



Nottinghamshire County Council

Meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

Date Thursday, 21st November 2013 (10.30 am – 5.14 pm)

Membership

Persons absent are marked with 'A'

COUNCILLORS

John Allin (Chairman)
Pauline Allan (Vice-Chairman)

Reg Adair
Roy Allan
Chris Barnfather
Alan Bell
Joyce Bosnjak
Nicki Brooks
Andrew Brown
Richard Butler
Steve Calvert
Ian Campbell
Steve Carr
Steve Carroll
John Clarke
John Cottee
Jim Creamer
Mrs Kay Cutts
Maureen Dobson
Dr John Doddy
Boyd Elliott
Sybil Fielding
Kate Foale
Stephen Garner
Glynn Gilfoyle
Kevin Greaves
Alice Grice
John Handley
Colleen Harwood
Stan Heptinstall MBE
Tom Hollis
Richard Jackson
Roger Jackson
David Kirkham
John Knight

Darren Langton
Bruce Laughton
Keith Longdon
Rachel Madden
Diana Meale
John Ogle
Philip Owen
Michael Payne
John Peck JP
Sheila Place
Liz Plant
Darrell Pulk
Alan Rhodes
A Ken Rigby
Tony Roberts MBE
Mrs Sue Saddington
Andy Sissons
Pam Skelding
Stella Smedley MBE JP
Martin Suthers OBE
Parry Tsimbiridis
Gail Turner
Keith Walker
Stuart Wallace
Muriel Weisz
Gordon Wheeler
John Wilkinson
Jacky Williams
John Willmott
Yvonne Woodhead
Liz Yates
Jason Zadrozny

HONORARY ALDERMEN

Martin Brandon-Bravo OBE
Stewart Pattinson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mick Burrows	(Chief Executive)
Jayne Francis–Ward	(Policy, Planning and Corporate Services)
Tim Gregory	(Environment and Resources)
Jon Wilson	(Adult Social Care, Health & Public Protection)
Anthony May	(Children, Families and Cultural Services)
Paul Simpson	(Environment and Resources)
Carl Bilbey	(Policy, Planning & Corporate Services)
Martin Done	(Policy, Planning and Corporate Services)
Chris Holmes	(Policy, Planning and Corporate Services)
Karen Townrow	(Policy, Planning and Corporate Services)
Anna Vincent	(Policy, Planning and Corporate Services)
Michelle Welsh	(Policy, Planning and Corporate Services)

OPENING PRAYER

Upon the Council convening, prayers were led by the Chairman's Chaplain.

FORMER COUNCILLOR ANDY STEWART

Members stood in silence in remembrance of former Councillor Andy Stewart

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED: 2013/044

That the Minutes of the last meeting of the County Council held on 26th September 2013 be agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ken Rigby (Personal)

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Steve Carr declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 11, Treasury Management Mid-Year report 2013/14, as he worked for the Royal Bank of Scotland.

4. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

(a) Former Councillor Andy Stewart

The Chairman, Councillor Alan Rhodes, Councillor Mrs Kay Cutts, Councillor Stan Heptinstall, Councillor Bruce Laughton, Councillor Stella Smedley, Councillor Keith Walker, Councillor Gail Turner, Councillor Maureen Dobson, and Councillor Roger Jackson all spoke in memory of former Councillor Andy Stewart.

(b) Presentations and Awards

Teacher of the Year Award

Councillor John Peck introduced the award and indicated the prestigious Daily Mail Pride of Britain Teacher of the Year Award had been won by Sharon Gray, Head Teacher of Netherfield Primary School. The Chairman acknowledged the exceptional achievement, and presented the award to her.

Institute of Customer Service Award

Councillor Alan Rhodes introduced the ICS Customer Service Award. The Chairman received the award from Councillor Rhodes and presented it to the members of staff from the Customer Service Centre who were present.

