

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING
HELD WEDNESDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2023
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

THE MAYOR – COUNCILLOR SANDFORD

Present:

Councillors Ahmed, Jackie Allen, Steve Allen, Asif, Ayres, Barkham, Bi, Bisby, Andrew Bond, Sandra Bond, Casey, Cereste, Cole, Day, Dowson, Elsey, Mohammed Farooq, Saqib Farooq, Fenner, Fitzgerald, Judy Fox, John Fox, Harper, Haseeb, Hemraj, Hiller, Hogg, Howard, Hussain, Iqbal, Jamil, Jones, Khan, Knight, Lane, Mahmood, Nawaz, Perkins, Ray, Rush, Sabir, Sainsbury, Sandford, Seager, Sharp, Simons, Skibsted, Stevenson, Strangward, Thulbourn, Trust, Tyler, Warren, Wiggin

48. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Casey, Councillor Coles, Councillor Over, Councillor Qayyum, Councillor Rangzeb and Councillor Shaheed.

49. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Wiggin declared that in respect of the Motion from Councillor Fenner under item 12 of the agenda, he currently worked for the Passport Office which is part of the Home Office. As action was requested in the Motion from the Home Office, he would not be taking part in the debate or voting on the Motion.

Ms Adesuwa Omoregie declared that for item 13e on the agenda, Appointment of the Interim Monitoring Officer, she would not be taking part in consideration of this item and would be leaving the room.

Ms Rachel Edwards declared that she would be leaving the room for item 13g on the agenda, Appointment of Statutory Scrutiny Officer and would not take part in the consideration of this item.

50. a) Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 June 2023

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 26 July 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

b) Minutes of the Public Meeting held on 31 August 2023

The public minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 31 August 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

COMMUNICATIONS

51. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor introduced the Mayor's Announcement report, outlining the recent civic events attended by the Mayoral Party, and upcoming events, including:

- His attendance at the annual Black History month celebration and Diwali events.
- His officiating at the start of the Great Eastern Run.
- His attendance at the opening day of the Peterborough Beer Festival.
- His joining in the Starlight Hike run by one of his mayoral charities, Sue Ryder.
- Mayoral fundraising events had been successful in September and October with over £600 raised at the Sausage Supper held at the Town Hall and over £800 at the first of the 'Curry Nights'.
- He referred to Remembrance Weekend on 11th and 12th November.

Members were encouraged to join the Mayor in attending fundraising events. These were a Caribbean evening at the Millennium Centre on 18th November, a mayoral curry night at Maharani's restaurant in Hampton Hargate on 26th November and a coach tour around the John Clare Countryside on 2nd December.

52. Leader's Announcements

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

- He wished Dan Kalley, who was due to leave his role as Democratic & Constitutional Services Manager at the Council shortly, all the best for the future and thanked him for his contribution.
- He had attended and given a speech at the Opportunity Peterborough Bondholder Dinner on 19th October.
- He stated that the Station Quarter re-development project would be used as a Levelling Up Fund case study by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- Two officers from the Council's Housing Needs Team, Megan English-Stevens and Ella Evans, were congratulated for being shortlisted for the Housing Occupational Therapist of the Year accolade at this year's National Healthy Housing Awards. He wished them well at the ceremony in the National Football Museum in Manchester next month.
- Officers would be attending a 'Love Local Government' event in London in a fortnight's time to celebrate the creative work taking place in the face of unprecedented challenges.
- The Cabinet had recently approved the route to delivery of the Peterborough Integrated Renewables Infrastructure 'PIRI' project, via a partnership arrangement. The project delivered low carbon heat and electrical power to key businesses and public buildings.
- ARU Peterborough had recently announced that work had started Work on XRP eXtended Reality Peterborough, a new Centre of Excellence on the ground floor of the Peterborough Innovation and Research Centre at the ARU Peterborough campus.

Other Group Leaders responded to the Leader's announcements and raised the following points:

- Dan Kalley was thanked for his contribution by the Group Leaders and they wished him well in his new role at Cambridge City Council.
- The Group Leaders congratulated Megan English-Stevens and Ella Evans for their shortlisting and wished them well at the National Healthy Housing Awards.
- Members welcomed the progress at ARU Peterborough in a short period of time.
- Further information would be appreciated on the plans for a replacement of the regional pool.
- Members looked forward to hearing more about the PIRI scheme as it develops.

QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

53. Questions from Members of the Public

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

1. Appearance and noise nuisance of monopole and boxes – why it was authorised to be located so close to a dwelling.
2. Criteria used to decide the area of land suitable for masts and how Coniston Road met this criterion..
3. Would the Council consider placing masts on the grass verge along the Parkways.
4. A request to remove the telecoms mast at Coniston Road.
5. Communications and Council decisions in respect of the situation in Israel and Palestine, including regarding the lighting in Peterborough city centre.

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

54. 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 was one petition presented by Members at the meeting. Councillor Hussain presented a petition from the Peterborough Hackney Carriage Association. Financial pressures such as the cost of living and high fuel costs had had a drastic impact on their taxi trade and as a result the Association was requesting an increase to the age limit of their vehicles by three years. The Association was also seeking that the waiting times for MOT checks were reduced as the existing waiting times of two to four weeks were having a significant impact on their livelihoods.

55. 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. Charging of new and replacement bins.
2. Update on the implementation of the Small Homes in Multiple Occupation.
3. Status of the Gravel Car Park.
4. Status of the loan to the developers of the Hilton Gardens Hotel.
5. Vote against the adoption of the new combined authority's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.

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

RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS

56. Executive and Committee Recommendations to Council

56(a) Employment Committee Recommendation – Appointment of S151 Officer

Council received a report from the Employment Committee recommending the appointment of Cecilie Booth as the permanent Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer for Peterborough City Council.

Councillor Alison Jones moved the recommendation and referred to Ms Booth's experience and suitability for the role, having been Chief Finance and Section 151 Officer at the Council on a temporary basis since January 2022. Councillor Jackie Allen seconded the recommendation, confirming she had nothing further to add.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to approve the appointment of Cecilie Booth as the permanent Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer for Peterborough City Council.

57. 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.

Disposal of the Dickens Street and Wellington Street Car Parks

In response to a question from Councillor Hogg regarding the impact on car parking at the Millennium Centre following the disposal of Dickens Street Car Park, Councillor Fitzgerald advised that the disposal of the Dickens Street Car Park was separate from the Millennium Centre's specific car parking area.

Citizens Advice Peterborough Grant 2023-24

In response to a question from Councillor Jamil around whether the award of grant funding would lead to an employee being available in person at Citizens Advice Peterborough rather than contactable by telephone, Councillor Steve Allen advised that the direction of travel was to have a member of staff in the library area.

Councillor Fitzgerald also clarified in response to a question from Councillor Hogg that it was deemed necessary for the Cabinet Member to authorise the delegation of authority to Cambridgeshire County Council in some of the Public Health decisions due to Public Health being a joint service.

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

Transport and Infrastructure Committee

In response to a question from Councillor Fitzgerald, Councillor Simons as the representative of the Combined Authority's Transport and Infrastructure Committee stated that he did not believe that the Committee had discussed that the drawdown of £200,000 which Councillor Fitzgerald had said that the Council had not received was reliant on the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan being passed at the subsequent Combined Authority Board meeting.

Combined Authority Board – 20 September 2023

In response to a question from Councillor Hogg, Councillor Fitzgerald advised that as the Council's representative on the Combined Authority Board, he had voted against the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan due to congestion charging proposals in the document.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

59. Reports to Council

It was agreed by the Mayor and Group Leaders prior to the meeting that item 13 on the agenda, Reports to Council would be considered before item 12, Notices of Motion.

59(a) Children's Improvement Board

Council received a report in relation to the setting up of the Children's Improvement Board

Councillor Jackie Allen moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

Councillor Ayres seconded the recommendation and reserved her right to speak later in the debate.

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

1. Approve the establishment of a Children's Improvement Board in line with the statutory notice of improvement issued by the Department for Education.
2. Approve the terms of reference of the Peterborough City Council Children's Improvement Board as set out at appendix 2 and in doing so appoint Sally Rowe as its independent chair.
3. Approve the remuneration of the panel chair as set out in para 2.1.
4. Approve the delegation to the Chief Executive, Executive Director of Children's Services and Young People and Executive Director of Corporate Services & S151 officer to take all necessary actions to appoint independent board members as outlined within the terms of reference.
5. Approve the delegation of authority to the Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer:
 - to make any necessary changes to the constitution and incorporate the terms of reference for the Children's Improvement Board
 - Outline the route for recommendations from the Children's Improvement Board through Cabinet, Children and Education Scrutiny Committee and Full Council.

