

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING
HELD WEDNESDAY 12 OCTOBER 2022
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

THE MAYOR – COUNCILLOR DOWSON

Present:

Councillors Ansar Ali, Imtiaz Ali, Jackie Allen, Steve Allen, Ayres, Barkham, Bi, Andrew Bond, Sandra Bond, Burbage, Casey, Cereste, Coles, Day, Dowson, Elsey, Mohammed Farooq, Saqib Farooq, Fenner, Fitzgerald, John Fox, Judy Fox, Harper, Haseeb, Hemraj, Hiller, Hogg, Howard, Hussain, Iqbal, Jamil, Alison Jones, Dennis Jones, Knight, Lane, Moyo, Gul Nawaz, Shaz Nawaz, Over, Perkins, Qayyum, Rangzeb, Ray, Robinson, Rush, Sabir, Sainsbury, Sandford, Seager, Shaheed, Sharp, Simons, Skibsted, Tyler, Warren, Wiggin, Yasin, Yurgutene

50. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stevenson and Councillor Bisby

51. Declarations of Interest

Agenda Item 12(3) – Motion from Councillor Sandford

Councillor Sandford advised that, while he had no interest to declare in relation to the item, he was a member of the Electoral Reform Society.

52. Minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 July 2022

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 July were approved as a true and accurate record.

COMMUNICATIONS

53. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor informed Members of a number of events attended by the Mayoral Party in the past few months, including Fly the Flag ceremonies, open days in the Town Hall and the Opening of the Bridge Fair and Sausage Supper.

Members were encouraged to attend the Armistice Two Minutes' Silence on 11 November 2022 and Remembrance Sunday on 13 November 2022.

54. Leader's Announcements

The Leader made a number of announcements on the following areas:

- Two staff were shortlisted for the Peterborough Apprenticeship Awards: Asif Ali and Maria Crowe.

- Serco Strategic Partnership won 'most improved team of the year' at IRRV Performance Awards.
- Sam Smith (Assistant Director for IT and Digital) was to speak at the Linked Organisation of Local Authorities annual conference in New Zealand in November. She was also nominated for the long list of the 50 most influential women in UK Tech Industry by Computer Week.
- Adrian Chapman's had been appointment as Executive Director for Place and Economy.
- Funding had been awarded to deliver third phase on Household Support Fund (1.8 million)
- £2.9 million had been drawn down to support getting rough sleepers into accommodation.
- Two projects had been given the green light as part of the Towns Fund Initiative.
- £3.5 million was on its way to help fund a new Activity Facility and Green Technology Centre.
- Peterborough was one of 75 local authorities to receive Government funding for Family Hubs of £3.4 million.
- There had been a recent visit from Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer for England, to learn about work with partners for better community health outcomes and early identification.
- The Christmas Lights switch on would be held in Cathedral Square on Friday 18 November, with the tree arriving a few days earlier. This would also feature an Ice Rink and Festive Stalls.

Group Leaders responded to the Leaders announcements, the key points raised included:

- Congratulations and thanks were passed on to all those staff mentioned, who had worked hard to go above and beyond what was required of them.
- Members congratulated Adrian Chapman on his appointment.
- It was recognised that a great deal of work went in to securing Government funding and Members welcomed additional funding for projects within the area.

QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

55. Questions from Members of the Public

Two questions were received from members of the public in respect of the following:

1. Financial issues for small businesses during the energy price increase.
2. Homelessness night shelter provision.

The questions and responses are attached in **APPENDIX A** to these minutes.

56. Petitions

(a) Presented by Members of the Public

There were no petitions presented by Members of the public at the meeting.

(b) Presented by Members

There were no petitions presented by Members at the meeting.

57. Questions on Notice

(a) To the Mayor

(b) To the Leader or Member of the Cabinet

(c) To the Chair of any Committee of Sub-Committee

(d) To the Combined Authority Representatives

Questions (a)-(d) were raised and taken as read in respect of the following:

1. Anglia Ruskin University Peterborough student figures.
2. Sewage river dumping.
3. Cabinet Advisor positions.
4. Cyclin routes and prioritisation.
5. Liaison with Mr Mahamani regarding a hydrotherapy pool site.
6. Council Tax rebate scheme eligibility and those who have not applied.
7. Anti-social behaviour hit squad.
8. Withdrawal of Stagecoach bus services.

The questions and responses are attached in **APPENDIX A** to these minutes.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS

58. Executive and Committee Recommendations to Council

58(a). Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee – Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel Report

The Council received a report from the Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee in relation to the first Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel Report.

Councillor Yasin moved the recommendation and advised that the panel were required to report to Council on a 6-monthly basis, with scrutiny to comment on the Cabinet response to this report. Members were thanked for their contribution and it was advised that the Scrutiny Committee had agreed with the actions and progress being made so far.

Councillor Jamil seconded the recommendation.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to:

1. Note that the Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee reviewed the first report of the Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel and agreed with the actions and progress being made with the delivery of the Improvement Plan.

58(b). Cabinet Recommendation – Sustainable Future City Council Strategy and Priorities 2022 to 2025

The Council received a report from the Cabinet in relation to the Sustainable Future

City Council Strategy and Priorities for 2022 to 2025.

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation, with an alteration to refer the Strategy to a Joint Meeting of the Council's Scrutiny Committees.

Councillor Steve Allen seconded the altered recommendation.

A vote was taken on the altered recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to:

1. Endorse the City Council's "Sustainable Future City Council Strategy 2022-25" and its accompanying "City Priorities", both artifacts which were attached as an appendix to the report, and refer them to a Joint Meeting of the Council's Scrutiny Committees for consideration, with any recommendations to be referred to the next available meeting of Full Council.