2013 Plaque of Honour

Councillor Joyce Bosnjak introduced the award and reported that Nottinghamshire had been awarded the prestigious 2013 Plaque of Honour by the Council of Europe. This recognised the work of local people over many years in promoting unity and friendship with different people and places in Europe. She presented the plaque to the Chairman

5. CONSTITUENCY ISSUES

Set out in Appendix A to these minutes is a full note of the issues discussed by Councillors as follows:-

Councillor Gordon Wheeler -The effect of the NET tram extension in Compton Acres

Councillor Jason Zadrozny – Public Services

Councillor Tom Hollis – Highways Safety

6.(a) PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

The following petitions were presented to the Chairman as indicated below:-

- (1) Councillor Joyce Bosnjak regarding the removal of overgrown planters on Gladstone Street, Mansfield
- (2) Councillor Joyce Bosnjak regarding a request for the pathway between Balmoral Drive and Chesterfield Road North to become a registered 'public right of way'
- (3) Councillor Michael Payne regarding the movement of the taxi rank in Front Street, Arnold
- (4) Councillor Liz Yates regarding bus services in Misterton
- (5) Councillor Richard Butler regarding bus services in Langar
- (6) Councillor Roger Jackson regarding Barrett Homes planning application for 100 houses at Ash Croft Farm, Crockett Lane, Mansfield
- (7) Councillor Bruce Laughton regarding Fiskerton Household Waste Recycling Centre
- (8) Councillor Steve Carr regarding residents of Warwick Avenue, Beeston calling for action to be taken against speeding traffic on their street
- (9) Councillor Stan Heptinstall regarding residents asking for a 20 mph speed limit on Cow Lane, Bramcote
- (10) Councillor Andy Sissons regarding traffic issues on Forest Avenue, Mansfield
- (11) Councillor Maureen Dobson regarding extending 30 mph limits to all entrances and exits to Collingham
- (12) Councillor Collen Harwood regarding installation of a zebra crossing outside St. Peters C of E Primary & Nursery School, Mansfield

RESOLVED: 2013/045

That the petitions be referred to the appropriate Committees for consideration in accordance with the Procedure Rules, with a report being brought back to Council in due course

6.(b) PETITION RESPONSES REPORT- - TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: - 2013/046

That the contents and actions taken as set out in the report be noted.

7. QUESTIONS

(a) QUESTIONS TO NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AUTHORITY

No questions were received

(b) QUESTIONS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Five questions had been received as follows

- (1) from Councillor Andy Sissons regarding why Nottinghamshire County Council is proposing to stop funding for Mansfield Play Forum (Councillor John Peck replied)
- (2) from Councillor Steve Carr regarding at what stage in the County Council election campaign did the Labour Group realise they would not be able to deliver their six pledges given that the Council was advised in February of a £133 million black hole in the budget (Councillor Alan Rhodes replied)
- (3) from Councillor Kay Cutts regarding the unusually high number of committee meetings that have either been cancelled or postponed since the summer recess (Councillor Alan Rhodes replied)
- (4) from Councillor Sue Saddington regarding the damage caused to surrounding roads by the high levels of traffic including heavy goods vehicles diverted on to them during the extended closure of Kelham Bridge (Councillor Kevin Greaves replied)
- (5) from Councillor Philip Owen regarding when the bus plug camera on Nottingham Road, Nuthall will be enforced (Councillor Kevin Greaves replied)

The full responses to these questions are set out in Appendix B to these Minutes

8. CLARIFICATION OF MINUTES

The report provided Members with the opportunity to raise any matters of clarification in the Minutes of Committee meetings published since the last meeting.

9. COMPOSITION OF THE HEALTH AND WELL BEING BOARD

Councillor Joyce Bosnjak introduced the report and moved a motion in terms of resolution 2013/047 below.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Muriel Weisz.

Reference was made to the minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board meetings on 5th June and 2nd October 2013 when members of the Board were informed that the County Council was considering changing the composition of the Board to include a representative from each district council and from the Police and Crime commissioner. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that in her view this was adequate consultation for the legislative requirement.

The motion was put to the meeting and after a show of hands the Chairman declared it was carried.

The requisite number of Members requested a recorded vote and it was ascertained that the following 35 Members voted '**FOR**' the motion:-

Pauline Allan	David Kirkham
Roy Allan	John Knight
John Allin	Darren Langton
Alan Bell	Diana Meale
Joyce Bosnjak	Michael Payne
Nicki Brooks	John Peck JP
Steve Calvert	Sheila Place
Ian Campbell	Liz Plant
Steve Carroll	Darrell Pulk
John Clarke	Alan Rhodes
Jim Creamer	Pamela Skelding
Maureen Dobson	Stella Smedley MBE JP
Sybil Fielding	Parry Tsimbiridis
Kate Foale	Muriel Weisz
Glynn Gilfoyle	John Wilkinson
Kevin Greaves	John Wilmott
Alice Grice	Yvonne Woodhead
Colleen Harwood	

