

**PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD MONDAY 23 MAY 2012**

**Present:**

Councillors Allen, Arculus, Ash, Casey, Cereste, M Dalton, Davidson, Day, Eley, Fitzgerald, Fletcher, Forbes, Fower, JR Fox, JA Fox, Goodwin, Harper, Harrington, Hiller, Holdich, Jamil, Johnson, Khan, Knowles, Kreling, Lamb, Lee, Maqbool, Martin, McKean, Miners, Nadeem, Nawaz, North, Over, Peach, Rush, Saltmarsh, Sanders, Sandford, Scott, Seaton, Serluca, Shabbir, Shaheed, Sharp, Shearman, Simons, Stokes, Swift, Sylvester, Thacker, Todd, Thulbourn and Walsh.

**Photographs During Proceedings**

The Mayor addressed the meeting and requested Members consent to photographs being taking during the ceremonial proceedings as required by the Council's Constitution. Members agreed to photographs being taking during the ceremonial proceedings.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Murphy and Lane.

**2. Election of the Mayor for the Municipal Year 2012 / 2013**

The Retiring Mayor requested nominations for the election of Mayor for 2012 / 2013.

Councillor Simons was nominated and seconded.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Simons was duly elected Mayor for the Municipal Year 2012 / 2013.

The Mayor made and signed his Declaration of Office. The retiring Mayor, Councillor Thacker invested the Mayor with his Chain of Office and the retiring Mayor's Consort, Ray Dobbs invested the Mayoress, Mrs Sylvia Simons, with her Chain of Office.

**3. Election of Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2012 / 2013**

The Mayor requested nominations for the election of Deputy Mayor for 2012 / 2013.

Councillor Stokes was nominated and seconded.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Stokes was duly elected Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2012 / 2013.

The Deputy Mayor made and signed her Declaration of Office. The Mayor invested the Deputy Mayor with her Chain of Office and the Mayor's Consort invested the Deputy Mayoress, Mrs Karien Gate, with her Chain of Office.

#### **4. Investiture of Badges of Office and Vote of Thanks to the Retiring Mayor and Mayoress**

Councillor Lee proposed a vote of thanks to the retiring Mayor, Councillor Thacker. This vote of thanks was seconded and endorsed by Councillor Cereste. Members agreed to support the vote of thanks.

Councillor Thacker responded to the vote of thanks and expressed her gratitude to all the people who had supported her throughout her term of office as Mayor.

Councillor Thacker further highlighted her key achievements for the year and advised that, to date, she had helped to raise just under £60,000 for her chosen charities.

The Mayor invited Councillor Thacker to receive her Badge of Office in recognition of her service to the city. Upon receiving her Badge of Office, Councillor Thacker presented the retiring Mayor's Consort and Deputy Mayor with their Badges of Office and the retiring Deputy Mayoress with a gift.

A special award was presented by Councillor Thacker to Mr James Deboo OBE for his outstanding contribution to the community.

The Mayor thanked all Members for their support in electing him as Mayor and expressed his thanks to Councillor Thacker for her hard work and dedication over the previous municipal year. The Mayor confirmed his chosen charities for his term of office as The Rudolph Fund and Supporters of Combat Stress.

#### **5. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **6. Minutes of the Meetings held 18 April 2012**

The minutes of the meetings held 18 April 2012 were agreed and signed as an accurate record.

#### **7. Results of the Local Elections 2012**

The results of the Local Elections 2012 were noted.

Councillor Swift requested that going forward the number of rejected postal ballot papers be included in the rejected figures per ward.

#### **8. Political Groups and Group Officers 2012 / 2013**

The membership of Political Groups and their Officers for the Municipal Year 2012 / 2013 were noted.

#### **9. Annual Appointments and Scheme of Delegations**

Councillor Cereste addressed the meeting and moved the first two recommendations contained within the report.

Councillor Cereste presented his Scheme of Delegations advising that he would be taking responsibility for a portfolio focusing on strategic growth, planning, economic development, business engagement and environment capital and highlighting priorities for the year including:

- Continue to encourage growth opportunities;
- Major events for the city centre were coming in the next year;
- Continued efficiencies;
- Continue improvements and investment in schools and children's services; and
- Continue to provide housing for families and communities.

Councillor Cereste further thanked former Councillor Samantha Dalton for all of her work over the previous four years and named his Cabinet Members and advisors and their responsibilities, highlighting the administration's priorities for the Municipal Year ahead.

Councillor Lee seconded the recommendations and outlined the growth opportunities for the year ahead.

The Mayor invited Group Leaders in turn to comment on Councillor Cereste's proposals.

Councillor Khan addressed the meeting and raised the following key points:

- The new Cabinet structure was disappointing. The Leader had missed an opportunity to revitalise the city by appointing new Members;
- Following the failure of the Ofsted inspection in Children's Services, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services should not have remained in post;
- Labour group would provide positive and constructive opposition.

Councillor Harrington addressed the meeting and raised the following key points:

- The Members of the Peterborough Independent Forum questioned the Leader's appointment of additional Cabinet Advisors, with the raising of Council Tax and the current number of special responsibility allowances paid to Members, this could not be justified;
- In some Neighbourhood Committees, the ruling political group did not hold the majority, therefore the appointment of Chairman from the ruling political group was questionable;
- Peterborough Independent Forum would also provide constructive opposition.

