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Minutes of the meeting of the City Council

held at the Council Chamber, Council House

on 20 May 2024 from 6.00 pm - 7.50 pm

Attendances:

✓ Councillor Carole McCulloch (Lord Mayor) [from Item 3]	
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✓ Councillor Saj Ahmad	✓ Councillor Sam Lux
✓ Councillor Liaqat Ali	✓ Councillor Sulcan Mahmood
✓ Councillor Leslie Ayoola	✓ Councillor Farzana Mahmood
✓ Councillor Cheryl Barnard	✓ Councillor AJ Matsiko
✓ Councillor Steve Battlemuch	✓ Councillor David Mellen
✓ Councillor Graham Chapman	✓ Councillor Sajid Mohammed
✓ Councillor Kevin Clarke	✓ Councillor Fozia Mubashar
✓ Councillor Audrey Dinnall	✓ Councillor Salma Mumtaz
✓ Councillor Michael Edwards	✓ Councillor Sana Nasir
✓ Councillor Nadia Farhat	✓ Councillor Devontay Okure
✓ Councillor Faith Gakanje-Ajala	✓ Councillor Nayab Patel
Councillor Samuel Gardiner	✓ Councillor Georgia Power
✓ Councillor Sam Harris	✓ Councillor Shuguftah Quddoos
✓ Councillor Jay Hayes	✓ Councillor Ethan Radford
✓ Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora	✓ Councillor Nick Raine
✓ Councillor Imran Jalil	✓ Councillor Eunice Regan
✓ Councillor Corall Jenkins	Councillor Sarita-Marie Rehman-Wall
Councillor Maria Joannou	✓ Councillor Samina Riaz
✓ Councillor Kirsty Jones	✓ Councillor Andrew Rule
✓ Councillor Kirsty L Jones	✓ Councillor Naim Salim
✓ Councillor Helen Kalsi	✓ Councillor Michael Savage
✓ Councillor Angela Kandola	✓ Councillor Matt Shannon
✓ Councillor Anwar Khan	✓ Councillor Hayley Spain
✓ Councillor Zafran Nawaz Khan	Councillor Maria Watson
✓ Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan	✓ Councillor Adele Williams
✓ Councillor Neghat Khan	✓ Councillor Linda Woodings
✓ Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis	✓ Councillor Audra Wynter

✓ Indicates present at meeting

1 Chair

In the absence of the Lord Mayor, the meeting was chaired by the Sheriff/ Vice Chair of Council, Councillor Shuguftah Quddoos.

2 Election of Lord Mayor

Councillor David Mellen proposed Councillor Carole McCulloch as Lord Mayor for municipal year 2024/25. This was seconded by Councillor Helen Kalsi.

Resolved to elect Councillor Carole McCulloch as Lord Mayor for municipal year 2024/25 until the next Annual General Meeting of Council.

As the newly elected Lord Mayor, Councillor Carole McCulloch chaired for the remainder of the meeting.

3 Appointment of Sheriff

Councillor Georgia Power proposed Councillor Liaqat Ali as Sheriff for municipal year 2024/25. This was seconded by Councillor Sajid Mohammed.

Resolved to appoint Councillor Liaqat Ali as Sheriff for municipal year 2024/25 until the next Annual General Meeting of Council.

4 Apologies for absence

Councillor Sam Gardiner – unwell
Councillor Maria Joannou - personal
Councillor Sarita-Marie Rehman-Wall – personal
Councillor Maria Watson - personal

5 Declarations of interests

None

6 Election of Leader of the Council

Councillor David Mellen proposed Councillor Neghat Khan as Leader of the Council. This was seconded by Councillor Patience Ifediora.

Councillor Kevin Clarke proposed Councillor Andrew Rule as Leader of the Council. This was seconded by Councillor Kirsty M Jones.

Resolved to:

- (1) note that Councillor David Mellen had resigned as Leader of the Council; and**
- (2) elect Councillor Neghat Khan as Leader of the Council for a term of office of three years starting on 20 May 2024 and ending on the day of the next Annual General Meeting of Full Council held after all Council elections (May 2027).**

7 Questions from citizens

Use of resources

A citizen asked the following question of the Executive Member for Finance and Resources:

With restrictions on spending why are bushes cut on Trent Bridge near the Embankment Public House on a Sunday at 05.30? Also, our road was resurfaced

from the Levelling Up Fund, which meant our street was closed from 08.00-17.00 on a Friday which is our bin collection day. We expected an early morning collection, before the work began at 08.00, this didn't happen, and instead our bin was collected on Sunday. Could better planning save money as I'm sure the staff would have either been on overtime or enhanced pay for working a Sunday?