The following 21 Members voted '**AGAINST**' the motion:-

Reg Adair	Bruce Laughton
Chris Barnfather	John Ogle
Andrew Brown	Philip Owen
Richard Butler	Tony Roberts MBE
John Cottee	Sue Saddington
Kay Cutts	Martin Suthers OBE
Dr John Doddy	Keith Walker
Boyd Elliott	Stuart Wallace
John Handley	Gordon Wheeler
Richard Jackson	Liz Yeyes
Roger Jackson	

The following 9 Members '**ABSTAINED**':-

Steve Carr	Rachel Madden
Stephen Garner	Andy Sissons
Stan Heptinstall MBE	Gail Turner
Tom Hollis	Jason Zadrozny
Keith Longdon	

The Chairman declared the motion carried and it was:-

RESOLVED: 2013/047

- (1) That the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board be increased to allow a representative from each Nottinghamshire district council and of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- (2) That each district council and the Commissioner be invited to nominate one substitute to attend in the absence of the representative.

**10. NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE WASTE CORE STRATEGY
EXAMINATION-RECEIPT OF INSPECTOR'S REPORT AND ADOPTION**

Councillor Jim Creamer introduced the report and moved a motion in terms of resolution 2013/048 below.

The motion was seconded by Councillor John Wilkinson.

RESOLVED: 2013/048

That the adoption of the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Waste Core Strategy be approved; and authority delegated to the Corporate Director of Policy, Planning and Corporate Services in consultation with the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability

Committee to make any final minor changes required to correct typographical or other errors.

11. TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID – YEAR REPORT 2013/2014

Councillor Steve Carr having earlier declared an interest in this item, left the meeting during discussion and voting on the item.

Councillor David Kirkham introduced the report and moved a motion in terms of resolution 2013/049 below.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Darren Langton.

RESOLVED: 2013/049

That the treasury management activities for the first half of 2013/14 be noted.

Councillor Steve Carr returned to the meeting.

12. NOTICE OF MOTION

A motion in terms of resolution 2013/050 below was moved by Councillor Alan Rhodes and seconded by Councillor John Wilkinson.

The following amendment to the motion was moved by Councillor Jason Zadrozny and seconded by Councillor Steve Carr:-

~~“Nottinghamshire County Council has been given an unfair deal from Central Government. The Council is facing a reduction in its Revenue Support Grant amounting to close to 21% over the next two years. This is in comparison to wealthier local authorities such as Surrey and Buckinghamshire which have been treated far more leniently.~~

~~There are only three local authorities in the country that have received a higher reduction than Nottinghamshire.~~

The Council notes that due to the financial mess the country was left in by the last Labour Government it has been necessary to reduce the country's budget deficit and make savings. Council also notes that Ed Balls and Ed Milliband have said they will not reverse the cuts if they win the next General election.

Council further notes that if the last Labour Government hadn't almost bankrupted the country then all councils wouldn't be facing such large reductions in expenditure.

Council calls on the Labour leadership to stop seeking to play party politics, stop simply looking at the easy options for cuts and look more innovatively at finding

new funding streams as many Councils have done which would mean that NCC isn't so dependent on Central Government funding.

A Campaign has been launched for a fairer deal for Nottinghamshire, aiming to work with community groups, district town and parish councils, faith groups, voluntary sector organisations, trade unions, private and public sector organisations and Members of Parliament. All local politicians from across the political divide are being invited to participate in the scheme.

Most importantly, this is a campaign for, and by, the people of Nottinghamshire. We are therefore calling upon Nottinghamshire County Council to support and adopt the Fair Deal for Nottinghamshire campaign and demand a fairer allocation of funding from Central Government for our county.

The amendment was put to the meeting and after a show of hands the Chairman declared that it was lost.

The original motion was then put to the meeting and after a show of hands the Chairman declared it was carried.

