent University for providing emergency temporary shelter during the period of evacuation.

Since the incident took place Community Protection teams have worked collaboratively to provide continued reassurance to residents, including a presence at schools and around residential areas close to the scene and additional support to the family.

Our Resident Development team has carried out joint visits to Amadiya Mosque with Police Inspector Karl Thomas to meet with the Imam, family members and the community. They also visited the Gambian Luncheon Club to meet with the Gambian Community Leaders including the Gambian Mosque.

Only days after the tragedy Community Protection and Resident Development officers attended a vigil outside the property. At the beginning of December the Neighbourhood Action Team lead a unique meeting to plan for the next steps of our intervention and how we could continue to support the family and rebuild the community.

A key community leader has been identified as the Police Liaison for the family and we intend to secure funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner to install fire

resistant external letterboxes. Fire safety information is being shared with residents as well as prevention advice. We plan to invite Fire and Police Services to more community events to engage and educate residents and be a visible source of advice and guidance.

Lord Mayor I'd like to thank those that attended the memory walk around Clifton on 4 December including my fellow councillors in this Chamber. The walk helped raise further funds towards the families' wishes to build a school in Gambia in the loving memory of this young family.

Finally Lord Mayor, I'd like to thank the Clifton community who have rallied together and this attempt at dividing the community has actually brought this community together. Also the Fire Service, Nottinghamshire Police and the many Community Protection colleagues who have been involved in this matter and continue to support the family and wider community.

**WQ1**

**Question asked by Councillor Andrew Rule of the Portfolio Holder for Finance at the meeting of the City Council to be held on 9 January 2023, requesting a written response**

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Can the Portfolio Holder confirm how much lending was extended by the Council to facilitate the development of the new Nottingham College, whether any interest has been generated on the capital extended and when the capital is expected to be repaid in its entirety?

Councillor Adele Williams replied as follows:

The original loan extended by the Council was for £18.000m, as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 the principal outstanding was £15.201m. Interest is charged at a state aid compliant rate, since the inception of the loan to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 the Council has received £1.255m. The loan is due to be fully repaid on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2033.