



Nottinghamshire County Council

Meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

Date Thursday, 16th January 2014 (10.30 am – 5.15 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 MBE
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
Ken Rigby
Tony Roberts MBE
Mrs Sue Saddington
Andy Sissons
Pam Skelding
Stella Smedley MBE JP
Martin Suthers OBE
Parry Tsimbirdis
Gail Turner
Keith Walker
Stuart Wallace
Muriel Weisz
Gordon Wheeler
John Wilkinson
Jacky Williams
John Willmott
Yvonne Woodhead
Liz Yates
Jason Zadrozny

A

HONORARY ALDERMEN

Martin Brandon-Bravo OBE

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mick Burrows	(Chief Executive)
Jayne Francis–Ward	(Policy, Planning and Corporate Services)
Tim Gregory	(Environment and Resources)
Derek Higton	(Children, Families and Cultural Services)
Jon Wilson	(Adult Social Care, Health & Public Protection)
Linda Smith	(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.

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED: 2014/001

That the Minutes of the last meeting of the County Council held on 21st November 2013 be agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Gail Turner (Personal)

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

4. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Councillor Mrs K Cutts MBE

The Chairman, Councillor Alan Rhodes, Councillor Martin Suthers, Councillor Ken Rigby, Councillor Reg Adair, and Councillor Yvonne Woodhead congratulated Councillor Mrs K. Cutts MBE on receiving her award in the Queen's New Year's Honours.

5. CONSTITUENCY ISSUES

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

Councillor Reg Adair - regarding the Youth Centre in Ruddington

Councillor Bruce Laughton – regarding the closure of Youth Centres in his division

Councillor Liz Yates- regarding the proposed reduction in the number of youth buses for the county

Councillor Roger Jackson – regarding parking outside schools

Councillor Richard Jackson – regarding Kingsbridge Way Centre

Councillor Martin Suthers – regarding the closure of recycling centres

Councillor Stephen Garner – regarding ward issues

6. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

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

- (1) Councillor Steve Carr regarding the possible closure of Kingsbridge Way Respite Centre
- (2) Councillor Reg Adair regarding the Youth Centre in Ruddington
- (3) Councillor Bruce Laughton regarding Fiskerton Recycling Centre
- (4) Councillor Liz Yates regarding the proposed reduction in the number of youth buses in the county
- (5) Councillor Richard Butler regarding the household waste recycling centre in Langar
- (6) Councillor Chris Barnfather regarding the retention of Youth Bus facility in Ravenshead
- (7) Councillor Sue Saddington regarding the proposed closure of Fiskerton Household Waste Re-cycling Centre
- (8) Councillor Pam Skelding regarding the closure of Day Centres in Retford
- (9) Councillor Philip Owen regarding parking in Strelley

- (10) Councillor Martin Suthers regarding Langar Recycling Centre
- (11) Councillor Richard Jackson regarding Toton Bus Service
- (12) Councillor Richard Jackson regarding Kingsbridge Way Respite Centre
- (13) Councillor Stuart Wallace regarding the change in parking restrictions on Barnby Gate, Newark
- (14) Councillor Stuart Wallace regarding parking restrictions on Lime Grove and Jubilee Street
- (15) Councillor Stuart Wallace regarding the cuts to the Nottingham Play Service
- (16) Councillor Andy Sissons regarding Open Play for children
- (17) Councillor Stephen Garner regarding Claymoor Close parking issues
- (18) Councillor Tom Hollis regarding cuts to the Framework service
- (19) Councillor Martin Suthers regarding Bingham Youth Centre
- (20) Councillor Steve Carr regarding the replacement of art in The Square, Beeston with a clock
- (21) Councillor John Wilkinson regarding a Fair Deal for Nottinghamshire

RESOLVED: 2014/002

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

7. QUESTIONS

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

No questions were received

(b) QUESTIONS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Four questions had been received as follows:-

- (1) from Councillor Richard Butler regarding why Local Improvement Scheme projects previously approved by committee have been cancelled (Councillor Jim Creamer replied)
- (2) from Councillor Stephen Garner asking why a Local Improvement Scheme within his division had been cancelled (Councillor Jim Creamer replied)
- (3) from Councillor Sue Saddington regarding the provision of bus services from Retford to Newark on Sundays (Councillor Kevin Greaves replied)
- (4) from Councillor Stephen Garner regarding the use of school premises as polling stations (Councillor John Peck replied)

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

Questions (1) and (2) were taken together.