6. Receive regular reports from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education following each Improvement Board Meeting.
7. Note that improvement work commenced in March 2023 following the initial feedback from Ofsted.

59(b) Notification of Changes to the Leader's Scheme of Delegations

Council received a report in relation to Changes to the Leader's Scheme of Delegations

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation as set out in the report.

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

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to note the changes made by the Leader of the Council to the Executive Scheme of Delegations.

59(c) Appointment of Independent Audit Committee Chair

Council received a report in relation to the appointment of the Independent Audit Committee Chair.

Councillor Haseeb moved the recommendation as set out in the report.

Councillor Dennis Jones seconded the recommendation and reserved his right to speak.

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

1. Approve the appointment of Daniel Schumann to the position of Independent Audit Committee Chair for a period of four years until September 2027.

59(d) Health and Wellbeing Board Annual Report

Council received a report in relation to the Health and Wellbeing Board Annual Report.

Councillor Hussain moved the recommendation.

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

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

1. Note the annual report of the Joint Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Health and Wellbeing Board for 2022-2023.

59(e) Appointment of Interim Monitoring Officer

Council received a report in relation to the appointment of the Interim Monitoring Officer.

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation.

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

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

1. Approve the appointment of Adesuwa Omoregie as the Interim Monitoring Officer for Peterborough City Council.

59(f) Appointment of Education Statutory Co-Opted Member

Council received a report in relation to the appointment of the Education Statutory Co-Opted Member

Councillor Jackie Allen moved the recommendation.

Councillor Ayres seconded the recommendation and reserved her right to speak.

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

1. Approve the appointment of Peter French as a co-opted member of the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee

59(g) Appointment of Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Council received a report in relation to the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation.

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

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

1. Approve the appointment of Rachel Edwards as the authority's Statutory Scrutiny Officer.

60. Notices of Motion

The Mayor adjourned the meeting prior to this item in keeping with 14.1 of the Council's Constitution.

60(1) Motion from Councillor Harper

Councillor Harper moved his motion, which asked for members to undertake a vote of no confidence to remove the Leader of the Council. He commented that opposition members had no confidence in the Leader of the Council, his Cabinet or the administration and would be seeking an alternative leader and administration. He added that the political attacks and weaponization of the Council administration against opposition members had led to the relationship between the Leader (including his cabinet) and the opposition groups (including former group members) deteriorating to such an extent that the delivery of council services and having majority consent on major policy including the budget were at risk. He placed an emphasis on the council needing stability and leadership to navigate through the difficult financial and governance challenges it was facing.

Councillor Iqbal seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

The designated speaker on behalf of the Conservative Group was Councillor Sainsbury. He referred to the issues he believed had been created by lack of

opposition support and commented that a new administration would put delivery of services at risk. Councillor Sainsbury also referred to some examples which he believed demonstrated the success of the Leader and the current administration.

The designated speaker on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group was Councillor Hogg. He reserved his right to speak.

The designated speaker on behalf of the Green Party was Councillor Day. She supported the motion, expressing the view that the Council required a fresh approach. She confirmed she would be supporting the proposed 'Peterborough First' administration.

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

- Members from the Conservative Group stated that the Council was in an improved position due to the actions of the current Leader, Cabinet and administration. Further points included that the current administration had provided strong leadership and created stability, including through the creation of the all-party Financial Stability Working Group and that progress had been reflected in the report of the Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel. Achievements were referred to that they believed were linked to the work of the current administration, including the establishment of the University, the development of the PIRI project and the number of houses being built which made Peterborough one of the fastest growing cities in the country. They disputed that there had been no attempt to work in a spirit of co-operation with opposition members and expressed the view that the Leader had encouraged cross party engagement.
- Opposition members spoke in favour of the motion, expressing their concerns that there had been political and personal attacks by the current administration against opposition members and a lack of an attempt to work in partnership or in a spirit of co-operation with them. Further points included that it was not considered that it was the way to run a minority administration and that decisions were taken in political interests rather than the City's interests. The decision to vote against the Combined Authority's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan was raised as a decision of concern. The lack of progress in the OFSTED report was also given as a reason for supporting the motion.
- Members of the Conservative Group had made the point that the Council's Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel would need to remain in place due to the challenges that were likely to be raised by a new administration. Members of the Council were advised that it was the intention of 'Peterborough First' Members to keep the Panel in place should they become the new administration as the journey to seek improvements continued. It was stated that it was responsible to retain the Panel's support.
- Councillor Lane did not support the motion on the grounds that he believed the priority was for Members to work together, using collective skills and experience to achieve financial stability.