Councillor Sandford addressed the meeting and raised the following key points:

- Peterborough was a medium sized Authority and it had almost the maximum number of Cabinet Members permitted by Legislation. In times of austerity, why were all these Cabinet Members required alongside an increase in Cabinet Advisors?;
- The situation within Children's Services was extremely serious and the re-appointment of the current Cabinet Member for Children's Services was not perceived to be credible;
- The Leader had previously stated that the Neighbourhood Committee were to be given delegations for a number of areas. This had yet to transpire and Neighbourhood Committees did not appear to be a priority;
- The size of the Cabinet should be reduced and a more meaningful budget should be given to the Neighbourhood Committees.

Councillor Cereste summed up and he stated that he appreciated the comments made by the Group Leaders and that decisions made had been based on the facts available to him at that time. Councillor Cereste further stated that he stood by his decision to retain Councillor Scott as Cabinet Member for Children's Services and that Neighbourhood Committees would continue to be given more powers and greater budgets going forward.

Following debate a vote was taken (31 for, 11 against, 10 abstentions) and it was **AGREED**:

1. and 2. To note the decision taken at Annual Council on 16 May 2011 to elect the Leader for a period of four years and the Leader's appointment of Cabinet members and their portfolios for 2012/13 municipal year.

Councillor Cereste addressed the meeting and moved the third recommendation contained within the report which was to approve the Council's new committee structure and to note the revised programme of meetings for 2012/13.

Councillor Lee seconded the recommendation and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Sandford declared an objection to the committee structure and furthermore to the exemption of certain committees from the political balance calculation in accordance with Section 17 of the Local Government Act 1989. Councillor Sandford further outlined his reasons for objection, including:

- The merging of the two Scrutiny Committees, with the largest ranges of responsibility, was done without consultation with Group Leaders or other party members;
- There had been no proper negotiation between parties with regards to the composition of Committees. The Liberal Democrats had been given the seats that no other Party had wanted and this was unacceptable.

Councillor Lee addressed the meeting and stated that the inclusion of Committees which had been exempt from political balance would have no real affect on the Committee structure.

The Legal Officer clarified that if any Member voted against the recommendation, a recess would be taken in order allow for an amendment to be made to the recommendation.

A vote was taken (42 for, 4 against, 6 abstentions) and the recommendation was **REFUSED**.

The meeting was adjourned for 10 minutes to allow amended paperwork, incorporating all committees into the political balance calculations, to be circulated.

The meeting was reconvened and the amended committee structure, along with the revised programme of meetings, was moved by Councillor Cereste and seconded by Councillor Lee, who reserved his right to speak and commented on how the revised structure had in no way benefitted the Liberal Democrats group.

A vote was taken (47 for, 4 against, 2 abstentions) and it was **AGREED**:

3. To note the amended committee structure and the revised programme of meetings for 2012 / 2013.

Councillor Cereste addressed the meeting and moved the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh recommendations contained within the report, these being for Council to agree the Terms of Reference of Committees and the Council's Scheme of Delegations; to agree the allocation of seats to Political Groups; to appoint the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the Council's Committees and Committee Memberships for 2012 / 2013 and its representatives to serve on the Fire Authority and the Joint Selection Panel for the Police Authority, with an amendment being that Councillor Harper to be Chairman of the Fletton, Stanground and Woodston Neighbourhood Committee; and lastly to delegate the consequential updating of the Constitution to the Monitoring Officer.

Councillor Lee seconded the recommendations and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Sandford moved an amendment to the report, detailing the Chairmen and Committee Membership for 2012 / 2013. The amendment proposed that Councillor Fower be appointed as Chairman of the Peterborough North Area Committee. Councillor Sandford

stated that the Council had chosen to impose its own Chairman and the composition of the Peterborough North Area Committee meant that the Liberal Democrats, having the largest proportion of seats, should be entitled to the Chair of that Committee.

This motion was seconded by Councillor Fower, who also stated that if he was appointed as Chairman he would forego his additional allowance to enable this to be utilised in the community.

Following a brief debate a vote was taken (5 for, 30 against, 20 abstentions) and the amended was **DEFEATED**.

Following brief debate on the original recommendations, as proposed by Councillor Cereste and seconded by Councillor Lee, a vote was taken (29 for, 5 against, 18 abstentions) and it was **AGREED**:

4. That the Terms of Reference for the Committees and Commissions, as referred to in the order paper at Appendix D, be agreed;
5. That the amended allocation of seats to political groups, incorporating changes to the committees that are subject to political balance calculations, be agreed;
6. That the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Committees and Chairmen of the Neighbourhood Committees and the Committee Memberships for 2012/13 including co opted members and appointments to the Fire Authority and the Joint Selection Panel for the Police Authority, as set out in the amended paper to incorporate the revised political balance arrangements, be agreed 13 (with an amendment that Cllr Harper be chairman of the Fletton, Stanground and Woodston Neighbourhood Committee); and
7. That consequential updating of the Constitution, including those updates arising from the above, is delegated to the Monitoring Officer and the revised members remuneration allocation at Appendix G be noted.

The Mayor  
18.30 – 20.35