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. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CITY OF NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY COMMITTEE

Councillor Alan Rhodes introduced the report and moved a motion in terms of resolution 2014/003 below.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Diana Meale.

RESOLVED: 2014/003

- (1) That the establishment of the Economic Prosperity Committee be agreed as a joint committee of the following local authorities: Ashfield District Council, Bassetlaw District Council, Broxtowe Borough Council, Gedling Borough Council, Mansfield District Council, Newark and Sherwood District Council, Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council (“the constituent authorities”);
- (2) That the Constitution (Terms of Reference, Membership and procedures) of the Economic Prosperity Committee be agreed as set out at Appendix A to the report.
- (3) That it be noted that any relevant powers previously delegated by the Leader/Executive to individuals or bodies are not expressly withdrawn and will be held concurrently;

- (4) That the Leader of the Council be appointed as the Council's representative on the Economic Prosperity Committee and the Chair of the Economic Development Committee to act as substitute;
- (5) That it be agreed to Nottingham City Council hosting the Committee and providing all necessary secretarial, legal and financial support services, (including S151 and Monitoring Officer roles) and the annual costs involved (estimated to be around £30,000), to be met in equal share by the constituent authorities, until such time as that this can be recovered in part or in whole from external funding streams;
- (6) That this Council's annual contribution to the cost of servicing the Committee in the estimated sum of around £3,300 be met from the Economic Development Committee budget and that any expenses for subsistence or travel in relation to the attendance of Councillors at meetings on Economic Prosperity Committee business be met by the individual authorities from existing budget provision for Members' allowances;
- (7) That an annual report on the Economic Prosperity Committee be brought back to the Council's Policy Committee commencing April 2015;
- (8) That, for the reasons set out in the report, the Committee will have no powers to co-opt.

10. STRATEGIC PLAN

Councillor Alan Rhodes introduced the report and moved a motion in terms of resolution 2014/004 below.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Joyce Bosnjak.

RESOLVED: 2014/004

That the Strategic Plan for 2014-18 be agreed.

11. CONDUCT ISSUES

Councillor Alan Rhodes introduced the report and moved a motion in terms of resolution 2014/005 below.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Joyce Bosnjak.

RESOLVED: 2014/005

- (1) That the Department for Communities and Local Government's guidance regarding openness and transparency on personal interests be noted.

- (2) That the establishment of a Conduct/Standards Committee be agreed and a further report be brought to the February Council meeting setting out the terms of reference and detailed working arrangements for the Committee.

12. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

MOTION ONE

A motion in terms of resolution 2014/006 below was moved by Councillor Colleen Harwood and seconded by Councillor Joyce Bosnjak.

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

RESOLVED 2014/006

Families trying to escape during the school holidays continue to face price increases of more than 50 per cent on term-time breaks results in families missing out on valuable family time.

Some travel companies are putting up breaks by more than £1,000 during the February half-term. And the price gap can be as high as 269 per cent. Some travel firms are holding parents to ransom. The average price of a family holiday for four during the February break is 53 per cent more than the same trip two weeks later.

The financial penalty for taking a holiday in the school break means many families will stay at home. There is also likely to be a rise in the number of families breaking the rules and facing a fine, by taking their children out of school in term time.

This motion calls on Nottinghamshire County Council to ask Nottinghamshire Members of Parliament to bring a debate to Parliament and to call representatives from the Holiday Industry together to discuss the over inflated prices the industry places on holidays and travel during the school holidays, and for the Government to push for a fairer pricing policy for families who wish to take their children on holiday.