Councillor Hogg addressed Council, commenting that there had been good measures brought forward by the current administration such as the Financial Stability Working Group but also some negative aspects. He referred to Empower, Hilton Hotel and the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan not being signed as examples of those. He considered that at July Council there had been combative motions submitted and he believed there had been criticism of that from the Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel. Councillor Hogg also confirmed there had been discussions between the Liberal Democrat Group and Peterborough First regarding cross party working and he would be supporting the motion.

Councillor Iqbal then spoke, stating that the current administration and Leader had not sought to build trust with the opposition parties. He considered that the Conservative Group's criticisms of Peterborough First were unfair and he had found them competent, experienced, aware of the financial challenges the Council faced and in his view they would do their best for the people of Peterborough.

Councillor Harper, in his summing up, thanked those who had supported his motion. The aim, he stated, was to put the citizens of Peterborough first with collaboration, listening, transparency, stability and financial competence.

A recorded vote was taken on the motion (32 voting in favour, 20 voting against, 2 abstaining from voting.) The motion was **CARRIED**.

Councillors For – 32 – Barkham, Bi, Bisby, Andrew Bond, Sandra Bond, Cole, Day, Dowson, Mohammed Farooq, Saqib Farooq, Judy Fox, John Fox, Harper, Haseeb, Hemraj, Hiller, Hogg, Howard, Iqbal, Jamil, Alison Jones, Dennis Jones, Knight, Mahmood, Rush, Sabir, Seager, Skibsted, Stevenson, Strangward, Thulbourn, Wiggin

Councillors Against – 20 – Ahmed, Jackie Allen, Steve Allen, Asif, Ayres, Cereste, Fenner, Fitzgerald, Hussain, Khan, Lane, Nawaz, Perkins, Ray, Sainsbury, Sharp, Simons, Trust, Tyler, Warren

Councillors Abstaining – 1 – Sandford

60(1) Motion without notice to suspend standing orders

Councillor Harper moved a procedural motion to suspend the following Council Standing Orders set out in the Constitution relating to Motions: 19.1, 19.2, 19.3, 19.4, 20.1, 21.2, 23.1 and 23.2. He advised this was intended to be for the duration of the motion to elect a new Leader and subsequent matters arising from this motion.

Councillor Hogg seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

A recorded vote was taken on the motion (32 voting in favour, 19 voting against, 2 abstaining from voting.) The motion was **CARRIED**.

Councillors For – 32 – Barkham, Bi, Bisby, Andrew Bond, Sandra Bond, Cole, Day, Dowson, Mohammed Farooq, Saqib Farooq, Judy Fox, John Fox, Harper, Haseeb, Hemraj, Hiller, Hogg, Howard, Iqbal, Jamil, Alison Jones, Dennis Jones, Knight, Mahmood, Rush, Sabir, Seager, Skibsted, Stevenson, Strangward, Thulbourn, Wiggin

Councillors Against – 19 – Ahmed, Jackie Allen, Steve Allen, Asif, Ayres, Cereste, Fenner, Fitzgerald, Hussain, Khan, Nawaz, Perkins, Ray, Sainsbury, Sharp, Simons, Trust, Tyler, Warren

Councillors Abstaining – 2 – Lane, Sandford

60(1) Motion without notice to elect a new leader

Councillor Harper moved his motion to appoint Councillor Mohammed Farooq as the new Leader of the Council.

Councillor Hogg seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

60(1) Motion without notice to elect Councillor Wayne Fitzgerald as Leader

Councillor Steve Allen proposed an amendment to the motion to elect Councillor Fitzgerald as Leader of the Council. Addressing Council on the amended motion, he stated that all Members of the Conservative Group were supportive of Councillor Fitzgerald as their leader. He expressed the view that it was personal enmities held by a group of disparate opposition parties and the ambition of the new administration rather than reasons of substance which had led to the vote of no confidence.