Councillor Linda Woodings replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor. I'd like to start by thanking this citizen for their question. They have flagged highway works that took place on their street and the fact that their bins weren't collected until two days later on the following Sunday because of the works that took place. So in relation to those highway works, the programme of highway improvements has been fully externally funded and delivered by the Council as part of the Streets for People programme. I think that all councillors in this Chamber will have had work carried out in their ward and seen improvements delivered by the Council's Highways Service to over 150 kilometres worth of roads footpaths and cycleways and, in addition, the Scheme has delivered ½ a kilometre of urban greening, it has planted over 200 trees, and it has introduced hundreds of traffic-calming measures, especially around sensitive locations such as schools. Wherever possible works in residential areas are scheduled to avoid waste collection days, but those works are also subject to the weather and so there are occasions where dates have to be delayed and it causes disruption to other services as a result of that. When that happens the Council always seeks to manage the impact on residents. Where possible with such schemes we recover costs from the external funding body, but where this isn't possible on occasion the Council will absorb limited unplanned costs of collecting bins on a Sunday. So it wasn't planned to do that, but it was just the way it actually turned out and obviously this resident had their road resurfaced and they had their bin collected all in the space of 48 hours. Given that the programme has so far delivered £11½ million worth of highway improvements across the city and roads that have been upgraded are less likely to suffer from persistent potholes and other defects that require short-term and temporary solutions, the rare occasions where service disruption creates additional costs for the Council is massively outweighed by the benefits of the Streets for People programme, which is delivering for our neighbourhoods and communities. Whether there were additional costs incurred in relation to that scheme I can't confirm without extra information on the exact street and date, but I am really pleased that the Streets for People programme has delivered highways improvements in this citizen's local area, and that service disruption associated with that was very quickly addressed.

The second part of the query is about bushes being cut around the Embankment Public House at 5.30am. I can confirm 'no', the Council has not cut any bushes in that area in recent weeks, not since February actually. However, there has been what is called tractor flail cutting. I'm told that's when you have a tractor that goes along country roads and it cuts the hedges and trees back as it goes along. That has taken place as part of the Winter Maintenance Programme between November and February and, if the question refers to those time periods, I can confirm that those operations are carried out in the early hours of the morning because of traffic. If we didn't do that, we might have to implement a Traffic Management Order, which costs about £2000 at a busier time of the day or week. As a result, the actual cost of the work is reduced even though we had to do that work in the early hours of the morning. Thank you.

8 Petitions from Councillors on behalf of citizens

Councillor Andrew Rule presented a petition on behalf of residents of Garrett Grove and Farriers Green asking the Council to improve flood mitigation measures on Council owned land adjacent to Garrett Grove and Farriers Green through the installation of a 'French Drain' along the entirety of the boundary of the field from Garrett Grove to Farriers Green.

9 To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of Council held on 4 March 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2024 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

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

The Chief Executive made the following announcement:

Catherine Underwood, Corporate Director for People Services, will be leaving the Council at the end of June. Having started her career in mental health services and becoming a registered social worker, Catherine has given many years service to local authorities and the NHS, before joining the Council in 2018. She became the Director of Adult Social Care and in 2019 was appointed as Corporate Director for People with responsibility for key statutory services including adult social care, children's social care, youth justice, education and public health. I would like to thank her for her service to the Council and wish her well for the future.

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

None

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

Leader of the Council

Councillor Adele Williams asked the following question of the Leader of the Council: Would the Leader of the Council join me in thanking Councillor David Mellen for his exemplary hard work and commitment as Leader for five years and as a Portfolio Holder for eleven years?

Councillor Neghat Khan replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor, and can I thank Councillor Williams for her question. I am pleased that my first speech here to you all as Leader is to thank my friend and ward colleague David Mellen for his service to our city and for his selflessness. All of us, even those in the Opposition Group, will have memories of David's leadership, where his calm, compassion and generosity have shone through. His time as Leader has been one that has seen many challenges: the Covid pandemic; a Conservative Government that has continued to reduce Council funding; Brexit; the collapse of Intu Broadmarsh; the closure of Robin Hood Energy; the imposition of a Government-appointed Improvement and Assurance Board; and our city becoming global news when terror was visited upon our streets last year. In these tough times however, he

has dug in and delivered. We now have the new Broadmarsh bus station and car park and can see the first shoots of a new green heart for the city. There are hundreds of new social homes; support for people into employment, education, and training; a successfully reopened Nottingham Castle; and, probably most dear to him, our new Central Library. The new Labour mayor for the East Midlands is down to David's hard work with colleagues in neighbouring councils to follow through on a new combined authority. The bio buses, electric bin lorries, and wildflower verges are a testament to his commitment to our Carbon-Neutral 2028 goal. The free children's books in hundreds of our homes across our city are down to him and his close friend Dolly. As the leader of our Labour Group, he was just as giving. Time and care were taken for each one of us, and flowers or a card would always arrive in tough moments or celebrations. Nothing was deemed to be too small for him to help out on. I sincerely hope that he takes a moment to look back at his time and his achievements over the Summer. David, thank you – not only for your service to Nottingham, but for your resolve, commitment, and dedication to the people of our city. Thank you.

Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Audrey Dinnall asked the following question of the Deputy Leader of the Council:

Would the Deputy Leader of the Council join me in thanking Councillor Audra Wynter for all her hard work as Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance under one of the most challenging years that this Council has had to face?