The requisite number of Members requested a recorded vote and it was ascertained that the following 31 Members voted '**FOR**' the motion:-

Pauline Allan	Colleen Harwood
Roy Allan	David Kirkham
John Allin	John Knight
Alan Bell	Darren Langton
Joyce Bosnjak	Diana Meale
Nicki Brooks	Michael Payne
Steve Calvert	John Peck JP
Ian Campbell	Sheila Place
Steve Carroll	Darrell Pulk
John Clarke	Alan Rhodes
Jim Creamer	Parry Tsimbiridis
Sybil Fielding	Muriel Weisz
Kate Foale	John Wilkinson
Glynn Gilfoyle	John Wilmott
Kevin Greaves	Yvonne Woodhead
Alice Grice	

The following 12 Members voted '**AGAINST**' the motion:-

Reg Adair	John Handley
Chris Barnfather	Richard Jackson
Richard Butler	Bruce Laughton
John Cottey	Philip Owen
Kay Cutts	Gordon Wheeler
Dr John Doddy	Liz Yates

The Chairman declared that the motion carried and it was:-

RESOLVED: 2013/050

Nottinghamshire County Council has been given an unfair deal from Central Government. The Council is facing a reduction in its Revenue Support Grant amounting to close to 21% over the next two years. This is in comparison to wealthier local authorities such as Surrey and Buckinghamshire which have been treated far more leniently.

There are only three local authorities in the country that have received a higher reduction than Nottinghamshire.

A campaign has been launched for a fairer deal for Nottinghamshire, aiming to work with community groups, district, town and parish councils, faith groups, voluntary sector organisations, trade unions, private and public sector organisations and Members of Parliament. All local politicians from across the political divide are being invited to participate in the campaign.

Most importantly, this is a campaign for, and by, the people of Nottinghamshire. We are therefore calling upon Nottinghamshire County Council to support and adopt the Fair Deal for Nottinghamshire Campaign and demand a fairer allocation of funding from Central Government for our county.

13. ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

As Councillor Steve Carr was not in the chamber, the request for an adjournment debate fell.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 5.14 pm

CHAIRMAN

APPENDIX A

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 21st November 2013

3 MINUTE SPEECHES

Councillor Gordon Wheeler

“The partial closure of Wilford Lane is scheduled to be reopened at the end of December this year. But given the massive delay in re-opening Ruddington lane when it was also closed for tram works, I fear the same delays will haunt Wilford Lane. In fact Chairman, if you look at the Post today, you will see they’re running this story on the huge delay to the works at Clifton and Beeston.

When I pointed out to NET and their Contractors that the road surfaces were breaking up badly I was told that a few buses would have no adverse impact on the road surface. Because busses have been re-routed, there are 83 **additional** busses from 7am to 7pm; 70 on a Saturday and 39 on a Sunday. I am sure no sensible person in this Chamber today would regard 524 **additional** busses a week as a “few”! And this does not include the lorries and other heavy vehicles that have chosen to take diversions down these residential streets because they cannot get through Wilford Lane.

I am sure Chairman many of you here today have seen your car journey times soar because of the tram works. And you have had to meet the extra fuel costs as you sit in a seemingly endless queue of traffic, without any recompense from NET. But far more importantly spare a thought for the dozens of businesses that have suffered huge financial hits because of the tram works.

Kevin, John Cottee is just about to pass you a picture. This was just part of the road photographed last month. This is simply representative of equal or worse damage on both these roads. Just imagine the condition of the roads by the end of this year. And to compound this, the problem British Gypsum has been sending its lorries down Landmere Lane rather than Ruddington Lane. I submitted a petition to Full council on this a few months ago but to the dismay of residents these vehicles continue to thunder down the residential street.

We will later today talk about the challenges facing this Council and the need to make savings. I somehow suspect the debate will be lively. But whatever our political views may be on what and where savings need to be made, everyone here today should agree that the damage to the road surfaces is a direct result from increased heavy traffic due to the closure of Wilford Lane for tram works. Why should this Council pick up the bill or, worse still, the roads left in a dangerous condition? Claims for compensation will spiral”

Councillor Jason Zadrozny

Members will be aware that I’ve risen a number of times in this Chamber to raise the issue of traffic safety on Skegby Road junction in my division and Dalestorth Street. I’ve had visits from Highways inspectors, I’ve paid for surveys for the justification of

roadworks, we've had schemes drawn up and a number of initiatives to try and increase safety in that area.

It's a particularly dangerous junction at which is the crossing point for 3 different schools so you can imagine my dismay at the beginning of this school term this year to discover that my school crossing patrol had been removed. I tracked the lady down who's been moved to a different position and she was quite pleased because the traffic there was so dangerous that the lollipop has been ripped out of her hand on a number of occasions and she's very concerned about working there. She's more concerned, as I am about the safety of the children.

