

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD WEDNESDAY 15 MAY 2015
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

THE MAYOR – COUNCILLOR JOHN PEACH

Present:

Councillors Aitken, Ash, Bisby, Brown, Casey, Coles, Davidson, Elsey, Faustino, Ferris, Fitzgerald, Forbes, Fower, F Fox, JR Fox, JA Fox, Harper, Harrington, Herdman, Hiller, Holdich, Jamil, Iqbal, Johnson, Khan, Knowles, Lamb, Lane, Maqbool, Martin, Miners, Murphy, Nadeem, Nawaz, North, Okonkowski, Over, Peach, Rush, Saltmarsh, Sanders, Sandford, Scott, Seaton, Serluca, Shaheed, Sharp, Shearman, Stokes, Swift, Sylvester, Thacker, Thulbourn, Whitby and Yonga.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Shabbir.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 April 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2015 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. Mayor's Announcements

There were no announcements from the Mayor.

5. Chief Executive's Announcements

There were no announcements from the Chief Executive.

6. Report of the Returning Officer

Members received and noted a report which detailed the results of the Local Elections held on Thursday 7 May, 2015.

Councillor Murphy queried whether further investigation could be undertaken as to the effect that rejected postal votes had on the overall turnout figure.

The Mayor advised that this was a matter for the returning officer and Councillor Murphy's comments had been noted.

7. Political Groups and Group Officers 2015 / 2016

The membership of Political Groups and their Officers for the Municipal Year 2015 / 2016 were noted and agreed subject to the removal of 'Group Whip' from the Werrington First Group.

8. Appointment of the Executive and Leader's Scheme of Delegations

The Mayor introduced the item and invited nomination for the appointment of Leader for a period of four years.

Councillor Murphy queried whether the Mayor would permit debate as to the length of appointment for the Leader, to be one year rather than four years.

The Legal Officer advised that the Council's Constitution explicitly set out that a Leader would be appointed for a four year period and if Members wished to debate a change, this would need to be brought back to a future meeting for consideration.

Councillor Hiller proposed Councillor Holdich as Leader of the Council, sighting his passion for the city and his proven track record over the years. This was seconded by Councillor Scott.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Holdich was duly elected as Leader of the Council for a period of four years.

Councillor Holdich addressed the meeting and moved the recommendations as detailed within the report and presented his Scheme of Delegations advising that he would be retaining responsibility for 'Education, Skills and University' with the addition of Communications. Councillor Holdich further named his Cabinet Members and advisors and their responsibilities and key areas to be addressed, these included:

- i. Councillor Wayne Fitzgerald Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Integrated Adult Social Care and Health;
- ii. Councillor Gavin Elsey Cabinet Member for Digital, Waste and Street Scene;
- iii. Councillor Peter Hiller Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development;
- iv. Councillor Diane Lamb Cabinet Member for Public Health;
- v. Councillor Nigel North Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment Capital;
- vi. Councillor Sheila Scott Cabinet Member for Children's Services;
- vii. Councillor David Seaton Cabinet Member for Resources;
- viii. Councillor Lucia Serluca Cabinet Member for City Centre Management, Culture & Tourism;
- ix. Councillor Graham Casey, Cabinet Advisor to the Cabinet Member for City Centre Management, Culture & Tourism (Culture & Recreation); and
- x. Councillor Yasmeen Maqbool, Cabinet Advisor for Children's Safeguarding.

Councillor Holdich further advised that he looked forward to working closely with all the political groups throughout the forthcoming year.

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

The Mayor invited Group Leaders to comment on Councillor Holdich's proposals. All congratulated him on his appointment and raised further points including:

- There was now an opportunity for a change of style to be adopted and for a more open and engaging approach to be taken forward;
- The number of Cabinet Members and Advisors was still considered to be high, particularly with the number of services that were now outsourced;
- It was hoped that work would be undertaken across all Groups to ensure the best for the city during difficult financial times;
- It was appropriate that the largest group on the Council held leadership;

- The austerity agenda needed to be responded to and the cross party budget working group should be taken forward;
- Assurance was sought that the work of the Alternative Governance Working Group would be pursued in order to look at an alternative system of governance to be implemented from 2016; and
- Further assurance was sought that a review of public transport would be undertaken, showing commitment to the environmental agenda;

Councillor Fitzgerald exercised his right to speak as seconder of the recommendations and stated that it would be important for all Groups to continue to work together and for opposition Members to ensure that they engaged themselves at an earlier stage.

Councillor Holdich summed up and thanked Group Leaders for their comments. He further advised that previous comments on the importance of Public Health had been taken on board, hence the formation of the Cabinet Member role for Public Health.

Following debate it was **AGREED**:

- To elect Councillor John Holdich as Leader of the Council for a period of four years;
- To note the appointment of the Cabinet and the Leader's Scheme of Delegation to Cabinet Members and officers; and
- To agree to amend the Constitution to include the Leader's Scheme of Delegation to Cabinet Members and officers.