58(c). Constitution and Ethics Committee Recommendation – Constitution Updates

The Council received a report from the Constitution and Ethics Committee in relation to a number of updates to the Council's Constitution, particularly in regarding naming conventions and Officer Employment Rules.

Councillor Sandford moved the recommendation and advised that while a number of other matters had been debated by the committee, including the Council agenda structure, timings for questions and notice of motions, no recommendations had been made on these topics at this time, however they would be kept under review.

The changes put forward would allow Members discretion as to how they wished to be addressed, including the Mayor. They would also remove the requirement to provide two clear days' notice for Cabinet Member to object to appointments made by the Employment Committee. The updated process would allow the Leader to confirm at the time of the interview if there were objections. It was noted that the Leader and the relevant Cabinet Member typically sat on interviewing panels.

Councillor Jamil seconded the recommendation.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to update the Constitution as follows:

Constitution Naming Conventions

1. That Members have discretion as to how they wish to be addressed, including allowing the Mayor the discretion over whether they are addressed as "Mr Mayor", "Madam Mayor", or in the same format as Councillors, for example, "Mayor" and then their surname.

Officer Employment Rules

2. That the reference to two clear days for objections to be registered to the Leader be amended, as at Appendix 2 to the report, it allow the Leader to confirm once the appointment has been made that no objections had been received.

58(d). Constitution and Ethics Committee Recommendation – Appointment to Outside Bodies and Appointment of Council Champions

The Council received a report from the Constitution and Ethics Committee in relation to the process for appointing to outside bodies.

Councillor Sandford moved the recommendation, with an alteration to remove the first recommendation and proceed with the second recommendation only.

Councillor Jamil seconded the recommendation.

A vote was taken on the altered recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to agree:

- ~~1. That the Constitution be amended so that appointments to outside bodies be agreed at Annual Council.~~
2. That the Constitution be amended to make clear that the Leader of the Council would be the Council's representative, ex officio, on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board, by virtue of holding the Office of Leader and that the Deputy Leader would be the substitute representative, ex officio, on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board, by virtue of holding the office of Deputy Leader.

58(e). Constitution and Ethics Committee Recommendation – Civic Protocol – Declaration by Mayor

The Mayor advised that no recommendations had been received from the Constitution and Ethics Committee in relation to this item. As such, no debate would be had.

58(f). Constitution and Ethics Committee Recommendation – Amendments to the Contract Rules

The Council received a report from the Constitution and Ethics Committee in relation to amendments to the Council's Contract Rules.

Councillor Sandford moved the recommendation and advised that the changes proposed would only require a competitive process to take place for contracts worth more than £25,000. At the moment, this trigger point was set at £5,000 and presented too great an administrative burden. The change was supported by the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

Councillor Jamil seconded the recommendation.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to agree:

1. To amend the Contract Rules as set out in Appendix A to the report.

59. Questions on the Executive Decisions Made Since the Last Meeting

Cllr Fitzgerald introduced the report which outlined the record of Executive decisions made since the last meeting.

Members asked questions on the following Executive Decisions.

Peterborough Youth Zones

In response to a question from Councillor Hogg, Councillor Steve Allen advised that no specific site had yet been identified, though a number were still under review.

Asset Disposal and Review Plan

In response to a question from Councillor Hogg, Councillor Coles advised that that the

Community Asset Transfer programme could now begin once more.

60. Questions on the Combined Authority Decisions Made Since the Last Meeting

The Mayor introduced the report which outlined the record of Combined Authority decisions made since the last meeting.

There were no questions asked on the Combined Authority decisions made since the last meeting.

Councillor Mohammed Farooq left the meeting at this point.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

61. Notices of Motion

61(1) Motion from Councillor Imtiaz Ali

Councillor Imtiaz Ali moved his motion and advised that the motion represented an important opportunity to outline how impressed Members were with the resilience of the workforce. The motion discussed the real-term reduction in pay. Strikes had been taking place in a variety of services, indicated that workers had had enough and were dissatisfied with having to accept sub-standard pay rises. It was recognised that the Council could not get involved with specific pay disputes, but it could set out its general stance. It was important to let public service workers know that Council had their backs.

Councillor Skibsted seconded the motion and reserved her right to speak.

Council debated the motion and the summary of the points raised by Members included:

- It was felt that it was within the Council's right to lobby the Government. If the NHS pay award came from Government, it seemed sensible that they would fund the local government pay award too.
- It was noted that the Council operated within National Joint Council (NJC) terms and conditions, which were bound by national negotiations.
- There was a strategy in place in order to protect the lowest paid employees, which ensured that they earned at least living wage of £9.50p.
- It was commented that the Council had already made its comments clear with its offer to the unions.
- The matter was high on the Local Government Association agenda, it was advised, and Members would be kept informed of negotiations.
- It was further noted that an increase in pay would impact on schools, but would also have non-monetary implications as well.
- Comment was made that most of that being asked in the motion was already being done.
- It was considered fundamental for wellbeing to have financial security, though this was difficult to achieve.
- It was noted that wellbeing and work-life balance were prioritised within the public sector, but finance was also key.
- It was advised that there were 1 million children in the UK who were children of key workers living in poverty. 4 out of 10 key workers earned less than the minimum wage of £10.

As seconder of the motion, Councillor Skibsted advised that a pay rise was vital, alongside the reduction of energy bills. It was considered to be key to provide decent homes for all and to tax the rich. Those in all types of employment needed to be able to

live.