Councillor Ethan Radford replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor. I will certainly join Councillor Dinnall in thanking Councillor Wynter for her hard work as Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance this last year and, as Councillor Dinnall says, the last year has been incredibly challenging for the Council, and more importantly for residents across the city. Audra will have known that Nottingham faced a hugely challenging year when she put her name forward. 24 years of Tory austerity bit ever deeper, and an increasingly demanding Improvement and Assurance Board hung over the Council. She would have known how the role she was taking on would be awash with significant political difficulties and that there would be few happy moments. She threw herself into those challenges with her usual determination and steadiness, characteristics that are of great benefit in such monumentally challenging times. That speaks a great deal to Councillor Wynter's character - her refusal to be perturbed by any obstacle and continuing to forge her path regardless. It is therefore little surprise that she smashed the glass ceiling that existed before her tenure, by becoming the first Deputy Leader of our great city from a black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) background. To be sure, that glass ceiling stood no chance against her forthright and sometimes straightforward, no-nonsense approach, something which I hope I will display in equal amounts. The fact that within the space of two solitary years our Council has had a Deputy Leader and now Leader, both strong, proud BAME women should give us a great sense of pride, not just political gimmicks. I hope that young women from Nottingham's diverse communities can look to leaders like Councillor Wynter and Councillor Khan, our first BAME women in leadership, and know that they too can reach the highest levels of public service and leadership in our city. Until we start shattering glass ceilings instead of reinforcing them, we'll never make politics accessible to everyone, and as long as that is the case our politics will never be equal, fair or just. It is the responsibility of all of us in this Chamber to achieve that,

regardless of the Party we belong, for the ward we are privileged enough to represent; and in Councillor Wynter we have an inspiring figure that can focus our minds to show that it can and must be done. Now we must continue to do our best, despite the challenging times we face, and I cannot pretend, nor should I, that they won't be challenging. The mission of this Council is to make the lives of residents across this city better. It will take all of us. It will take fierce determination and a forthright directness to challenge ourselves to be better – all of which are traits that Councillor Wynter has demonstrated, and while she may no longer be Deputy Leader it is of no doubt that she has a huge role to play and will help us deliver on that mission for Nottingham people for years ahead. So, on behalf of Nottingham Labour, on behalf of this Council and the people of Nottingham, I'd like to thank Councillor Wynter.

East Midlands Combined County Authority Mayor and Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner

Councillor Angela Kandola asked the following question of the Leader of the Council: Could the Leader of the Council explain how she feels that the new Combined County Authority Mayor and Police and Crime Commissioner will help Nottingham City Council in achieving the aims of our Council Plan?

Councillor Neghat Khan replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Kandola for the question. Firstly, I'd like to congratulate the new East Midlands Mayor Claire Ward and Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner Gary Godden on their election. I look forward to working with them for Nottingham. It was a resounding victory for the Labour Party, taking over 50% of the vote in the city and a 50,000 vote lead over the Tories across the region. Many here played key roles in their election and I want to pay tribute to our campaigns officers - Councillor Woodings and Councillor Kandola - for their hard work. The new Combined Authority will be key driver for investment across our region. Our Council Plan has bold pledges around our local infrastructure, supporting businesses and protecting our environment, so I see the Combined Authority as a vital ally in getting the best for Nottingham people. I sincerely hope that we can make the case for transport funding, support for our high streets, proper investment in the skills needed for the workplaces of tomorrow, and spades in the ground building new homes and neighbourhoods for families. Claire Ward will support our city's tourism by establishing Visit East Midlands, sharing with everyone what our amazing region has to offer, and all underpinned by green, carbon-reducing pledges to safeguard our environment. Devolution will help to address historic under-investment in the East Midlands. The opportunities on the table include: a £1.14 billion devolved investment fund for our region - at least £38 million per year over 30 years; a brand new city region sustainable transport settlement of over £1.5 billion; and devolution of adult education budget to improve local skills worth approximately £50 million per year; but this is just the starting point. Working with Claire, I want the East Midlands to become a devolution trailblazer. The success, growth, and impact of combined authorities in the West Midlands and Greater Manchester have seen these areas awarded further powers and funding from Government. We could achieve the same for Nottingham. I have worked closely with previous Police and Crime Commissioners and I hope the city builds a similar relationship with Gary. When residents tell us about antisocial behaviour and crime in their area, we know that the Council working in partnership with the police and communities achieves the most change. I am proud that by working with Nottingham Community Safety Partnership

we have developed many programmes and projects that have helped make Nottingham safer. Some of these activities are supported through funding received from the Police and Crime Commissioner, such as programmes combating modern slavery, violence against women and girls, serious violence, and I hope that these will continue as we move forward with Gary making Nottingham City safer for our communities.

Private rented housing sector

Councillor Georgia Power asked the following question of the Executive Member for Housing and Planning:

Does the Executive Member believe this Government has failed private renters in Nottingham?