So I immediately spoke to Andy Warrington who promised me a telephone call back that day and I'm still waiting. That is some weeks and now months since that telephone call, and I've since emailed on a number of occasions as has Anna to try and chase up to find out what's happening cause we can't even get an answer on whether the post is going to be made vacant and advertised, whether it's been deleted, whether it's to be replaced. My great concern is that members cannot answer their members of the public, their residents on what's happening because we can't find the information out from the authority.

And my grave fear is that this is cuts to public services by the back door. They're clearly moving vacancies about which we all know and accept to a certain degree. There are some vacancies which we believe should be protected such as the safety of children and if the administration agree with me which I suspect they will then we need to have a transparent exchange of information to know what's happening to replace essential frontline services like that because at the moment I've got some hundreds of children crossing a very dangerous junction with no extra safety provision and no sign of that being provided.

We are having a nice day today but when it's foggy and when it gets darker in the morning and darker in the evenings we are very close to increasing the danger level to some of the youngest residents within my division and I just don't think that's tenable.

So Mr Chairman I think we need to have a better dialogue. We need to have the departments explaining to members much more quickly and professionally what's happening and we can't carry on like that Mr Chairman.

Councillor Tom Hollis

Members may recall that at the last Full Council meeting I presented a petition on behalf of the residents of the Ashfield Estate in my Division, calling on the County Council to add the main routes through the estate onto the definitive gritting routes. An area which was omitted from this basic service by the member who was in office during the development of that estate.

This issue is now essential prior to the poor weather which is due to hit us over coming weeks and months, not least because even inclement weather some areas of this estate are treacherously dangerous.

I have made many reports to the highways department of this Council about the speeding traffic and poor road conditions, particularly on Castlewood Grove and Redbarn Way. There have been a number of very very serious accidents along the stretch of Castlewood Grove, mainly in-between Calladine Grove and Winterbank Close.

Cars have often lost control and careered into the front gardens of homes, dangerously close to hitting houses on a number of occasions. The most recent accident was just a few weeks ago when a driver lost control on the main road and ploughed into one of my resident's front gardens. This accident was at 10:00am in the morning but if had it been an hour earlier during school time, in what is a popular area for walkers and the main route to school, who knows how bad the outcomes could have been.

To make matters worse the Council recently removed the interactive speed sign from Castlewood Grove.

It is a very poorly designed section of the highways network. With one tragic fatality in my division in recent years, I do not want to see another before action is taken, and it is not likely to be just one person hurt or killed if one of the cars that frequently end up in someone's garden, ends up in their front living room.

Again, I urge the Council to take urgent action to review and implement measures to demonstrably reduce traffic and traveling speeds through the estate as well as improving the surface of the highway to prevent such frequent skidding. I look forward to an urgent response from the Highway department to let me know what timeframe they will be working to, to ensure that accidents are stopped as far as is possible in this area. I do not want to be standing in this chamber following the death of a resident saying "I told you so", let's fix this now, and get it right first time.

APPENDIX B

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 21st NOVEMBER 2013 QUESTIONS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Question to the Chairman of the Children & Young People's Committee, from Councillor Andy Sissons

Six months ago Mansfield Play Forum was given a contract to provide active play services for children 2 to 3 years old up to 11 years old, arguably their most formative years, to the whole of Nottinghamshire, including areas of social deprivation, which of course, have been used as one of the valid and sensible criteria in deciding what to cut and what to save.

Mansfield Play Forum has actually saved Nottinghamshire County Council money since commissioned to deliver not just open access play but also providing equipment to play groups, child minders and organisations such as scouts and brownies nurturing good citizenship and social skills in children up to early teens.

It has also provided gainful employment to 20 previously unemployed young adults training them as Play Leaders to the children.

The question is:- why is it proposed to stop funding for this organisation half way through its 3 year contract signalling the extinction of this valuable resource with a multitude of benefits when there are other areas within the children and young people's budget that are not cost effective and could be cut instead.

Response from Councillor John Peck, Chairman Children & Young People's Committee

Thanks very much Councillor Sissons for asking the question and I fully understand your evident concerns and I assure you that proposals such as these are ones that I would not wish to be considering and that can be said for every one of the business cases in my department. To paraphrase the prime minister who recently expunged these speeches; "I did not come into local government to make cuts" and certainly not ones such as these I assure you. We've spent a long time agonising over every one of these decisions which are out to consultation.