As mover of the motion, Councillor Imtiaz Ali summed up, advising that he had worked with officers to amend the wording of the motion so that no specific pay dispute was included. However, it was important to lend support to workers, particularly when the number of people living in poverty and using foodbanks was as high as it was.

A vote was taken on the motion moved by Councillor Imtiaz Ali (25 voted in favour, 27 voted against, 5 abstained from voting). The motion was **DEFEATED**.

61(2) Motion from Councillor Day

Councillor Day moved her motion, with an alteration to bring a report on the progress around the Council's investment strategy and the pension scheme's Responsible Investment Policy, and advised that she had now been advised that the Pension Fund was already working towards divestment in fossil fuels on a voluntary basis, rather than utilising pecuniary measures. It was felt that this transition was essential to decarbonising the economy. This would assist in moving to a fair sustainable economy, including in those polluting industries.

Councillor Wiggin seconded the motion.

Councillor Coles moved an amendment to the motion, taking into account the alteration.

Councillor Ray seconded the amendment.

Councillor Day accepted the amendment as moved.

A vote was taken on the amended motion moved by Councillor Day. The Council **AGREED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) the motion as follows:

"Peterborough City Council recognises that fossil fuels have played a central role in the past 150 years of social and technological development but that their continued use poses a serious risk to the stability of the climate upon which our well-being and economy depends. Climate change endangers the health of local residents in Peterborough, directly through impacts such as heatwaves and floods, like we have seen this year, and indirectly through impacts on food systems and global security. Research demonstrates that 80% or more of the world's fossil fuel reserves will have to remain unburnt if we are to meet targets for climate change mitigation. A rapid large-scale shift away from fossil fuels towards energy efficiency and alternative sources of energy is needed to avert catastrophic climate change. This will soon render investments in fossil fuel reserves 'stranded assets', representing substantial risk for investors and pensioners. Research also shows that divestment actually reduces carbon emissions. Therefore, having declared a climate emergency in 2019, Peterborough City Council, should fully support this shift to a zero-carbon economy, which also presents significant opportunities for Peterborough in its mission to become Environment Capital.

In response to this Peterborough City Council pledges:

- to develop and implement an ethical investment policy, including a commitment to not knowingly invest directly in businesses whose activities and practices pose a risk of serious harm to individuals or groups, or whose activities are inconsistent with the Council's mission and values. ~~This will include avoiding investment in the top 200 publicly-traded fossil fuel companies. It may also include other companies associated with environmentally or socially harmful activities.~~

- ~~Call on the Support Cambridgeshire County Council's Pension Fund "Just Transition" approach with is consistent with the Paris agreement and provides a policy of engagement with businesses who are actively transitioning away from fossil fuels. Recognise that the fund expects each of its investment managers to appropriately manage environmental, social and governance risks alongside financial risks, and constructively engage with investee companies on any issues identified. Should these issues not be addressed satisfactorily, we recognise that selling or divesting from the individual stock remains an appropriate option for the fund.~~

~~to divest from fossil fuels by requesting its representative(s) on the Pension Fund Committee to call for the development and adoption of responsible investment policies which:~~

- ~~1. Immediately freeze any new investment in the top 200 publicly-traded fossil fuel companies.~~
- ~~2. Divest from direct ownership and any commingled funds that include fossil fuel public equities and corporate bonds within 5 years.~~
- ~~3. Set out an approach to quantify and address climate change risks affecting all other investments.~~
- ~~4. Actively seek to invest in companies that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and minimise climate risk.~~

- ~~to instruct the chief executive to write to the Leaders and Chief Executives of all other councils that use the Cambridgeshire County Council Pension Fund outlining this Council's position and asking for their support to adopt the same policies.~~
- ~~with respect to its indirect investments, to work with a ratings agency to develop a workable ethical policy aligned with the above mission and values with the aim of achieving full divestment within 5 years.~~
- ~~to work with local businesses and community groups to support further positive investment in local companies and projects, including community energy schemes, which are hastening a rapid shift to a zero-carbon economy.~~
- ~~to undertake the above pledges in the context of a city-wide energy descent plan and energy security policy which will be developed with local business and community groups.~~
- ~~to call on the Cambridgeshire Pension Fund to adopt a similar ethical investment policy and divest from fossil fuels.~~
- ~~to call on the national U.K. government to support the principle of a just transition from fossil fuels divestment, to stop subsidising the fossil fuel industry and to advocate for all other countries to commit to this in the wake of the Paris Agreement, which was reaffirmed at the 2021 Glasgow Climate Summit.~~
- To bring a report to the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee in 12 months' time to review the Council's investment strategy and the pension scheme's progress with its Responsible Investment Policy."

61(3) Motion from Councillor Sandford

Councillor Sandford moved his motion and advised that a 'winner takes all' style of voting needed to be replaced. It was felt that this method encouraged one-party states and depressed voter turnout. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, the Single Transferable Vote systems was used, with the option available in Wales. This system would operate well within local government, as most wards had three or four Councillors. This system laid more power with individuals and, while possible a more complex counting process, was simple in terms of voting. It had been observed that in the 2022 elections in Scotland the turnout was 45%, whereas in Peterborough it was 30%. Many residents

felt that, with the First Past the Post (FPTP) system, their votes would make a difference. Comment was made that the Labour Party had agreed to support proportional representation at the most recent party conference.

Councillor Day seconded the motion and reserved her right to speak.

Council debated the motion and the summary of the points raised by Members included:

- It was suggested that FPTP was a cornerstone of democracy, and offered a fair and inclusive system where the person with the most votes wins.
- The FPTP system ensure that geographical representation was assessed on individual performance in the vote.
- Comment was made the FPTP safeguarded against political extremism.
- It was suggested that the single transferable voting system was most appropriate for modern times.
- It was noted that proportional representation benefited smaller parties. It also allowed for people to choose between candidates within parties.
- It was felt that proportional representation provided greater stability and allowed for more extremist groups to be pushed out of coalitions.
- It was further noted that often the electorate felt that there was no point in voting within the FPTP system, and therefore turnout remained low.