MOTION TWO

A motion in terms of resolution 2014/007 below was moved by Councillor Kevin Greaves and seconded by Councillor Steve Calvert

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 34 Members voted '**FOR**' the motion:-

Pauline Allan	Stan Heptinstall MBE
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	Liz Plant
John Clarke	Darrell Pulk
Jim Creamer	Alan Rhodes
Sybil Fielding	Parry Tsimbiridis
Kate Foale	Muriel Weisz
Glynn Gilfoyle	John Wilkinson
Kevin Greaves	Jacky Williams
Alice Grice	John Wilmott
Colleen Harwood	Yvonne Woodhead

The following 16 Members voted '**AGAINST**' the motion:-

Reg Adair	Richard Jackson
Chris Barnfather	Roger Jackson
Andrew Brown	Bruce Laughton
Richard Butler	Philip Owen
John Cottee	Sue Saddington
Kay Cutts MBE	Martin Suthers OBE
Boyd Elliott	Keith Walker
John Handley	Liz Yates

Councillor Maureen Dobson abstained.

The Chairman declared the motion carried and it was:-

RESOLVED: 2014/007

Nottinghamshire County Council recognises the huge social, economic and environmental benefits the Tram brings to the City of Nottingham and the areas of Nottinghamshire it serves.

Nottinghamshire County Council will, in principle, support the future development of the tram by working in partnership with the District and Borough Councils and Nottingham City Council.

13. ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

None

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 5.15 pm.

CHAIRMAN

APPENDIX A

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 16th September 2013

3 MINUTE SPEECHES

Councillor Reg Adair

Chairman it is with a heavy heart that I on behalf of the young people and old in my Ruddington division make this speech in this chamber today. I shall shortly be handing in a petition to this Council on behalf of 1,379 residents who signed this to save Ruddington Youth Centre.

Ruddington Youth Centre serves as much more than just a youth centre. It also provides Ruddington with an invaluable community venue and is used by young people, new parents, senior citizens and church groups alike. These groups allow people not just to connect, but to learn and develop themselves, to keep fit and healthy, to teach children and young people how to successfully interact together and critically enable networks to form across our community.

Ruddington is a growing village and the closure of this centre will have a serious impact not just on our community today but increasingly in the future. Ruddington young people and wider have as much right to investment and resources as all other communities in the county and I would like to understand why we are picked out for closure of this vital resource.

The Ruddington youth centre is the only place for young people of Ruddington to go. If this Council closes it, you're turning the young people onto the streets. They will then hang around the street corners, village doorways, bus shelters for places to communicate with each other. If history repeats itself, they will then end up with the police and the courts.

Ruddington youth workers have in the last few years taken young people off the streets and given them direction for the future. This work will be lost if this proposal is carried out. The cost of looking after them will then move from one service to another.

Following the consultation period, it is very clear that residents i.e. the 1300+ who signed the petition are not in favour of the closure of Ruddington Youth Centre and wish it to remain open for services to the community.

Councillor Bruce Laughton

On Friday night I had the pleasure of going out with the street pastors in my area in Southwell run by the local Methodists and we went around for 3 or 4 hours around Southwell looking at all the areas and we visited many groups of youngsters who were congregating around the area. We handed out water and rhubarb and custard lollipops

and they were most appreciated and I'd like to pass my thanks on for all the hard work that they do.

But our last calling was to go to the Caunton Youth Centre and we spoke to the staff there and I was extremely impressed because their jobs are at risk and they are still carrying out a very professional job for the youngsters in my patch. It is extremely busy and I spoke to one 16 year old girl who had been going to the Youth Centre since she was 12 and she openly admitted that it was down to the youth workers within the core that had kept her head straight as she put it very explicitly.

Another lad who was pointed out by the Youth Centre was sat in the corner with his mates around him and he was the main leader for any anti-social behaviour that goes on in my patch. And there he was under control at the youth club and being supervised. If you close my core completely you will push this lad straight back out onto the street and he will continue to do what he did previously before he visited the centre.