However, as part of the council's proposed budget reduction programme, a reduction of £1,350,000 is proposed from the 1st October 2014 in the Young People's Service budget. The Service currently has responsibility for play provision as well as youth work. The current £140,000 3 year contract that you refer to, to deliver open access play across the county was awarded to a consortium led by Mansfield Play Forum and commenced on 1st April of this year. The contract was commissioned in 2012 when at that time the scope of the Council's future budget reductions from 2014 onwards was unclear and we certainly couldn't envisage the additional budget pressures caused by the Chancellor's decision in June.

The contract replaced the Council's direct provision of open access play and was driven by a budget reduction required of the young people's service which was actually made by the previous administration. The current proposed budget reduction of 30% for the young people's service, and we're looking at those sort of reductions – 30%, will require it to be reshaped and to prioritise its contribution to the Council's statutory duty to provide services and activities to improve young people's wellbeing in the 13-19 age range.

So this reshaping that we're considering has led to the proposal to end the current Open Access Play contract halfway through its 3 year duration on the 1st October 2014. This contract as you refer to supports work with children in the 3-12 age range and the proposal does not in any way reflect on the quality of open access play provision that is currently delivered by Mansfield Play Forum and its partners. I have to say that by all reports this is of the very highest quality and this decision to go to consultation is certainly no reflection on their high quality and excellent work.

However the position the Children and Young People's Department finds itself in is no different to every other department and savings just have to be made. We can't do everything in the same way nor to the extent which we would like. If this County had a fair share of funding, perhaps some of the decisions might be different. At the moment all the proposals are out for consultation as you know and I give you my assurance that we will listen to all representations before any final decision is made.

Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Steve Carr

Given that this Council was advised in February 2013 that there was a budget black hole of £133 million over the next three years, at what stage in the County Council election campaign did the labour Group realise they would not be able to deliver their six pledges?

To remind Councillors these were:-

1. Make jobs, skills and training our priorities
2. Build extra care housing for our elderly
3. Put a 20 mph LIMIT outside our schools
4. Keep the street lights on at night
5. Modernise our libraries
6. Invest in our children's centres and youth services

Response from Councillor Alan Rhodes, Leader of the Council

Can I thank Councillor Carr for his question and for the little aid memoir that he put in it for our assistance.

I'd also like to say Chairman that for a Lib Dem to be questioning us on keeping our election pledges is rather taking irony to a whole new level.

That aside I will answer his question and I'm proud to do so.

This administration fully intends to deliver on all its election promises.

We have made Jobs, skills and training our priority. We gave the Economic Development Committee the status it deserved. We have produced a strategic plan which sets economic development and job creation at its heart, we are working better than ever with our partner authorities in D2N2 to deliver the jobs that people in Notts want and deserve.

We have invested £1 million in a Jobs Growth Fund and have re-designed our Local Improvement Scheme in order to make regeneration, job, skills and training our priority.

Not only have we done this but we have made a commitment to paying more than 2,200 of the lowest paid workers at Nottinghamshire County Council the Living Wage. This will benefit employees, many of whom are part time, female workers, in a range of frontline public facing jobs like caring for older people, cooking school meals, helping our children safely cross the roads and cleaning school buildings – and promise to give these people more spending power to boost the local economy.

We are building extra care housing for the elderly. Something we started in the previous Labour administration under David Kirkham's leadership which was put on ice for four years under the last administration. On the 30th October, which was only a few weeks ago, we signed off the extra care housing in Gedling. We have approved sites in Retford and Eastwood. We have identified further sites in Ashfield and Mansfield in partnership with District Council colleagues and the private sector.

We have already commenced a programme of 20mph zones outside schools. The first 20mph speed zone to be implemented outside a school under a new scheme by Nottinghamshire County Council is up and running.

The scheme -- outside Robin Hood Primary and Nursery school in Oxclose Lane, Mansfield Woodhouse was the first since the County Council gave the go-ahead for 20mph speed zones to be implemented outside all the county's schools. I was happy to be there on November 15th when we officially opened the zone. Currently there are 15 schools in Nottinghamshire which have 20mph speed limits. It is planned to roll out the scheme to eventually cover all 338 schools in the county, both primary and secondary.