As seconder of the motion, Councillor Day advised that very few countries used the FPTP elections system. The UK had a disproportionate system, with the majority of Europe using a form of proportional representation. Proportional representation genuinely reflected the views of the public.

As mover of the motion, Councillor Sandford summed up and thanked Members for their contributions to the debate. It was suggested that issues around geographical representation were more relevant for parliamentary elections than local authority elections. It was noted that before the 1800s many seats in Parliament were dual seats and many were elected to via single transferable vote. It was felt that extremism was more likely to arise under one-party states. If a proportional representation method of voting was introduced, then a change in the control of Government could be likely.

A vote was taken on the motion moved by Councillor Sandford (27 voted in favour, 30 voted against, 0 abstained from voting). The motion was **DEFEATED**.

Councillor Sabir left the meeting at this point.

62. REPORTS TO COUNCIL

62(a) Notification of Change to the Executive Delegations

The Council received a report in relation to a notification of change to the Executive Delegations, specifically in relation to the creation of and appointment to the position of Advisor to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Governance.

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation.

Councillor Steve Allen seconded the recommendation.

Council debated the recommendation and a query was raised in relation to why the report stated that no financial implications arose from the appointment, as it attracted a Special Responsibility Allowance. It was suggested that further detail on the reasoning for appointing a specific person would be helpful.

Councillor Fitzgerald, as mover of the recommendation, summed up and advised that the funding for the position had already been allocated. It was not within the Council's authority to agree Cabinet positions. The report before Council was simply for noting in line with Constitutional requirements and there was no obligation for the Leader to justify his decision.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (49 voted in favour, 6 voted against, 2 abstained from voting) to note the changes made by the Leader of the Council to the Executive Scheme of Delegations (Appendix A to the report).

62(b) Appointment of the Monitoring Officer

At this point a vote was taken and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on Item 13(b), Appointment of the Monitoring Officer on the grounds that the item contains exempt information under Paragraph 1 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and that it would not be in the public interest for this information to be disclosed (Information relating to an individual and negotiations in connection with a labour relations matter arising between the authority and employees or office holders of the authority).

The Council received a report in relation to the appointment to the position of Director and Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer.

Councillor Jamil moved the recommendation and advised that every local authority was obliged to make arrangements for the appointment of Monitoring Officer, and this fell to Full Council. It was further noted that the appointment to Monitoring Officer would take affect from the first day of employment.

Councillor Alison Jones seconded the recommendation.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to:

1. Note that Employment Committee met on the 10 October 2022 to consider the appointment of the Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer.
2. Formally appoint the recommended candidate to the Monitoring Officer role.

The Mayor
7.00pm – 8.52pm
12 October 2022

**FULL COUNCIL 12 OCTOBER 2022
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

Questions were received under the following categories:

| <u>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</u> | |
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| <u>Questions from members of the public</u> | |
| 1. | <p>Question from Marija Obradovic</p> <p>Councillor Coles Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Governance</p> <p>I would like to inform you of the dire consequences my business is facing - and of course the whole of hospitality.</p> <p>The business rates I pay are too excessive and even with a discount for this tax year I am struggling to meet the payments.</p> <p>Now I have the added threat of an increase in utility charges which means I will not be able to continue unless I receive some help now.</p> <p>I am community minded and do my best to encourage the locals to come in but with increases in prices everywhere people are too worried to come out and spend what little they have left.</p> <p>Charlies is a wonderful place for the community. We have people of all ages and will be starting a friendship club, thanks to your donation, in October. We will be a safe and warm place as our cafe will be based in the small function room. We can't open our main premises except on match day as we can't heat both.</p> <p>We are surviving thankfully to my partner who has returned to work.</p> <p>Please can you help in any way in highlighting my concerns. I feel this may be the final nail in the coffin.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>Thank you for raising this query with me. Your work to build up Charlies from a standing start, your commitment to the community and the efforts you have put in to the building to redecorate, improve and develop your business has been inspirational.</p> <p>I think it would be sensible to clarify exactly the business rates position for Charlies AYC. Charlie's was set up at Swiss Cottage on Grove Street from March 2019. The business rates chargeable at the premises are set by central government and linked to the rateable value (RV) of the premises, set by the Valuation Office. The council is only responsible for billing the resulting charge and has no control over the calculation or amount. For these premises the RV is £18,250, giving a gross bill in 2022/23 of £9,106.75. The business qualifies for retail relief and so this bill has been reduced by 50% to £4,553.37.</p> |

Since Covid-19 the business has been in receipt of all available covid related business grants administered by Peterborough City Council, with the main grant scheme awards totalling £58,357. In current addition the council has allocated a further £16,000 in discretionary business grants to support the business. There are no further grant schemes available currently and all available business rates relief has been awarded to the business.

The team have followed up to see if the business has been given all the financial support that was able to be given and we can see it has.

I am very aware of the challenges your business and countless others in the sector have experienced and continue to experience due to the pandemic and economic situation within Peterborough and the country as a whole. Your resilience and commitment to the business has been inspirational. However, I am sorry to say that whilst the Council would very much like to provide additional support to your business and others within the City it is simply not possible due to the very significant financial challenges the Council itself is facing. I regret that my response cannot be more positive at this time but you have my personal assurance that I will make you aware if any further funding support becomes available and for which you would qualify.