This is not based on deprivation; this is based on a leaderless, directionless policy which will effectively cause considerably problems in my patch. Your policy is wrong, particularly on the back of your strategic plan which states quite clearly one of your main policies is 'treating people fairly'; this is not treating people fairly, this is treating people unfairly. We are quite prepared to accept service change but obliteration is wrong and we should not continue down this route while protecting services in your own area. My residents recognise this and if you don't do something about it and I give you a warning Stella Smedley gave us 4 years ago over a particular issue – the electorate will get rid of you at the next election.

Councillor Liz Yates

Later I will be handing in a petition of 283 signatures from young people, parents and residents of some villages within the Misterton division regarding the proposed reduction in the number of Youth buses.

The youth buses has been a regular visitor to some villages for the past 3 to 4 years giving opportunities to young people they would not have experienced without this service. The youth workers who provide the facility do an excellent job building relationships and providing information, activities and social inclusion.

This is something the Conservatives recognised and acted on early in our administration. In the current budget proposals, it is proposed to reduce the number of buses from 10 down to 4 in the county. This would inevitably lead to the loss of the service for some if not all users, leaving them with no youth service provision.

You only have to visit Teenfest – an event that is held annually in Kings Park, Retford, to see the enthusiasm of the young people who engage with the youth centres and the mobile units and their rapport with the youth service staff. For the last few years it has worked well; it's highly valued by the Parishes residents and the Police.

Please do think very carefully about the reduction of this excellent service. Rural areas and their young people do not deserve these drastic cuts.

Councillor Roger Jackson

I rise to talk about an issue that I think affects a lot of people in this chamber. That is the parking outside schools and the danger it causes to the children who go there. It comes as a topic that most of my parishes where they have a school in their area and they also get a lot of lobbying by local headmasters and school governors all the time about the dangers to the children and the irresponsible parking of some of the parents dropping their children off outside the school gates.

They have tried many ways of trying to get the parents to be more responsible with safety campaigns and getting the children involved in projects to try and educate them to the risks and the dangers that they cause but when you look into this a bit further you find out that most schools have no provision for parking, even for the teachers and the auxiliary staff that work there so that automatically creates 8, 10, 12 cars parked outside schools all day and provide no extra parking for people dropping off their children.

So Chairman can we be a little bit more proactive please and create some parking spaces outside schools for the people who work there. If any other ones are being built or especially if any refurbishment is carried out in the near future.

We're about to spend £750,000 in temporary advisory signs for 20 miles an hour speed limits outside schools while an assessment is done to go on the full spending millions on putting a full advisory measure of 20 mph outside schools. I look around members, and I say yes, a 20 mph speed limit is very desirable here but put your hands on your heart; is that the best way to spend the public purse at this time of spending cuts? Especially when we can do a little bit more proactiveness and try and eliminate the dangers outside our schools by adding a small amount of parking for the teachers and auxiliary staff so we provide spaces for parents to drop their children off and do more to educate the children and the parents on the dangers of parking outside the schools and irresponsible parking that goes on.

I'm of an age Chairman like a few more around here where I used to walk to school. I used to enjoy walking to school and I used to enjoy the company of my schoolmates as I went to school. In this age of convenience, people now are getting a little bit lazy and everybody has to drive their children to school and this is something we have to cater for and the dangers that it poses.

Councillor Richard Jackson

I am speaking today to draw member's attention to the closure of Kingsbridge Way respite centre which is in my Chilwell division and in spite of the fact that the Council's consultation on the budget says that it's in Beeston, it has a Bramcote postal address and is actually in Chilwell.

Members who have not studied the detail of the Council's budget cuts may not be aware of the planned closure of Kingsbridge Way, others may not fully understand the vital service that Kingsbridge Way provides to service users, their carers and their families.

I don't believe that the impacts of planned closure of Kingsbridge Way have been fully thought through and I am calling on the Labour Group to look again at this vital service.