Councillor Tyler seconded the amended motion and reserved his right to speak.

It was agreed that Members would speak on the Motion without notice to elect a new leader and the amended Motion without notice to elect Councillor Fitzgerald at the same time.

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

- Members of the Conservative Group expressed concerns that many of the Members who were now part of the new administration had formerly been elected as Members of the Conservative Group and not on a Peterborough First mandate. Further points included that Councillor Farooq had originally been elected as a Member of the Group and was now seeking to be Leader of the Council as a Member of Peterborough First. It was questioned whether this was legitimate or moral. It was queried whether the numbers in Peterborough First were sufficient to run the administration and it was doubted whether it was appropriate that the largest party was no longer being asked to form the administration. There were concerns expressed that opposition groups were voting for the new administration of former Conservative Group councillors and would take no part in it.
- Members of the Conservative Group spoke in favour of the motion to elect Councillor Fitzgerald on the grounds that he was the best leader for Peterborough.
- There were concerns expressed from opposition members about the level of debate from Councillor Fitzgerald during this item, including in relation to Members of Peterborough First. This was stated as a reason as to why a new Leader and administration was required.

Councillor Hogg, in his capacity as the seconder of the motion to elect Mohammed Farooq as the new Leader of the Council, queried the legitimacy of seeking to elect Councillor Fitzgerald as Leader following the vote of no confidence. He hoped that Councillor Fitzgerald would be able to play a part in seeking better outcomes for the Council with the other parties in the future, given his experience.

Councillor Harper summed up, having moved the motion to appoint Councillor Mohammed Farooq as the new Leader of the Council. He concurred with Councillor Hogg that it was necessary for all parties to work together and the Members who had stated that the level of debate was the reason why it was necessary to seek a change of administration. He asked that Members vote for Councillor Farooq in order for the City to make progress.

It was clarified by the Mayor that the amended motion to elect Councillor Fitzgerald as Leader would be taken first and in the event it was carried, it would become the main motion. A recorded vote was taken on the amended motion. (20 voting in favour, 32 voting against, 1 abstaining from voting.) The motion was **DEFEATED**.

Councillors For – 20 – Ahmed, Jackie Allen, Steve Allen, Asif, Ayres, Cereste, Fenner, Fitzgerald, Hussain, Khan, Lane, Nawaz, Perkins, Ray, Sainsbury, Sharp, Simons, Trust, Tyler, Warren

Councillors Against – 32 – Barkham, Bi, Bisby, Andrew Bond, Sandra Bond, Cole, Day, Dowson, Mohammed Farooq, Saqib Farooq, Judy Fox, John Fox, Harper, Haseeb, Hemraj, Hiller, Hogg, Howard, Iqbal, Jamil, Alison Jones, Dennis Jones, Knight, Mahmood, Rush, Sabir, Seager, Skibsted, Stevenson, Strangward, Thulbourn, Wiggin

Councillors Abstaining – 1 – Sandford

A recorded vote was then taken on the motion to appoint Councillor Mohammed Farooq as the new Leader of the Council (32 voting in favour, 19 voting against, 2 abstaining from voting.) The motion was **CARRIED**.

Councillors For – 32 – Barkham, Bi, Bisby, Andrew Bond, Sandra Bond, Cole, Day, Dowson, Mohammed Farooq, Saqib Farooq, Judy Fox, John Fox, Harper, Haseeb, Hemraj, Hiller, Hogg, Howard, Iqbal, Jamil, Alison Jones, Dennis Jones, Knight, Mahmood, Rush, Sabir, Seager, Skibsted, Stevenson, Strangward, Thulbourn, Wiggin

Councillors Against – 19 – Ahmed, Jackie Allen, Steve Allen, Asif, Ayres, Cereste, Fenner, Fitzgerald, Hussain, Khan, Nawaz, Perkins, Ray, Sainsbury, Sharp, Simons, Trust, Tyler, Warren

Councillors Abstaining – 2 – Lane, Sandford

60(1) Motion without notice to note leader's scheme of delegations

Councillor Farooq moved his motion for Council to note the new Cabinet Members and their respective portfolios. He thanked colleagues, including from the different political groups, for voting for him as the new Leader of the Council. He also referred to four key priorities for the new administration that were growth and prosperity, protecting the vulnerable, education and environment. He stated that the vision was for the core values of transparency, compassion and ambition to become embedded in a financially stable and collaborative council.