2. **Question from Fiona Oloug**

Councillor Cereste, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Planning, Housing and Transport

I would like you to raise the homelessness issue rampant in Peterborough. I have heard disappointingly that the winter night shelter is not going ahead again this year, I think that's awful.

It is run mostly by volunteers and the local churches, so can the relevant Cabinet Member confirm why that's not happening again!

There are so many people abandoned in this city who are vulnerable or addicted to a substance or with severe mental health issues. What kind of city/society are we to just ignore this?

What exactly is our tax etc being spent on? Surely, it's meant to help these people marginalised in this world?

The Cabinet Member responded:

The City Council does not operate the night shelter. The night shelter has previously been operated by the Light Project Peterborough and the Council has supported the initiative where it has been appropriate to do so. Unfortunately, during the Covid pandemic national guidance stated that night shelters with shared sleeping spaces should not operate due to the increased risk of spread of infection. Now we are past the pandemic and return to life as usual schemes such as this can recommence.

Since the start of the pandemic the work around tackling rough sleeping has been very much a priority for the Council, the Council has continued, despite the night shelter not opening, to continue funding the Light Project Peterborough at the same

levels as pre pandemic. In addition, the city has received significant investment from Government as part of the Rough Sleeping Initiative and the Council has bolstered its rough sleeping response through outreach and commissioned services. An example of this is the safe sleeping spaces that the Light Project have opened in the city.

We currently have the most robust support in place for rough sleepers in the city and no rough sleeper who is entitled to be resident in the UK needs to sleep out. For those who are not eligible for assistance, support is provided by the voluntary sector into accommodation such as the safe sleeping spaces. As we come into the winter months the Council will operate its Severe Weather Emergency Provision when the temperatures drop to 1°C or below as we have always done.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

Questions on notice to:

- a. The Mayor
- b. To the Leader or Member of the Cabinet
- c. To the Chair of any Committee or Sub-committee

1. **Question from Councillor Hogg (1)**

Councillor Ayres, Cabinet Member for Childrens Services, Education, Skills and the University

In August 2020 Joel Lamy reported in the Peterborough Telegraph the numbers of students planned for ARU Peterborough had been reduced from an initial 12,500 to just 5,000 by 2028 reducing the economic benefit of the new campus from £1.1bn to £400 million. Now that the university is open can the Cabinet Member for Education please update us on where these figures stand now?

The Cabinet Member responded:

Peterborough's new university opened its doors, I'm delighted to say, on schedule a few weeks ago, with teaching capacity for 846 students in specialist labs and teaching rooms. ARU Peterborough received over 1,600 applications to start courses this autumn and is expecting to support more than 950 learner this trimester. This includes up to 650 students based at University House, and other provision includes short courses and work-based learning. The aim remains to reach 5,000 students by 2028 and every effort will be made by the partners, including the Council and its officers, to support this growth.

Unlike many universities, a large number of courses at ARU Peterborough have two main start dates, in September and January, providing greater flexibility for students. Plans have already been submitted for the next phase of teaching space, which is of course the third building, including a living lab, which will further increase teaching capacity.

Supplementary Question

So, of those 846 students, how many of those would have been going to do the Guild House site which is now being closed, and essentially what I am trying to get to is, what is the actual uplift of students across those two sites do you know?

The Cabinet Member responded:

Councillor Hogg, I don't have the answer to that at this present time because all of these things are having to be looked into in some considerable detail this first term, but I am very happy to meet with you subsequently and give you such get from the University itself of course, including any response you want in relation to the cost benefit and ... inaudible

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| 2. | <p>Question from Councillor Day</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Planning, Housing and Transport</p> <p>How has our local area and region been impacted by the dumping of raw sewage into rivers?</p> <p>Link to useful background information: https://theriverstrust.org/sewage-map</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>I am happy to answer this question but I think it should go to the Member for Climate Change, Planning and Housing and Transport as listed in the paperwork.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Planning, Housing and Transport responded:</p> <p>Anglian Water is responsible for the treatment and management of sewage across the Peterborough area. The Environment Agency is responsible for the local river. Therefore, both agencies would be best placed to provide a detailed answer as to whether or not there have been any impacts in the local area.</p> <p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>I put a link to the rivers trust maps, which shows where sewage network discharges and treated sewage overflow of untreated sewage has been release into our rivers. So at Peterborough Northminster, the sewer storm overflow spilled two times over a period of 12 hours, discharging into the River Nene. Peterborough, Oundle Road in 2021, the overflow spilled over 38 times for a total of 144 hours, discharging into the River Nene. At Peterborough Orton Mere the sewer storm overflow spilled over four times for a total of 65 hours, discharging into the (inaudible) River Nene and Ullswater Avenue the sewer storm overflow spilled twice for a total of five hours discharging into the Werrington Brook. This information is on the Rivers Trust site and there is a map that shows you where these discharges have taken place. I am aware that it is Anglian Water, but I'm sure you are all aware that not only the health risk to humans, but the devastating impacts on nature that these spills have. Is there anyway as a Council we could pressure Anglian Water and the Environment Agency to prevent sewage being spilt into our local rivers.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>Thank you for that Councillor Day, the only thing I can really suggest is perhaps that we get together and see if we can come up with a plan.</p> |
| 3. | <p>Question from Councillor John Fox (1)</p> <p>Councillor Fitzgerald, Leader of the Council</p> <p>The Leader of the Council made it clear in his statement to the Peterborough Telegraph that we have been pushed into a new era of permanent austerity.</p> <p>Officers have also produced a four-point plan to achieve financial sustainability in this council.</p> |

I support financial sustainability and would therefore ask the Leader to disband the privileged and un-needed Cabinet Advisors' positions straight away.