The Council has already undertaken speed surveys at the first 50 proposed locations, with the remainder of the surveys scheduled to take place between now and March 2014 so that a rolling programme of 20mph zones can be introduced throughout 2014/15 and 2015/16.

We are keeping lights on at night and replacing outmoded technology with LED lighting to make us more energy efficient and save money. We are proud to be a Council that has pledged to switch our street lights back on in every community that requires us to do so.

We fully intend to carry out our promise to modernise our libraries during our four year term. The proposals we have issued for consultation set out a new vision for library management which involves real community involvement and commitment in the

running of these valuable community resources. What could be more modern than that? And this modernisation will be backed by capital funding, where appropriate, to ensure successful transitions to community managed delivery. At the same time, we are continuing with a long term programme of major capital investment in our libraries. Later this month, for example, we will be re-opening Stapleford Library following an extensive refurbishment.

We are investing in our children's centres and our youth provision. We are moving away from a universal offer to a more directed provision aimed at those young people most in need of support. We are continuing to invest in our children's centres and youth provision. Indeed, our proposals for children's centres and our youth service are intended to protect and preserve the vital services they deliver, whilst ensuring that we focus our funding in the communities that need our support the most. And our proposals will ensure that we retain a comprehensive children's centre offer, and one of the largest open access youth networks in the country."

So, we are meeting our pledges and this is actually quite a considerable achievement for a Labour Administration that has only been in office for seven months.

We had every intention of delivering on our pledges when we issued our manifesto and despite the current budgetary difficulties we still have every intention of delivering on those pledges. This administration will protect the most vulnerable in our society just as we said we would.

Chairman I am also happy to tell this Council that to date it seems that the good people of Nottinghamshire also agree with the proposals we have put forward from the consultation responses we have received around the budget.

I am sorry that Cllr Carr is so lacking in innovative ideas or inspiration that he can only see one way of providing services and suggests that any change is a failure to deliver on promises rather than a more cost effective approach. However, I completely understand that being a Liberal Democrat, Councillor Carr is well rehearsed in the non-delivery of pledges.

I've nothing further to add to that other than to say that the question was gratefully received and I'm very happy to give a progress report

But it doesn't surprise me and amply demonstrates why his party will never be in a position to have to make decisions such as this. Let's be thankful for small mercies.

Question to Leader of the Council from Councillor Kay Cutts

Would the Leader of the Council explain the unusually high number of committee meetings that have been either cancelled or postponed since the summer recess, including Culture, Transport & Highways, Rights of Way, Planning & Licensing, Health & Wellbeing (Board) and all but one of the Members' Forums?

Given:-

a) his report to Council in September piloting a reduction in the number of meetings of the Community Safety, Culture, Environment & Sustainability and Rights of Way committees;

b) the proposal through Policy Committee (13/11/13) to scrap Members' Forum meetings, and

c) the reduced number of Full Council meetings this year compared to previous years;

Would the Leader agree with me that this is undermining the committee system and represents a significant democratic deficit?

Response from Councillor Alan Rhodes Leader of the Council

I would like to thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question.

It is however inaccurate and ill-considered and clearly Councillor Cutts has not done any research into the facts of the situation. Allow me to enlighten you.

The facts are these.

Transport and Highways Committee; the meeting on 5th Sept was indeed cancelled and rearranged for 12 days later on 17th September. No reduction in meetings therefore.

Planning and Licensing Committee; the meeting on 17th September was cancelled and rearranged for 30th Sept, for business reasons. No reduction in the number of meetings on that occasion either. There was a meeting cancelled in October due to no business but due to a recent increase in applications which require determination an extra meeting has been added to the calendar for December to cover the work required. In summary exactly the same number of meetings as originally diaryed

Health and Wellbeing Board; the September meeting was rearranged for business reasons and a prearranged workshop was converted to a formal public meeting. No change in the number of formal meetings from that diarised.

Rights of Way Committee; the meeting was rearranged from 4th Sept to 11th Sept. No change in the number of meetings diarised.

Now it is fair to say that four meetings have been cancelled due to lack of business; a Culture Committee, a Health Scrutiny, Public Health and a Joint Committee for Strategic Planning and Transport.

It's also correct that at the last Council Meeting it was agreed that we would pilot a reduction in the meetings cycle for Community Safety Committee, Environment and Sustainability Committee and Culture Committee and that in this municipal year two meetings of Environment and Sustainability Committee, two meetings of Community Safety Committee and three meetings of Culture Committee are due to be cancelled as part of this pilot scheme.