Councillor Jay Hayes replied as follows:

Thank you Lord-Mayor. Councillor Power: yes, I do believe that Government has failed private renters in Nottingham. Currently there are over 30,000 households living in the private rented sector who have been impacted by the lack of action from this Government to address the ongoing housing crisis. The Government has proposed a Renters Reform Bill that is making its way through parliament at the moment. This has been long overdue and some aspects of it have already been watered down. While the ban on Section 21 No-Fault Evictions is a step in the right direction, there are still loopholes and a backdoor way of forcing people out of their homes by the landlords. I, personally, would like to see the Bill go further than what is proposed by this Government. I think all unfair evictions must end and tenants should have much more secure tenancies in their private accommodation. More time and support needs to be given to renters who are facing eviction from their properties. Currently they have about a couple of months, two months, to leave their properties and find another private rental. This should be extended and along with that I also believe the upfront costs of private renting need to be addressed as well. The Local Housing Allowance has a massive impact on housing in the private sector. In Nottingham rent increases have been some of the highest outside of London, while support to cover increased rent has not matched rent increases. Many families who are in work, as many have full-time jobs or are working two jobs, are still having to find £300-£400 per month to top up their rent from the Local Housing Allowance. Now, I welcome the Government increasing this Local Housing Allowance for this year, but on the next four years Government policy freezes it, so we are constantly in this cycle of increasing rents and pay not keeping up, which means we will see more demand on our housing and homelessness services. Alongside this, energy-efficient targets for homes in the private rental sector have been scrapped, which means people in private renting are having to pay more and more for their bills because their houses are not up to a decent standard. However, while the Government has lacked action in the private rental sector, here in Nottingham we have been doing a lot of work. Not only have we been building more council houses and more houses with registered providers, in the private sector, as seen across my ward in Bestwood, we've got hundreds of new houses being built. We've also introduced an elective licencing scheme which has helped to bring the standard of private rented houses up to ensure that our tenants have a safe and secure place to live. We've also been working hard leading in the retrofitting of not just our council houses but of private houses helping us to lower the cost and reach our carbon neutral target of 2028. So the Government needs to do more. I'm sure a Labour Government will do a lot more going forward.

Local government funding

Councillor Helen Kalsi asked the following question of the Executive Member for Finance and Resources:

The latest Local Government Association (LGA) research found a £4bn funding gap facing local government in England. Councillors across the country have been calling out for the funding we desperately need. Does the Portfolio Holder think the Tory Government is either ignorant or just doesn't care about the impact of the Tory cuts across the country?

Councillor Linda Woodings replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor, and thank you Councillor Kalsi for your question. In January the LGA pointed out the gross inadequacy of funding facing councils across England. The sum of £4 billion is an astronomical figure, but that is just the shortfall for England for this financial year only. In fact, as you have heard many a time in this Council Chamber, over the last 10 years Nottingham has had its Government Revenue Support Grant cut by £100 million pounds per year, and that level of cuts in funding has been replicated across the country, leading to severe challenges for all councils to fund their statutory duties. Government policy dictates that the shortfall is pushed down onto local council taxpayers, and it is grossly unfair that the people of Nottingham should have to shoulder the burden of paying for services that, in truth, should be funded from national taxation. But you've heard that many times before, so I'll come to the main part of this question - has the Conservative Government done this out of ignorance, or do they just not care about the effect of cuts to local services? Well sadly the answer is not an either/or, it's actually both. Now I'm using the term 'ignorance', not to mean stupidity, but in the terms of a government that is wholly out of touch with the lives of ordinary people, because when you have inherited wealth, and your parents paid for your private education at elite schools, and you've never known the strain of family finances at an average wage level, you'll have a complete lack of understanding about how devastating some of the decisions you have made are on the lives of ordinary people. Soaring energy bills? Well, Rishi Sunak never had to think about them - he and his wife are now richer than the King today. Unbelievable! Struggling to meet your mortgage payments? Well Jeremy Hunt never had to worry about that, did he? Soaring food bills? Well, if you've never had to check the prices as you go around your weekly supermarket shop, how could you understand that food prices are up 25%. So, with a front bench of millionaire ministers, it's little wonder there is no understanding of the devastating effect of the cuts they've inflicted on the lives of ordinary people. There is a lack of compassion too, a lack of care in this government, because making the less well-off pay more, and therefore suffer more, is actually necessary if you need to keep your wealthy friends, press magnates and financial backers on side. You only have to look at the Open Democracy website to see these funders and their areas of interest - in fact last year the Tory party raked in £44.5 million in private donations including £10 million from the racist Frank Hester, £5m from him and £5m from his company which profited from public sector contracts. What policies do we see as a result of this? Well, up until last year Corporation Tax had been slashed to just 19%; National Insurance cuts benefited the richest households by 12 times more than the poorest; the highest rate of tax was cut so that millionaires got an additional £40,000 per year; and the non-domicile status was protected along with offshore tax havens; and the cap on bankers' bonuses lifted. Let's contrast this with the policies that affect you and I - crippling underfunding of the NHS and councils; devastating cuts to benefits;