This will show the public that we are truly in this together.

The Cabinet Member responded:

I am really disappointed to be answering this question tonight. As we are all aware a key recommendation of the External Assurance Governance Review, which was undertaken on behalf of DLUHC was to complete a Finance and Governance Review to improve (inaudible) in the Council.

Part of this review was to bring fresh energy as well as a new approach, with valuable expertise and leadership for the Council.

Councillor Fox, you are correct in saying the Council has produced a 4 point – plan, with the official name being the Sustainable Future City Council Strategy.

We as a Council all support financial sustainability and our journey to get there, but again, I am disappointed with the wording to your question relating to 'disbanding the privileged and un-needed Cabinet Advisors, which to those involved is offensive and insulting.

This year I consolidated the portfolio's in my cabinet, which in turn gave executive members more ownership and responsibility for wider areas within the Council.

Furthermore, the improvement panel's journey for Peterborough also incorporates longer-term thinking, diversity, inclusion and succession planning, and therefore, bringing on expertise and encouraging it from the wider administration to support Cabinet members is a vital part of this process.

I can confirm that all Cabinet Advisors or deputy Cabinet Members, whichever you want to call them, add value and support to the executive member and the rest of my Cabinet, as well as officers, and also gain valuable experience and knowledge for possible future Cabinet positions.

Councillor Howard would not be in the position he is in if he hadn't gone through that process and Ray Bisby also is in the same position. So should something; forgive me happen in terms of a mishap, its only because I am aligning it to that role, people can step up to the job. And I would also remind Members that the cost of my Cabinet and Cabinet Advisors or Deputy Cabinet Members remains within the Council's budget for this. Had I not got 6 or 7 Cabinet Advisors, I would have 10 Cabinet Members. So to me, it seems very good value that we are getting 13 people for the price of 10 and each one of those people contributes and has responsibility. The latest one of course being Councillor Nicola Moyo who has been mentioned rather unfairly and feels grossly offended by it, that she is a very small lady training to be a solicitor. One of the things that we have been criticised for is the lack of governance oversight and those skills will be useful to Councillor Coles, when we are talking about governance and legal matters, and I feel that very pertinent and it would be the same in any other skill sets within the Conservative Group that needs nurturing and bringing on.

Supplementary question:

At this time of unprecedented financial chaos to this Council and an enormous black hole, the current leader decides that it is ok to spend even more tax payers money on Cabinet Advisors roles, making it now six Cabinet Advisors at the cost of £48,000 per year to the tax payers of this city. How in name can he or any of us justify this for the residents of the city. Especially for the hard working officers of this Council who are desperately trying to keep to incredible difficult spending budgets. Please explain to me, please how this is a case of permanent austerity. It doesn't quite match.

The Leader responded:

It's about vision Councillor Fox. It's about vision and leading the Council to financial sustainability. And it's about getting the very best out of the team that you have around us. So, if I could do it with less people, I would do, but I have realigned. I will take Councillor Coles portfolio, which you have maligned. Andy Coles did not have property or legal governance and a variety of other things in the portfolio, so he has taken on more responsibility and needs some help to shoulder that load. So I brought in somebody that can add some expertise to that. Its about running the Council properly and efficiently with the right people. We are not spending any more money and if people what to open a can of worms about allowances, I'll go there if you want to, because there a people in this Chamber that perhaps be embarrassed if we start that conversation because of conversations, we have had previously about allowances, and I will praise by the way Lucinda Robinson for her selfless view on allowances. She is the only Member in this Chamber that refused to take an SRA, so let me get that on the record. She is the only one that is not taking a special responsibility allowance. Yet all the crowing from Opposition Members previously. So lets not go there because every single member in this chamber that is entitled to an allowance is taking it. Some are taking slightly less, Councillor Harper, I understand is not taking his full allowance, which is laudable, but hang on, if you want to open that can of worms lets do so, but we buried it, and we are going with the panel's recommendations as the Independent Panel and we should stick to that, or we'll be in a whole load of trouble. As I have already said, we are within budget and we have some very talented people in the Cabinet doing their very best, working with me, and Opposition Members to try and improve this Council.

4. **Question from Councillor Skibsted (1)**

Councillor Marco Cereste, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Planning, Housing and Transport

Cllr Marco Cereste, Council Cabinet member for Climate Change, Planning, Housing and Transport, has recently stated: "To reach our ambitious goal of becoming a carbon net-zero city will require all parts of our city to come together and embrace the big changes we will all need to make"

So far the LCWIP - Local Council Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan - has no mention of linking cycling routes between the north and south and east and west of the city to enable cyclists to cycle freely and safely across the city centre. It is not acceptable or practical to expect cyclists to "get off and walk" for large parts of their journeys and will not encourage more cycling and fewer cars on the roads. Car users are not expected to do this.

As chair of the new Task and Finish Group for Walking and Cycling, I understand

that creating such routes would be a "big change" requiring a lot of resources. However:

- I) is this not integral to the idea of making big changes and enabling and enticing residents to cycle to work/school etc on a safe route thus reducing the need for cars and therefore air pollution in this area,
- II) Should this therefore not become a major priority for our city, and
- III) Why has it not been up until now?

The Cabinet Member responded:

Thank you Mr Mayor, thank you Councillor for the question.

Increasing the number of people walking and cycling is a priority for this council because of course it has so many other positive benefits such as improving people's health and well-being as well as reducing of course our carbon emissions. We are developing options that will improve walking and cycling connections in the city centre, for example, to our new university. These improvements will require significant engineering works so they will be expensive to construct. However, it is important that we put ourselves in the best possible position for future funding so I would support the improvements to the University going into our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. The growth in that part of the city now gives us the economic benefits needed to seek external funding for these improvements.