By my calculation across the Municipal Year that equates to 12 meetings cancelled. I'm sure members will be interested to know how that equates to the previous municipal year; the first and only comparative year under the committee system. 12 meetings were cancelled. Shall I repeat that? 12 meetings cancelled; exactly the same number of meetings as are proposed cancelled in this current year. The difference is that this administration has been upfront and clear on the pilot it is running, unlike the previous administration.

Can we now move on to consider Member Forums? Why did these get set up? They were established when the Cabinet System of governance was introduced to ensure members had an opportunity to ask questions about issues that were happening in their areas. They don't form part of the formal governance structure, they aren't included in the constitution and they are not public meetings.

Members can now ask questions at Committees about issues which affect their local areas. The standing orders for committees allow the local member to attend and speak at committees meetings, even if they aren't a member of that committee if an item relates to their patch. The group opposite wanted to introduce a committee system but it seems they want to keep all the processes attached to a cabinet system as well. Clearly they don't really know what they want.

I'm astounded by the Council meeting question. . It is quite correct that the number of Council meetings have been reduced from 8 to 7 per year. But this was done under the previous administration, not under this one. All my administration has done is move the scheduling of Council meetings to better fit the business which is required to be undertaken. There are still 7 Council meetings in this Municipal Year.

I trust the facts which I have set out above satisfy Cllr Cutts but let me be 100% clear. I will not take lessons in democracy from someone who under her Leadership had a rule which only allowed a member to speak once at a committee and who stifled democratic debate. I will not take lessons from someone who presided over a meeting of a Policy Committee which lasted for four minutes and where no comments from any members were allowed in order that she could leave to watch Margaret Thatcher's funeral on the television.

Far from undermining the committee system this administration has embraced it and improved it. Proper debate is allowed in meetings and all members from all sides of the chamber can and do participate in proper debate. All committees are empowered to make decisions. Under the previous administration it was only Policy Committee that was allowed to agree anything. As an administration we have been willing to be flexible when meetings are held in order to ensure meetings occur when needed and not simply because they are diarised a year in advance at that time and date. We are using the system properly and to best effect.

Proper debate. Full agendas. Meetings held when required in order to properly conduct the business of this council. It doesn't sound like a democratic deficit to me Chairman but a well-managed and transparent system of governance.

Question to the Chairman of Transport & Highways Committee from Councillor Sue Saddington

Is the Chairman of the Transport & Highways Committee aware of the damage caused to surrounding roads by the high levels of traffic (including heavy goods vehicles) diverted onto them during the extended closure of Kelham Bridge?

Can he give assurance to road users in my division that these highways will be properly and swiftly repaired?

Response from Councillor Kevin Greaves, Chairman of Transport & Highways Committee

I am aware of the damage caused to surrounding roads as a result of the closure of Kelham Bridge which is why a package of measures are being considered including:

Carriageway repairs

One way streets

Environmental weight limits

In order to reduce delays to the travelling public in future to closures of the bridge.

Question to the Chairman of Transport & Highways Committee from Councillor Philip Owen

Could the Chairman of the Transport & Highways Committee state when the bus plug camera on Nottingham Road in Nuthall will be enforced?

Response from Councillor Kevin Greaves, Chairman of Transport & Highways Committee

The bus gate at Nuthall remains enforceable, as it has been for several years. There is no change to that situation.

It is accepted that currently enforcement is a police matter, and they will only be available to undertake enforcement alongside their other duties.

Therefore camera enforcement is proposed. By the removal of through traffic during the evening rush hour, there will be a benefit to local bus service by making journey times more reliable.

Following a resolution at the Full County Council Meeting on 25th April and the discussion at the Transport and Highways Committee on 6th June, further work has now been undertaken.

We are now establishing a greater detail of feasibility for providing an exemption for some of the local residents. There will be a schedule of consideration at the Transport and Highways Committee on 9th January 2014.

The work conducted on the feasibility of an exemption, for local residents, have included the following:

Consideration of detailed practicalities,

Technical considerations.

And legality of such an arrangement, which unfortunately has taken some time to pull together, due to its complicated nature.

Considerable provision has already been made for local residents through junction improvements in order to provide alternative access during the hours of the restriction, which is only during the evening rush hour.