and wages not keeping pace with inflation. So, people like you and I have to pay so that the Conservatives can line their and their friends' pockets, and the Tories will tell you it's everyone else fault but theirs for the state of this country. They started out blaming single mothers – do you remember that? Then the trade unions, then the EU, then migrant workers, illegal immigrants, trans people, lefty lawyers and 'The Wokerati'. Now it's people who can't work due to illness and disability who are being held responsible for the stagnation of the UK economy. What a disgrace. In truth it's their fear of losing power and being exposed. We've had years of short-term policies designed to get the Tories though the next few months, and in truth this Tory Government hasn't governed over the last 4 years, it has campaigned. Last week Jeremy Hunt bragged about his Government's economic record, whereas in truth we've had the worst decade of productivity growth since the Industrial Revolution, with stagnant incomes and deepening regional inequality. In fact, the Tories main convictions are based around self-service and survival. They are a party out of ideas, a party of few principles. They have utterly failed to address the structural inadequacies underpinning our economy with an over reliance on service industry, low wages and skills; a lack of investment in people and communities; and not building the infrastructure that is needed for a modern 21st century country. The Labour Party has already put forward just some of the steps which will put the country back on a stable economic foundation - house building; a Great British Energy company with green jobs and skills, moving away from fossil fuels to green energy; safer streets with proper community policing; rebuilding the NHS to reduce waiting times so that if you are sick you can get back to work, because the NHS has actually treated you; and removing barriers to opportunity by improving education. Our Labour Party takes nothing for granted, we know it's a long way to the General Election and we here at Nottingham Labour will play our part to fight for our city, our people, and our services to put the 'Great' back into 'Great Britain'.

Levelling Up and regional investment

Councillor Gul Khan asked the following question of the Executive Member for Finance and Resources:

Does the Portfolio Holder agree that this Conservative Government has broken its promises on Levelling Up and now that we have a Labour Combined Authority Mayor elected for the East Midlands what effect do they think this will have on investment into the region and our city?

Councillor Linda Woodings replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor, and thank you Councillor Khan for your question. Now, I think that all of us will remember that Levelling Up was a catchphrase thought up by Boris Johnson in 2019, a name for his plan to bring economic prosperity to the left-behind towns and cities. I should just say that I think that it's disgraceful that a Government department has been named after a Tory catchphrase. However, Levelling Up has turned out to be a bit like the Tory party: something close to a scam, with so far only 10% of the promised funds made available to regenerate struggling areas according to the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee. That does not, of course, invalidate the basic idea. The UK, and England in particular, remains absurdly centrist and riven by the huge economic gap between London and the South-East, and almost everywhere else. There has been a plethora of different grants promised under the label of Levelling Up. First the Towns Fund; then the beauty pageant of the Levelling Up funding bids, where, by the way, the Financial Times pointed out just this week that deprived areas have substantially lost out to

wealthier areas; then the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, a domestic replacement for the European Structural and Investment Programme; and several smaller schemes as well which were supposed to show visible delivery of regeneration projects in the space of a few years. The problem is that the Public Accounts Committee has said it can see “no compelling examples” of delivery to date. In fact, the Committee Chair described Levelling Up as a sticking plaster over the huge reductions to local government funding. Councils have complained of big delays in decisions being made, leading to unachievable spending deadlines, expensive bidding processes, and a lack of transparency and unfairness in the way money was allocated. Recent high inflation caused by Liz Truss and Kwasi Kwarteng has also devalued grants because of the increase in construction costs. However, the real scandal is that areas with high levels of deprivation have missed out on this funding, for example in the £3.6 billion English Towns Fund, 101 towns were selected by ministers in the first trench for one-off regeneration cash and there was a very close correlation to marginal Tory electoral seats. I wonder how that could have happened? One example of a successful bid came from Cheadle, a leafy Tory marginal seat on the edge of Cheshire with very low levels of deprivation. The Public Accounts Committee in its report in 2020 concluded that the allocations had not been impartial.

So I am really pleased that we have a devolution deal and a combined authority, bringing £1.14 billion of investment into the region over the next 30 years and the potential for more, because the East Midlands is the most underfunded region per head of population in United Kingdom, and the people of this region and our city deserve better. What do we hope this would contribute towards? How about a train link to East Midlands airport; an integrated transport plan; smart ticketing across the region on public transport; better connectivity; skills funding that meets the needs of Nottingham companies; affordable housing on the more expensive to develop brownfield sites; and a retrofitting of homes to make them more carbon efficient and cheaper to heat; and the development of green jobs and skills. What we hope for in a Labour Mayor is not actually favourable treatment for Labour areas, it's simply a fair chance at getting some of the additional investment that will be available. My biggest fear was that with a Tory Mayor would see more of what we saw under Levelling Up, with investment steered towards the many Tory marginal seats in the East Midlands that they need to retain at the next General Election to stay in power. With Claire Ward I'm now confident that we will have both transparency and objectivity in decisions about funding, and we councils won't have to waste millions of pounds pointlessly developing bids for projects. So, I welcome the convincing win by Labour's Claire Ward, and I am confident that her integrity and intent to genuine collaboration will steer the vital decisions that are needed to bring our region and our city forward. Thank you.