Supplementary Question:

Yes, thank you.

Data from the Department of Transport shows that cycling is reducing in Peterborough so it's clear we need to change at an unprecedented level and yet progress on this has been slow. We have a target to promote active travel and bring the City to net zero carbon by 2023. Will the Council, once the report by the task and finish group has been completed and has suggested improvements to city centre cycling, agree to prioritise and implement these changes in order to ensure cycling across the city becomes a real safe alternative, especially for the north-south link coming in from, going across the city. Because at the moment people have to get off and push the bikes, that's how it is currently, thank you.

The Cabinet Member responded:

Well ok, I promise to have a look at it, and I promise we'll have a good conversation about it but I can't give you a blank cheque without seeing what it is that you propose.

5. **Question Councillor from Judy Fox**

Councillor Coles, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Governance

Having promised to liaise with Ranjit Maharani to advise and assist him in finding suitable land on which to create a new hydrotherapy facility. Have you or any officers contacted him since your promise was made? The offer was made, I believe, to allow Mr Maharani to consider any sites specifically owned by the council, not on the open market.

The Cabinet Member responded:

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| | <p>Thank you Mr Mayor and thank you Councillor Judy Fox.</p> <p>Just before I answer, I think there might be a small typo here, I'm a bit of a stickler for getting names right and its Ranjit Mahamani and not Maharani of course Maharanis is a restaurant one of our members owns so an obvious slip that might be made but I just thought I'd want to be accurate there.</p> <p>Our property contractor, NPS, have been conducting a review of suitable options for land or assets that the council owns and will be in touch with Mr Ranjit Mahamani shortly to discuss those outcomes. I'm sorry it hasn't happened at the moment, it is due very shortly but they do also recommend he updates his details with all local agents who may have suitable options already.</p> <p>Thank you Mr Mayor.</p> <p>Supplementary Question:</p> <p>Thank you, thank you very much for your reply.</p> <p>I'm very pleased that you are now speaking with Mr Ranjit but my concern is that you have found time to speak with others about building a suitable facility some time ago but you have only now today found the time to speak to him. What exactly is going on, please be transparent and let this Council know what meetings have taken place with other interested parties, who they are, when those meetings took place and why does it seem to us that Mr Ranjit was being ignored.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>Thank you Mr Mayor, Thank you Councillor Fox.</p> <p>I don't think there is an issue here to be honest, I think that the time has been because our staff have been so busy in the property review overall there's just been a little bit of a delay here. There have been one or two other delays but for most of the issues someone looking to build a hydrotherapy centre will need to work also with all these the local agents to try and find suitable land not just the council so that's what I'm trying to encourage that Mr Mahamani looks at what's available commercially as well as within the council.</p> <p>Thank you Mr Mayor.</p> |
| 6. | <p>Question from Councillor Hogg (2)</p> <p>Councillor Coles, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Governance</p> <p>The recent Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme, automatically paid out to those homes eligible that pay their bills using direct debit, but those paying by other methods had to apply for the rebate. Can the relevant Cabinet Member update us on how many homes which were eligible have not applied for the grant and what steps are PCC taking to get those grants to these households?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>Thank you Mr Mayor and thank you Councillor Hogg for your question.</p> |

Based on existing council tax data and direct debit details that held in April 2022 the council identified as eligible and paid 49,033 people automatically by BACS. A further 27,780 eligible households were identified and an application form was made available to either collect bank details or for customers to request credits to be applied direct to their council tax account. 9,297 successful applications were received, resulting in 7,056 BACS payments and 2,241 council tax account credits being made. The remaining 18,483 eligible households who had not applied had the rebate applied to their council tax accounts at the end of July, reducing future instalments.

In total 76,813 households have been paid £150 either by BACS or council tax credit, totalling just over £11.5m. And Based on our council tax data, all eligible households have received this funding.

Thank you Mr Mayor.

7. **Question from Councillor John Fox (2)**

Councillor Steve Allen, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communications, Culture and Communities

It seems from the public announcements that the current administration is to solve the problems within our City Centre by tasking a hit squad to stop all the anti-social behaviour we see daily.

My questions are:-

1. How many officers will be employed to do this and when?
2. What are their hours of work?
3. What will be the total cost to the taxpayers of Peterborough for this period of operation?
4. What powers will they have to immediately enforce any necessary action?
5. Will these officers be given the right tools to carry out such work, such as body cameras, spit masks and any other protective equipment?

The Cabinet Member responded:

Indeed, and thank you Mr mayor and thank you Councillor John fox.

Appreciate the question these are all very valid queries and its important we get the information shared in order to reassure the public of our intentions.

We are committed to continuously improving the quality of our city centre, as a safe place for people to visit and enjoy their leisure time, support the wide retail offer and enjoy the many bars and restaurants that are on the high street. Working alongside the police and Business Improvement District Ambassadors, our new pilot city centre enforcement service will play its part in keeping the city centre feeling vibrant and dynamic as well as safe.

There are 4 officers working Wednesday to Sunday for a 6-month trial period, between the hours of 2pm and 10pm. The officers are able to fully enforce the public pace, let's try again the Public Space Protection Order in the city, which includes enforcing restrictions on street drinking, littering, and cycling in

unauthorised areas.

We have commissioned a local company to deliver this trial, who employ well-trained staff who and in turn are equipped with the necessary PPE and body cams. The staff also have direct access to our CCTV control room through their radios. With regard to the question about the cost I'm unable to share the contract value as you'll understand this is commercially confidential.