The new Cabinet Members were as follows:

- Councillor Howard – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services, Legal and Communities
- Councillor Bisby – Cabinet Member for Children's Services
- Councillor Hiller – Housing, Growth and Regeneration
- Councillor Saqib Farooq - Cabinet Member for Adults and Health
- Councillor Elsey - Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change
- Councillor Harper - Cabinet Advisor for Housing, Growth and Regeneration
- Councillor John Fox - Cabinet Advisor for Adults and Health.

Councillor Farooq added that the new administration was well aware of the financial challenges the council was facing and the plan was to deliver a long term financial strategy in order to provide stability in the medium to long term. It appreciated all the hard work of officers and looked forward to working with them having taken on the new roles. It also planned to work closely with all political groups and extend a hand of friendship to Conservative Group colleagues. Co-operation of the Conservative Group would lead to stronger and more stable leadership.

Councillor Howard seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

It was clarified by the Mayor that the vote taken on the motion was to note the leader's scheme of delegations. The vote was as follows (33 voting in favour, 18 voting against, 1 abstaining from voting.) The motion was **CARRIED**.

60(1) Motion without notice to elect Committee Chairs, Vice Chairs and Appointments to Outside Organisations

Councillor Farooq moved his motion, asking Council to approve the appointments of the following as Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Council Committees:

- Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee – Chair, Councillor Wiggin and Vice Chair, Councillor Jamil.
- Children and Education Scrutiny Committee – Chair, Councillor Shaheed and Vice Chair, Councillor Hemraj.
- Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee – Chair, Councillor Day and Vice Chair, Councillor Sandford.
- Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee – Chair (To Be Confirmed) and Vice Chair, Councillor Shaheed.
- Employment Committee – Chair, Councillor Alison Jones and Vice Chair, Councillor Jamil.
- Planning and Environmental Protection Committee – Chair, Councillor Iqbal and Vice Chair, Councillor Jamil.
- Appeals and Planning Review Committee – Chair, Councillor Thulbourn and Vice Chair, Councillor Qayyum.
- Audit Committee – independent Chair, Daniel Schumann and Vice Chair, Councillor Haseeb.
- Corporate Parenting Committee – Chair, Councillor Dennis Jones and Vice Chair, Councillor Bi.
- Constitution and Ethics Committee – Chair, Councillor Qayyum and Vice Chair, Councillor Hiller.
- Licensing Committee – Chair (To Be Confirmed) and Vice Chair, Councillor Sandra Bond.

Councillor Farooq asked Council to note the Committee membership, to approve the appointment of Councillor John Fox as the Armed Forces Champion and to note the membership of all other outside bodies (these had been provided to Members at the meeting).

Councillor Howard seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

A vote was then taken on the motion (47 voting in favour, 3 voting against, 2 abstaining from voting.) The motion was **CARRIED**.

60(2). Motion from Councillor Fenner

Councillor Fenner moved the motion. He stated that it was noted that the Council had received £48 million for the Station quarter. The redevelopment was likely to include the Great Northern Hotel site. At present the hotel was being used as a hostel for migrants that had crossed the channel on small boats.

Councillor Fenner commented that Peterborough supports more asylum seekers than any other city in the east of England. There was a strong track record of helping those that faced persecution and who are in need. However, any further use of this hotel as a place for migrants could potentially impact and delay any redevelopment plans. The use of the hotel for this purpose was not in the long-term interests of Peterborough and

the young men themselves.

It was proposed that the Council resolve to press ahead with the station quarter redevelopment plans as quickly as possible, lobby government to find alternative accommodation, outside of Peterborough, for the asylum seekers and support the government in its campaign to stop the boats and illegal immigration.

Councillor Hussain seconded the motion, thereby reserving his right to speak.