Nottingham Forest

Councillor Kevin Clarke asked the following question of the Leader of the Council: The Leader of the Council will appreciate the huge disappointment caused to Nottingham Forest's fans, in the City and beyond, by the Council's protracted negotiations over the City Ground. Will she take the opportunity to confirm the Council will leave no stone unturned to ensure Nottingham Forest remain at the City Ground?

Councillor Neghat Khan replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor, and can I thank Councillor Clarke for the question. I'd like to be clear that I do not want Nottingham Forest to move from the City Ground. It's the

historic home of one of our city's great football clubs. Neither the Council nor the fans want this. The songs from the terraces at the Chelsea game last week are a clear indication that the mist needs to keep rolling in off the Trent, not the M1. I've asked for a meeting with both the owner and the chairman to try to help to resolve this. The Council owns the land that the City Ground sits on. We have been in talks with the club for some time to look at the future of the site. This includes retaining the current arrangement, negotiating a new lease, or potentially selling the freehold on a permanent basis, all at a fair market value. Despite what you might read in the media, the Council has been actively negotiating with Nottingham Forest. We provided heads of terms for a new leasing arrangement, and for the freehold sale of the ground to the club in March. We are yet to receive a substantial response to either option. It is disappointing that the club have not responded to the options presented to them, and to hear that Forest might be looking to relocate. The Council is proud of Forest's history and Brian Clough's Miracle Men, and we recognise the positive media attention, visitors and income the club bring to our city. It is important to understand that the Council is legally bound by the need to seek best value for taxpayers. No local authority can subsidise a Premier League football club, and we are seeking an independently evaluated market rate for the site, nothing more, which is in line with our statutory requirements. The rent increase is less than Forest has been reportedly paying a player who hasn't made a first team appearance since January 2021. We are ready to continue negotiations but can only do that if Forest come back with meaningful, comparable evidence on their evaluation of the site, which we have repeatedly requested. The City Ground lease has been discussed for a long time now, and it is important to say again that the Council remains committed to finding a solution which works for both parties. I hope that working with the club we can secure Forest's future at the City Ground, and that they go from strength to strength on the pitch and off it.

Victoria Market

Councillor Kirsty M Jones asked the following question of the Executive Member for Carbon Reduction, Leisure and Culture:

Can the Portfolio Holder provide an update on current developments with Victoria Market?

Councillor Sam Lux replied as follows:

Thank you Lord-Mayor and thank you to Councillor Jones for her question. Following a decision by Executive Board in 2022 the Council has sought to achieve an early exit and surrender it from its current lease. As has been reported previously the Council had agreed terms and did have the opportunity to exit in early 2023 but was unfortunately unable to reach a satisfactory agreement with all the market traders to secure an exit at that stage. Recent meetings with traders have confirmed that the Council is still seeking to close the market and officers met operators of the Victoria Shopping Centre last month to discuss which exit options now exist. As the new Executive Member I will be meeting with officers in the coming days to discuss the options available to us to deliver the decision we took as a Council in 2022 to close the market. We will continue a regular dialogue with traders as we work towards achieving this outcome as quickly as possible. Thank you.

High-rise flats

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

The Portfolio Holder will be aware that in April the lift system at Southchurch Court was non-operational for almost a week. Would the Portfolio Holder agree with me that high-rise flats are totally unacceptable places to live for families with small children and for pensioners with mobility constraints who are unable to exit the building without the aid of the lifts?

Councillor Jay Hayes replied as follows:

Thank you Lord-Mayor, and thank you Councillor Clarke for your question. The incident which caused the lifts to be out of action at Southchurch Court was a rare occurrence. There was a fire in a flat which caused the sprinkler system to go off, and the sprinkler system damaged both lifts. I'm happy that the sprinkler system worked, it shows that our fire safety systems and protocols kept everybody safe and there were no deaths reported in this incident. The lifts were out of use for about five days while emergency work was being prepared and prioritised for the lifts to be repaired. A package of support was put in place to provide assistance for people who needed it, for example getting essential shopping or medication for those that need it and couldn't get out. While there have been challenges and we understand that there was challenges for residents as there was for us, officers have reassured me and I will assure Council that we have reviewed everything that happened in this incident and we will implement any learning going forward.

