

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY 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

47. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stevenson and Councillor Bisby.

48. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

49. Move to Whole (All Out) Elections

The Council received a report in relation to a proposal to move to whole ('all out') council elections.

Councillor Coles moved the recommendation and advised that considering a move to 'all out' elections had been one of the key recommendations from the governance report in 2021. Government policy encouraged Councils to consider switching to this system in order to incentivise long-term planning and stable leadership. The financial benefit of introducing whole elections would be £62,000 saving per year. 232 had responded to the public consultation, with 64.6% responding in favour of the move, and 81% of those showing a preference for a 2023 start. The alternative, it was advised, was to do nothing. This may assist smaller parties in attracting candidates and would avoid the possibility of a high level of turnover of experienced Councillors.

Councillor Steve Allen seconded the recommendation and reserved his right to speak.

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

- It was suggested that the benefits of a move to 'all outs' in stability, long-term planning and accountability were clear.
- The results of the public consultation were in favour of the move and it was felt that the Council should act on the will of residents.
- Comment was made that party politics and campaigning each May led to difficult decisions being put off and promises being made that never materialised.

- If the Council was serious about controlling its own future, it was considered, the move to 'all outs' was a necessity.
- The contrary view was also raised that, while the governance report asked the Council to consider changing its electoral system, it did not require it.
- Comment was made that the consultation was poorly designed and that the full responses had not been provided to Members until the day before the Council meeting.
- The low response to the consultation meant, it was suggested, that the results could not be relied upon to be a true reflection of residents' views.
- It was suggested that 'all out' elections could magnify small changes in political support and may result in the loss of a significant number of experienced Councillors in one go.
- Further comment was made that elections by thirds ensured that Councillors engaged with their ward residents on a more regular basis.
- It was considered that short-term thinking was both the consequence and the cause of the situation the Council currently found itself in and that long-term planning was important for growth, sustainability and stability.
- It was questioned that if the Council did not listen to the outcome of the consultation, what was the point of the consultation?
- Members referenced conversations that had been held with Councillors at authorities that had moved to 'all outs' and it was considered to be one of the best things they had done.
- It was noted that if the Council rejected the proposal to move to 'all out' elections, robust alternative plans needed to be in place to ensure the stability of the Council and its decision-making.
- It was suggested that a move to 'all outs' could cost the Council money in the long run as in the form of loss of expertise putting the Council in a worse position.
- Comment was made that, should the proposal not be agreed, it would be possible to consider it again at a future time.
- In relation to earlier comments, Members were advised that the Improvement Plan set out how the Council would be moving towards sustainability.
- It was also suggested, however, that if arrangements within the Council remained the same, then nothing would ever change.

As a second of the recommendation, Councillor Steve Allen advised that the way forward for the Council would be co-operation across the Chamber and that the key issue to address was the position of no overall control, rather than the electoral cycle.

Councillor Coles summed up as mover of the recommendation and felt that Members' debate had raised interesting points exploring all positions.

Councillor Jamil proposed that a recorded vote be taken, with 22 out of the 58 Members in attendance indicating their support. Therefore the vote on the move to Whole (All Out) Elections would be recorded.

A recorded vote was taken on the recommendation (19 voting in favour, 35 voting against, 4 abstaining from voting). The recommendation was **DEFEATED**.

Councillors For: Ansar Ali, Imtiaz Ali, Bi, John Fox, Judy Fox, Harper, Haseeb, Hemraj, Iqbal, Jamil, Alison Jones, Dennis Jones, Lane, Shaz Nawaz, Qayyum, Robinson, Sabir, Yasin, Yurgutene

Councillors Against: Jackie Allen, Steve Allen, Ayres, Barkham, Andrew Bond, Sandra Bond, Burbage, Casey, Cereste, Coles, Day, Mohammed Farooq, Fenner, Fitzgerald, Hogg, Howard, Hussain, Knight, Moyo, Gul Nawaz, Over, Perkins, Rangzeb, Ray, Rush, Sainsbury, Sandford, Seager, Shaheed, Sharp, Simons, Skibsted, Tyler, Warren, Wiggin

Councillors Abstaining: Dowson, Elsey, Saqib Farooq, Hiller

The Mayor
6.00pm – 6.45pm
12 October 2022