9. Committee Structures, Delegations and Allocations

Councillor Holdich addressed the meeting and moved the recommendations as detailed within the report along with proposed amendments including the increase in size of the Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee to ten members and that the Employment Committee start time be 7.00pm in the evening, except for interviews and appointment meetings. Councillor Holdich further moved that the Audit Committee and the Planning Review Committee be removed from the political balance seat allocations to allow for cross party representation, the revised figures for which were tabled for Members. This was seconded by Councillor Fitzgerald who reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Sandford addressed the meeting and concurred that the move to a ten Member Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee was a good move, along with the change in start time for the Employment Committee in order to allow for Members who had difficulty attending daytime meetings, along with members of the public.

Following a vote (54 For, 1 Abstention), it was **AGREED** that:

The Audit Committee and the Planning Review Committee be removed from the political balance requirements, equating to Council seat allocations of 75.

Following a vote on the remainder of the motion (unanimous), it was **AGREED** that:

- The Council agree the Committee structure:
 - as set out at paragraph 3.1 of the report (*as agreed to remove the Audit Committee and the Planning Review Committee from the political balance calculations*); and

- (ii) that the terms of reference of those committees and the Council's Scheme of Delegations remained as currently set out in the Constitution, subject to any changes tabled at the meeting.
- (b) Council noted the programme of meeting schedules;
- (c) The Audit Committee and the Planning Review Committee be exempted from the political balance seat arrangements;
- (d) Council agreed the allocation of seats on Committees of the Council, subject to political balance seat arrangements; and
- (e) Council agreed the allocation of seats on Committees to be appointed to by the Council, not subject to political balance seat arrangements.

10. Appointments to Committees and Other Bodies

Councillor Holdich addressed the meeting and moved the recommendations as detailed within the report along with the tabled Committee Membership document. Councillor Holdich further moved that it be permitted that appointments to Outside Bodies be made by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with political group wishes.

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

Councillor Fower moved an amendment to the recommendations which sought that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committees be appointed by the Committees themselves and that the Chair of the Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee be Councillor Sanford, and the Vice Chair be Councillor Thulbourn. This would send out a strong democratic message to the people of Peterborough, making for a fairer scrutiny system.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Jamil who stated that although Conservatives had the largest Group, they did not have the majority of seats. The public would gain more confidence by proper scrutiny being implemented.

Councillor Holdich exercised his right of reply as mover of the original recommendations and stated that he did not believe the amendment fair as Conservatives were proposed for exclusion completely.

A vote was taken (28 For, 27 Against) and the amendment was **CARRIED**.

Members debated the substantive motion and in summary raised points including:

- It was requested that Conservative Members not be excluded from the consideration of the position of Chair. There were many experienced Members with a wealth of knowledge;
- If Group Leaders come together to discuss the allocation of seats, Conservative Members not in the Cabinet should also be considered;
- Why had opposition Members not been considered for Chair previously;
- The Conservative Party had held overall majority until this point; and
- All Members needed to have democratic input.

Councillor Holdich summed up as mover of the original recommendations stating that he hoped all Members would work together going forward.

Following a vote (unanimous), it was **AGREED**:

- (a) Where the allocation to different political groups of the seats on committees and other bodies had been determined under Agenda Item 10, that Council
 - (i) make appointments to those Committees so as to give effect to the wishes about who is to be appointed to the seats on each Committee which are allocated to a particular political group as are expressed by that group;
 - (ii) in respect of any appointments to be made other than under (a) above, appoints the Monitoring Officer as Proper Officer to be authorised to carry out the wishes of the Leaders of the Political Groups in allocating members to each Committee; and
 - (iii) appoints those Members with effect from the date at which the Proper Officer is advised of the names of such Members;
- (b) The Chair and the Vice Chair of each of the Council's Committees be appointed as set out in the tabled papers, except that Councillor Sandford be elected as Chair and Councillor Thulbourn as Vice Chair of the Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee and each of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee, Creating Opportunities & Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee and the Rural and Health Scrutiny Commissions should be decided by the Committees themselves in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders;
- (c) The membership of elected and non-elected members of committees be confirmed; and
- (d) The appointments to outside organisations be made by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with political group wishes.

11. **Standing Orders**

Council received a report from the Member Officer Working Group which requested it to revoke the current Council's Standing Orders at Part 4, Section 1 of the Council's Constitution and to adopt each of the variations to the Council Standing Orders as set out within the report. It was further recommended that the related protocols and schemes be adopted, these being the 'Selection of Mayor Protocol' and the 'Petition Scheme'.

Councillor Seaton introduced the report and moved the recommendations contained within. This was seconded by Councillor Fitzgerald who reserved his right to speak.

There was no debate on the item and it was **RESOLVED** that:

Standing Orders be varied in that Council:

- (a) revoked the following Standing Orders as set out in the Constitution at:
 - (i) Part 4, Section 1 of the Council's Constitution
- The Council's Standing Orders.
- (b) adopted each of the variations to the Council Standing Orders set out within the report.
- (c) adopted the related protocols/schemes as follows:

- i. The Selection of Mayor Protocol, as amended; and
- ii. The Petition Scheme.

The Mayor
7.45pm – 8.45pm