Mr Chairman I had written a three minute speech but quite frankly having looked through the comments made by some of the signatories to the petition which I'm going to present in a few minutes I thought it would be far more powerful to share some of these comments with Council today rather than say this in my own words. There are hundreds of these, literally and I'll make these available to all groups so that members have a chance to look at these before making a decision at February's meeting.

Just to pick a few out but in no particular order, one is

"I know how vital respite care is to my friends with children who require round the clock care"

"My friend's brother with special needs goes daily here, it's very important for adults with learning difficulties to be independent and to be looked after"

"It is vitally important that respite facilities especially ones that are valued within the community are supported and well used. They provide a much needed respite for families, independence for users and integrate people who are different and yet make up the wealth of variety of our population, within a local community"

Another works with parents of children and young people with learning disabilities who says that she's also the sister of a brother with autism and knows first-hand of the enormous stress that this can put on a family;

"Respite care provides a valuable lifeline to not only parents but siblings too as they also are affected by the impact on family life that having a person with special needs brings. Respite care is vital to allow families to recharge their batteries and have some semblance of 'normal' family life for short periods of time - (this is) not much to ask, surely?"

I'll pick a few more out;

"Kingsbridge Way is well known to provide a high quality service. It is trusted by family carers and actually loved by many of the people it cares for. It provides true respite, because carers can have peace of mind when they are away from those they love. That is a very rare thing. It has taken years for this level of respect to be earned, and it cannot be replaced at the stroke of a pen. Many of the family carers who use the service have very stressful lives. Some are multiple carers. Some are elderly, with health problems of their own. They all know what it is to be thoroughly exhausted! Some will struggle on alone rather than see their loved ones passed around like a sack of

potatoes. When they fail, the emotional cost will be devastating, and guess what? The financial cost of picking up the pieces will go to Nottinghamshire County Council”.

Chairman I'd call upon all members to be very careful before making this decision.

Councillor Martin Suthers OBE

Under the next item on the agenda I shall be presenting an electronic petition that's attached some 1500 signatures objecting to the proposed closure of the Langar waste recycling centre. The petition's been sponsored by my colleague Councillor Butler who represents Langar but I'm presenting it because the greatest number of signatures are from my division.

My purpose in making this 3 minute speech though is not to rehearse the usual arguments against tip closures about increased fly tipping and inconvenience of residents going to other sites elsewhere in the County but to draw attention to the fact that less than 4 miles from Langar tip as the crow flies there is another waste recycling centre.

The problem is however of course that it located at Bottesford which is in Leicestershire and of course traditionally and historically waste disposal authorities have quite understandably because their council taxpayers are funding the facility discouraged those from other areas from using those facilities. We have done so, those from Derbyshire, Leicestershire & Lincolnshire, they have returned the compliment.

But it is a fact that for quite a number of my constituents Bottesford is the nearest waste recycling centre and I have asked them what their experience of going there has been and they have said well they've never had a problem and others have said that they have been turned away.

Now Mr Chairman I would suggest that at a time when by common consent of all of us, frontline services are under unprecedented strain and we are encouraged to think in terms of sharing services and lateral thinking on these things it is quite unacceptable that we allow ourselves to be hogtied by County boundaries that were fixed in rather different conditions about a 1,000 years ago.

So what I'm asking is that before this decision to close this is taken, there should be serious discussion with Leicestershire County Council because dismayed as my constituents may be at the possibility of closure of Langar tip, that dismay would turn to outrage if Leicestershire for similar reasons of underuse also closed Bottesford tip leaving a very wide section of 2 Counties extending into a third without a facility that as a matter of public policy we are all urged to promote. So that is my request cause I think it may well be the closure of one of other of those facilities is realistic but the savings that could be made could help to sustain the other and continue to provide a service that is greatly need.

Councillor Stephen Garner

I would like to have this 3 minute speech with a couple of issues I've got in the ward.