Thank you Councillor Fox.

Supplementary Question:

Yeah, thank you Mr Mayor

After a year and a half of this current administration we still still suffer the blight of drunkenness anti-social behaviour, drug use and begging in our city centre rather than what could be perceived by some as weak announcements that may only end up as being effective in the short term with no long-term effect. It's just not good enough or cost effective as we have all seen this happen in the past.

What the public need and want is more bobbies back on the beat police patrolling our city centre on foot 24 7 helping to combat the fear of crime which is more important sometimes than the actual crime because the fear of crimes there's a lot more damage at times and helping to make our city centre feel safer for pedestrians, the elderly and all those that visit our city. Who in higher authority have you contacted directly to press the government for more desperately needed funding to match the increasing growth of our city and increased population compared to the ratio of new police officers we see coming through. I ask that I asked you when will residents get the true protection they already paid for and truly deserve.

The Cabinet Member responded:

Your mic went off Mr Mayor but I got the gist of it that you'd like me to respond to the supplementary from Councillor Fox.

And Councillor Fox we agree, we need more bobbies on the beat certainly via our MP representations are made to government to have further policing in our city. Further numbers are important, we indeed have ourselves engaged with the chief constable along with Paul Bristow MP with a couple of meetings as well as with the police and crime commissioner to find funds to bring more coppers into our main street. What I would say is that this team that we're put into play we are by negotiation having police support for this new group of officers we'll call them that will be patrolling the streets and I think all efforts to bring our city centre ground to be a safer place should be applauded and I think we're all on the same page with regard to this. Let's just make the place even more appealing to come and visit day and night.

Thank you Councillor Fox and thank you Mr Mayor.

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| | <p><u>Questions on notice to:</u></p> <p>d. The Combined Authority Representatives</p> |
| 1. | <p>Question from Councillor Hogg</p> <p>Councillor Fitzgerald, Combined Authority Board Representative</p> <p>With Stagecoach announcing bus routes being withdrawn and others being cut back specifically at the weekend, can the relevant rep on the Combined Authority please updates us on what is being done to overturn these decisions by Stagecoach which will have a devastating effect on bus users from parts of our city?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>I'm happy to respond to Councillor Hogg and in as personal manner I could possibly do because he's staring at me.</p> <p>We are very concerned about the actions taken by Stagecoach, it's created a lot of publicity, and I can assure you that steps have already been taken by the Combined Authority to put out to public tender every single one of the bus services surrendered by Stagecoach with the intention of having all our bus services run by other operators from the changeover date of Sunday 30th October. All the tenders have been received and are being carefully evaluated.</p> <p>Stagecoach have been motivated by a large drop in revenue minus 24% less passengers and 48% less concessionary bus pass use compared to pre-Covid times and very little improvement is being detected in those numbers. Few companies in any industry could sustain such reduced revenue and the Government has recognised this with additional grants to all bus operators which are coming to an end this winter as we find the new normal. However, bus operators are also now facing higher fuel costs, higher parts bills, higher insurance costs and, most importantly, a large ongoing shortages of bus drivers. By withdrawing their least profitable services they are able to solve their driver shortage - potentially at the expense of other bus operators who are trying to step up and help us out on those routes abandoned by Stagecoach.</p> <p>The Combined Authority is very mindful of the importance of bus services for its residents especially all those dependent on buses for getting to work or school and therefore it has dug deep to find to find funds to find this new bus network. But we are also looking ahead and trying to answer the question what comes next? Where do we find the additional revenue money to fund the bus services next year and thereafter? This has the Authority's full attention, and our officers are burning the midnight computing power even though energy bills have risen as they strive to solve all those issues.</p> <p>A point to note from Councillor Hogg who questions about evening services Stagecoach are paid in the order of £200,000 pa to run the city's evening services and that tender has not been returned so will continue unaltered.</p> <p>Details of the new bus operators and any changes to times or routes will not be finalised straight away – they'll have to go through a 10-day standstill in</p> |

procurement legislation before any announcements can be made as to who will run with what.

As an addendum from myself to that, I've had some discussion with colleagues in group and the chief executive and our transport team about having little shall we say exploratory discussion with all members about the states of the bus services. The current state of play where we are what our responsibilities are and what we can try and do to improve matters so I'm extending that conversation to all members and will advise accordingly when we can get that organised either in all party policy or an informal briefing because I think members as a whole should get an understanding on bus services

I've finished Mr Mayor.

Supplementary Question:

Yes thank you Lader for that informative answer.

So I'm under the impression that that certainly the 23 bus has been, is being looked at by the Combined Authority but the briefing I got from from the Combined Authority made no mention of the eye thorney buses bus services that have been severely cut so I would hope that you would be chasing up on that

I also understand that the funding from the Combined Authority Mayor is to help overcome this situation will run until March of next year and they are working up a solution that that could mean that the Combined Authority Mayor would exercise his rights to put a precept in of around 20 pounds for a a band d house and I just wanted to know were you broadly in support of that or did you think that was something that you would want to bring forward.

The Cabinet Member responded:

That is not a Conservative party policy nor is it something as a conservative group we have discussed. What the Mayor might do is what the Mayor might do who is of course a labour mayor so if the labour mayor wants to introduce a precept into the county of Cambridgeshire that is a matter for him and he could probably do it. I he's had no discussion with me or other members I believe what you've heard is just shall we say speculation or some discussion but as far as I'm aware there is no decision. As far as your comments about the other buses I'll refer you to what I said all the things that have been surrendered are being looked at but I think there is a longer discussion within the combined authority that needs to be had and the Mayor needs to get his act together and put together a public transport policy.