You mention allocations and people living in flats. The Council's current allocation policy is under review. Other cities do place families and elderly residents in high rise buildings, whereas we currently don't, and we're going to be doing a review. We may do, we may not, who knows? While understanding that there is concern with residents, certainly the elderly and families, in flats, you also have to balance that with the people on our waiting list – we've got over 10,000. The Conservative Government, that you supported, scrapped housing targets but we've continued to build them and we have a commitment from our Labour Mayor to build more houses. We have to allocate all of our properties based on need and assessment, and sometimes it does mean that families and elderly will be placed in flats. Many people have lived in those flats most of their lives and they don't want to move and it's suitable for them. So, until you get more members in this Chamber, we will continue dealing with the allocations policies and all the policies across the Council going forward. Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our Fire Service and our officers for ensuring that everything went to plan and that there were no fatalities during this incident.

Loxley House

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

Now that the third and fourth floor of Loxley House have been mothballed, can the Portfolio Holder confirm what their long term plan is to ensure that this now dead space does not result in holding costs for the Council?

Councillor Ethan Radford replied as follows:

Thank you Lord Mayor, and thank you Councillor Rule. Forgive me, when you said 'dead space' I thought you were referring to Ben Bradley's political future following the mayoral elections. Nevertheless, Councillor Rule, I can assure you there are no specific holding costs associated with the closure of those floors while the rest of the building remains open. The closure of floors three and four at Loxley House was taken forward to reduce the level of running costs associated with the building with

the aim of achieving a £200,000 annual saving, the progress toward which we are monitoring since the closure of the floors in March. I can tell you we are currently considering options to let out the floors to third-party occupiers. In the long term we will be reviewing all of our administrative estate to ensure the scale is in keeping with the Council's needs and so that the allocation of resources is distributed in such a way that best meets the needs of the Nottingham people. I hope that puts your mind at ease.

Council improvement

Councillor Kevin Clarke asked the following question of the Leader of the Council: Given the final report by the Improvement and Assurance Board concludes that the Council's failure to deliver change has raised a concern that it has "still not fully accepted the gravity of the situation", can the Leader of the Council confirm what internal changes she will be prioritising to ensure that Nottingham residents can be assured the controlling group has accepted the gravity of the Council's situation.

Councillor Neghat Khan replied as follows:

Thank you, Lord Mayor. Thank you Councillor Clarke for this question. I would though like to ask my own question: do the Nottingham Independents grasp the seriousness of this situation? The proposals that you bring to this Chamber suggest you are the ones who do not accept the gravity of 14 years of continued cuts to our budgets. Nottingham Labour, however, has been working hard with officers to deliver solutions. We've worked with the Improvement and Assurance Board and we're now working closely with the Commissioners. As Leader of this Council, I assure you and everyone here today, that our improvement journey will continue to move forward. We've never shied away from tough choices. We've confronted them, even in the face of £136 million cut from our budget this year in real terms compared with 2010. In March, this Council faced the most horrendous of choices we've ever faced in a nine-hour budget meeting. The Nottingham Independents shared no alternative budget – I repeat, no alternative budget – and abstained on the vote. I would call that abdicating their responsibility to the people of Clifton East in this Chamber. I can't even say the city, it's just Clifton East. Nottingham Labour understands well the situation. We, with heavy hearts, voted for the budget, a budget with cuts no Labour councillor would ever choose, while you sat on your hands. Do not mistake me, Councillor Clarke, over the next three years I will take no lectures from the Nottingham Independents. I assure you as Leader that my Party takes governing Nottingham seriously. Responsible leadership for this city does however come with working together and across party lines. My door is always open to our Independent councillors, should they want to discuss ideas and proposals which deliver for our city, rather than point-scoring from the side-lines. Working for the benefit of our residents will always be my first priority and I hope it is yours.

13 Establishment of, and appointments to committees and joint bodies 2024/25

Councillor Carole McCulloch, Lord Mayor and Chair of Council, proposed the report setting out proposed terms of reference and first meeting dates for Council committees in municipal year 2024/25 along with proposed memberships, substitute and chairing arrangements; and the terms of reference and City Council membership of joint committees to which Council is delegating non-executive functions. The report was seconded by Councillor Liaqat Ali.

Resolved to:

- (1) establish the following Council committees and joint committees, with terms of reference as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, for municipal year 2024/25:**
 - i) Appeals Committee**
 - ii) Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee**
 - iii) Audit Committee**
 - iv) Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**
 - v) Communities and Environment Scrutiny Committee**
 - vi) Corporate Scrutiny Committee**
 - vii) Greater Nottingham Light Rapid Transit Advisory Committee**
 - viii) Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee**
 - ix) Health and Wellbeing Board**
 - x) Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committee**
 - xi) Independent Panel**
 - xii) Investigating and Disciplinary Committee**
 - xiii) Licensing Committee**
 - xiv) Planning Committee**
 - xv) Regulatory and Appeals Committee**
 - xvi) Standards and Governance Committee**
 - xvii) Trusts and Charities Committee**
 - xviii) Joint Committee on Mineral and Waste Planning**
 - xix) Police and Crime Panel**
 - xx) Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Partnership**
- (2) set the first meeting dates for Council committees and joint committees in municipal year 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report;**
- (3) appoint the membership and substitutes, where applicable, for Council committees and the City Council membership and substitutes, where applicable, for joint committees for municipal year 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report;**
- (4) appoint the committee chairs and vice chairs for municipal year 2024/25 for committees that Council is responsible for appointing, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report;**
- (5) amend Article 9 Non-Executive Functions and Committees of the Constitution to reflect the Council committees and joint committees established for municipal year 2024/25 and their agreed terms of reference.**

14 Executive Appointments, Committees and Delegations

Councillor Neghat Khan, Leader of the Council, proposed the report informing Council of her appointment of Deputy Leader and Executive Members; the terms of reference and membership of Executive Committees for 2024/25; and confirmation of other Executive delegations. The report was seconded by Councillor Ethan Radford.