I would like to make members aware of the issues within my division of South Mansfield and put on record. A few days ago a local improvement scheme I had approved in March 2013 has been pulled, or cancelled. This has been blamed on the unprecedented cuts totalling £154 million the communiqué says with the demand to help support more vulnerable older people. Well, this scheme was to help one of my very old vulnerable residents; a lady over ninety years of age who cannot get by her gateway onto the pedestrian highway with her three wheeled trike for walking due to the girth of the mature tree. This mobility issue was a reason for this LIS scheme and I would like you to have a look at it again please.

I have a long-term issue and I have brought it up on the Transport Committee; 7.5 tonne weight restriction. Well, we are clambering to get these put on roads. I can't fault that, I welcome them absolutely, great, fantastic! However in my division this is not working, nobody or very few lorry drivers take any notice. The B6030 section from Forest Road to Sherwood Hall has had a weight restriction for well over a year now. My concerns are we have Asquith Primary School on Carter Lane with 380 children. The road being narrow, narrow pavements with parking on one side, against 40 odd tonne articulated lorries constantly passing by.

Yes Trading Standards teams have been out and they have taken action but I believe more is needed. I would like to have (I know a camera's expensive) but a bit more monitoring, probably a chain across the road maybe. Obviously I stand here for half an hour here, half an hour there but I catch two or three which is my main concern. So I'd just like to bring that to the Council's attention.

APPENDIX B

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 16th JANUARY 2014 QUESTIONS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Question to the Chairman of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, from Councillor Richard Butler

"I have recently been made aware by applicants for Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) projects that had been previously approved by committee, that their projects had been cancelled due to "Government budget cuts forcing changes to LIS in 2013-14".

Could the Committee Chairman please explain:

1. When and how were these projects chosen?
2. When was the committee informed and when was it able to discuss previously agreed decisions being cancelled?
3. How were the cancelled projects chosen and prioritised?
4. Why are budget savings planned for 2014/15 affecting projects that were costed and agreed for the 2013/14 financial year?
5. Could you confirm that funding for LIS projects is capital expenditure and not revenue budget?"

Question to the Chairman of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, from Councillor Stephen Garner

"Just recently in the last couple of days I have had confirmation that a Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) within my division granted in the 2013/14 budget has been cancelled.

1. Can you tell this Council how many other LIS projects have been cancelled.
2. Can you tell this Council the net savings you have made by doing so."

Responses for both questions from Councillor Jim Creamer, Chairman of the Environment and Sustainability Committee

"A programme was brought to the Environment and Sustainability Committee in October which set out the plans that would reprioritise capital investment that has supported the running of the Local Improvement Scheme. It was agreed that the Council would establish:

A capital fund focused on economic development and growth and the establishment of a 'Supporting Local Communities Fund' to support infrastructure projects with community benefits.

The previous LIS scheme did not have a specific focus on economic growth and job creation as this has never been the primary focus of the scheme.

However due to the priority given by the Council towards economic growth, and the commitment to deliver jobs, skills and training for Nottinghamshire, the priority of the programme changed.

It was found that the Council's discretionary capital investment could deliver greater economic impact and job creation, generate impact and create a substantial numbers of jobs and growth opportunities if the priorities of the scheme were realigned.

Capital investment would therefore be targeted at fewer but larger schemes involving partners from the Borough and District Councils and the business community. Schemes that would play a part in the regeneration of areas. This approach would offer the Council opportunities to seek substantial match funding from the D2N2 Single Local Growth Fund for some of the schemes.

The conclusion was reached that in order to achieve the Council's objectives in terms of economic growth and job creation; the discretionary capital allocation should be split.

- A. £0.5m retained for community-based environmental improvement Schemes and
- B. £1m redirected to a new scheme focused on growth and job creation

This process and the need to re-assess current year schemes that unfortunately can no longer be supported, for delivery in the following financial year was reported to, and approved by the Environment and Sustainability Committee in December. Projects were chosen on the basis of schemes that have not actually started on the ground so as to avoid abortive costs. Due to the size of the budget issues and in order to minimize the number of applicants affected. Please note that schemes under £10,000 were excluded from this process.

