

QUESTION TO BE ASKED BY I. L. OF THE LEADER AT THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2017

It seems that the Urgent Decision procedure is used rather a lot for decisions that, on the face of them, are not urgent. Examples from recent months:

1. 'Procurement for a Cafe/Bar & Event Catering Management Concessionaire at The Nottingham Theatre Royal and Concert Hall' 'Urgent decision required in order to maximise the income to the Council.' You could make almost any decision about an income-generating service urgent in that way. It does not mean that the decision is urgent.
2. 'Property Investment Acquisition – Project Highland' 'To allow for a timely purchase.' Similar to (1). This is a tautology - performing something urgently makes it timely almost by definition.
3. 'Approval of procurement of electricity supply for Nottingham City Council' 'To enable an immediate tender to be placed.' This one was £24,000,000 (over several years). I appreciate this is a tender and not money being immediately spent, but how can such a significant deal be undertaken without the opportunity for political input - even on the framework?
4. 'Island Site - consultancy fees to support CPO business case' 'To bring forward development of the site', that is no reason for urgency. There are millions upon millions of council funds being authorised to be spent under this procedure. It seems that there is a serious lack of accountability inherent in the Urgent Decision procedure.

Does the Councillor agree that the procedure is undemocratic and is allowing too much money to be spent without proper oversight? Will the Council please strengthen the requirements for undertaking decisions under the procedure? Will the Council further require the decision taker to submit much more detailed information to Full Council meetings, in order to allow councillors to scrutinise the decisions of portfolio holders? Will the Council finally consider establishing a post-facto review process for Urgent Decisions, including a role for citizens, which provides for the possibility of censuring portfolio holders who sidestep proper expenditure procedures?