Resolved to:

- (1) note the appointment of Councillor Ethan Radford as Deputy Leader of the Council;**
- (2) note that all references to the term ‘Portfolio Holder’ within the Council’s Executive arrangements are replaced by the term ‘Executive Member’;**
- (3) note the appointment of the following councillors as Executive Members and their areas of responsibility as set out in Appendix 1 to the report:**
 - i) Councillor Cheryl Barnard – Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education**
 - ii) Councillor Jay Hayes – Executive Member for Housing and Planning**
 - iii) Councillor Corall Jenkins – Executive Member for Communities, Waste and Equalities**
 - iv) Councillor Neghat Khan – Executive Member for Strategic Regeneration, Transport and Communications**
 - v) Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis – Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health**
 - vi) Councillor Sam Lux – Executive Member for Carbon Reduction, Leisure and Culture**
 - vii) Councillor Ethan Radford – Executive Member for Skills, Growth and Economic Development**
 - viii) Councillor Linda Woodings – Executive Member for Finance and Resources**
- (4) note the terms of reference and first meeting dates for Executive committees in 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report;**
- (5) note the appointments, including substitutes where appropriate, to and chairing arrangements for Executive committees, including joint arrangements, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report;**
- (6) note that the Constitution will be amended to reflect these appointments and delegations of responsibility; and**
- (7) note that all other Executive delegations, as set out in the Executive Scheme of Delegation, are confirmed.**

15 Establishment of the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA)

Councillor Neghat Khan, Leader of the Council, proposed the report informing Council of the establishment of the East Midlands Combined County Authority on 27 February 2024 and the election of a Mayor of the East Midlands on 2 May 2024. The report was seconded by Councillor Ethan Radford.

Resolved to note that:

- (1) the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) was formally established on 27 February 2024, with the first formal board meeting held on 20 March 2024; and that the EMCCA brings with it additional investment**

funding to the area alongside devolved powers around transport, housing, skills, adult education, economic development and net zero;

(2) the EMCCA is a new body that Nottingham City Council will work in partnership with. Achieving success in Nottingham’s strategic priorities will require effective working with the EMCCA and the new Mayor and this relationship, of fundamental importance to the Council, will be a priority for the foreseeable future; and

(3) the first election for the new role of Mayor of the East Midlands took place on 2 May 2024.

16 Decisions taken under Urgency Procedures

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

Resolved to note that:

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

Decision Reference	Subject	Decision Taker	Reasons for Urgency
5106	Acceptance of grant funding from the Department for Transport	Leader of the Council	The acceptance letter had to be returned by 15 March 2024 otherwise the funding would not be available.

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

17 Future Meeting Dates

Resolved to meet at 2pm on the following Mondays:

- 8 July 2024**
- 9 September 2024**
- 11 November 2024**
- 13 January 2025**

- **24 February 2025**

The Meeting concluded at 7.50 pm

**Responses to questions from councillors requiring a written response
20 May 2024**

WQ1

**Question to be asked by Councillor Kirsty Jones requesting a written response
from the Executive Member for Carbon Reduction, Leisure and Culture**

Could the Portfolio Holder provide a breakdown of funds generated from fines and reservation costs by the City's library service since 2019, together with the costs of administering the same?

Councillor Sam Lux replied as follows:

Following the lockdown for Covid in March 2020 all charges in regard to fines and reservations were suspended and then subsequently abolished. The reason for the change was to reduce barriers for people using the Library Service and in recognition that the cost of administering, auditing and banking such small sums being taken was often not cost effective. This was also in recognition of communities having been adversely impacted by Covid and requiring support that libraries can provide. Research has identified increased take up of services in authorities which do not charge fines.

The implication of removing fines and reservation charges income was a reduction in £15,605 per annum for the last year the Council was charging in 2019/20. Alternative ways of finding those savings were made which enabled this income target to be removed from the Libraries Service budget. A small breakdown is shown below.

- Fines: Fines are a deterrent to library use, and for citizens who cannot afford fines, they have a highly disproportionate negative impact. Fines result in fears of return, or disengagement as a result of the perception of being punished.
 - In 2019 / 2020 income received from fines was: £13,682.
 - Reservation charges: Similar to the detrimental effect of fines, reservation charges serve only to create further barriers to the customers that we are seeking to encourage into our libraries.
 - In 2019 / 2020 income received from reservation charges was: £1,923.
- Total: £15,605

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