The Environment and Sustainability Committee was informed and approved the need to re-assess schemes in December. The new programme for 2014/15 and the list of schemes that cannot be delivered this year will be reported to Committee in March.

I have been informed that there has always been an element of over-programming and this was true for the 2013/14 programme. I am sure that Councillor Richard Butler would be aware of this as he was the Chair of Environment and Sustainability Committee during the last administration. Any schemes that are not able to be delivered this year (to manage the programme within its £3m allocation) will be assessed alongside all new applications for funding in 2014/15.

I can confirm that to date no projects have been cancelled, but that 23 projects in total have been informed that their applications will be re-assessed alongside all new applications for funding in 2014/15 but will not be given any additional priority compared with the new applications.

The Council only ever had £3m to spend this year and has a committed budget of £0.5m for next year. The Council will spend these budgets in full."

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

“Would the Chairman agree with me that the removal of Sunday bus services from rural areas will have a huge impact on the lives of residents who for one reason or another are unable to drive?”

In some cases if residents work on a Sunday they would be unable (to) travel to work, or perhaps visit relatives in hospital or access other activities within the town leading to a sense of isolation or loneliness.

Would the Chairman consider the possibility of providing, for example in my case in the Farndon and Muskham division, one or two buses into Newark from the villages on the Retford to Newark service on a Sunday morning and one or two buses back from Newark to Retford in the early and late afternoon. This would provide a retention of part of the existing service to residents.”

Response from Councillor Kevin Greaves, Chairman of the Transport and Highways Committee

“The supported bus service budget is circa £6m per annum which, since 2003 has reduced from £10m per annum. This budget supports journeys that are not covered by commercial operators and which have been deemed necessary for people to access key services. The current proposals will reduce funding by £1.8m over the next two years through service efficiencies (£1.1m) and service reductions / withdrawals (£700k). These include early morning, evening and Sunday services which are high cost and with low usage by the public.

The budget reduction proposals include 16 contracts for Sunday & bank holiday services. These cover partial financial support for 13 routes which are commercially operated and 3 routes which are fully supported by the County Council. Usage on these services is low with an average of 3 passengers per trip on the fully supported services.

At the present time it is unlikely that any continued or new financial support for limited Sunday services in the Farndon, Muskham area can be found from the proposed 2014/15 local bus budget”.

Question to the Chairman of the Children & Young People’s Committee, from Councillor Stephen Garner

“Chairman, with the European elections this year, isn’t it time we stopped using school premises as a polling station and thought about our children’s education.

There are many alternative venues in Nottinghamshire we could use rather than disrupting not only the children’s education but the parents with work commitments.

I would like to request that this Council encourages Districts and Boroughs to find an alternative venue for future elections. To stop schools being closed. To stop parents having to find alternative arrangements. To minimise disruption to our children."

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

"My thanks to Councillor Garner for raising this matter.

However whilst the question makes reference to the use of school premises as polling stations, this is actually a matter over which District Councils have responsibility, that is to say, for the organisation of elections and ensuring there are appropriate and accessible premises within each electoral ward, to be used as polling stations.

In an ideal world, it might be best if the use of schools as polling stations is limited, where suitable alternative and easily accessible alternative premises are available.

But the fact is that elections in this country are invariably held during the school term and always on a Thursday. Personally, we wouldn't be having this discussion if elections were on a Sunday.

It is just a fact, that in some communities the only building of a suitable size and accessibility is the local school. This situation has been exacerbated over the years as Councils and other organisations have closed community centres and leisure centres and in Nottinghamshire many of the Miners Welfares have been closed and demolished. As we speak, the Miners Welfare in my village is being demolished and that has been a polling station in Edwinstowe for as long as anyone can remember.

By no means is every school in the County used as a polling station and I know that the Local Authority has offered advice to schools in the past. It is possible, as schools know the dates of elections well in advance to plan to hold one of the five INSET days on the same as an election day, so the staff work in a separate part of the school to the polling station area and the children do not lose one of their 190 statutory days of schooling.

However in these days of school autonomy, that decision rests with the Head Teacher and Governors and not with me."