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

- The Government had now advised that the Great Northern Hotel would no longer be used as a place for asylum seekers to stay after the end of January 2024.
- The view was expressed that given there were 'no spades in the ground' as yet in the redevelopment, the position regarding the hotel was not currently impeding it.
- It was agreed that there was no wish to see asylum seekers risk their lives in boat crossings and for human traffickers to profit. However, there was a difference of opinion between Conservative Group members who supported Government policy and added that those who travelled in the boats were not following due process and Liberal Democrat and Labour Group members who expressed concerns about the Government's policy, including the cost of people staying in hotels and the number of cases yet to be processed. Opposition members asked that asylum seekers were not called illegal immigrants on the basis they were able to seek asylum and it was for the system to ascertain whether they met the legal criteria.

During this item, in according with the Council's Standing Orders in the Constitution, it was noted that at 10.15pm the meeting would be formally brought towards its conclusion unless there was a motion to suspend Standing Order 14.2 in order that the meeting could be extended.

Councillor Hogg moved a motion to suspend the Standing Order in order that the meeting could be extended. Councillor Ray seconded the motion.

A vote was taken on the motion to extend the meeting of Council by 30 minutes (29 voting in favour, 23 voting against, 1 abstaining from voting.) The motion was **CARRIED**.

Councillor Farooq moved a procedural motion under Standing Order 20 to refer Councillor Fenner's motion to the Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Jamil seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

A vote was taken on the procedural motion moved by Councillor Farooq (30 voting in favour, 20 voting against, 2 abstaining from voting.). The motion was **CARRIED**.

60(3). Motion from Councillor Trust

Councillor Trust moved her motion. She stated that according to the Office of National Statistics, one in five adults experienced domestic abuse. The majority were women. Reflecting conversations she had had with residents, there was a lack of knowledge about support services available to them. Earlier in the year, the Youth MP Eva Woods and Paul Bristow MP had contacted Councillor Trust about exploring the prospects of

launching a Violence Against Women and Girls Commission in Peterborough which emphasised the ongoing work of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership. Driven by high profile inroads made by Plymouth City Council around violence against women and girls, it had been decided to take action to address the lack of understanding and discussion of this issue amongst elected representatives and the general public in Peterborough. In response the Partnership Board had outlined a highly impressive map of ongoing work at a strategic and operational level to support and protect known victims and facilitate reporting and strategies to further meet the need in the City. It was considered that the need in Peterborough was not a gap in provision but a lack of knowledge of the support available.

Councillor Trust added that to help combat the lack of profile of this work across the community, it was requested that members engaged with plans for wider communications of the campaign, including male members to take the White Ribbon Pledge to support the eradication of violence against women and girls. White Ribbon Day was being held on 25 November. The motion also included that the draft domestic abuse and violence guidance for members be referred to scrutiny and then to the relevant Cabinet Member for sign off.

Councillor Jackie Allen seconded the motion and reserved her right to speak.

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

- The motion was welcomed. It was requested that there was support not only for victims of domestic abuse and violence but also those working to help victims.
- Councillor Cole was thanked for her work in this area.
- Members were encouraged to sign up to the White Ribbon Pledge and be an ambassador.

A vote was taken on the motion and it was **CARRIED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain).

60(4). Motion from Councillor Hussain

Councillor Hussain moved his motion. He stated that the Government had opted to extend the date of the petrol and diesel car ban to 2035 to ensure a more fair and pragmatic approach towards achieving net zero. He commented that the delay aimed to provide an opportunity for individuals and businesses, including taxi drivers, to take advantage of the decreasing costs of electric vehicles, thus promoting an eco-friendlier way of travelling.

Councillor Hussain requested that in alignment with the Government's approach, the council ensured that the transition to net zero remained fair and pragmatic while not punishing Peterborough taxi drivers with further financial burdens. By allowing taxi drivers to license vehicles which were Euro 6 compliant would allow those drivers a greater choice of vehicles there by guarantee convenient taxi services for the residents of Peterborough.

He added that Euro 6 vehicles not only allowed a greater choice of vehicle but a wider choice of type of vehicle from small hybrids to larger MPVs, which was able to help school runs and improve accessibility for individuals with mobility challenges. By permitting Euro 6 emissions vehicles, it would strike the right balance between reducing harmful emissions and considering economic conditions, thereby offering taxi drivers a practical and fair path forward that protected their livelihoods.

The motion requested Council recommend that the Licensing Committee consider bringing forward the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licencing Policy Review to allow for Euro 6 emission standards taxi vehicles and recommend to the highway authority to review road layouts to allow private hire and taxi cabs access to previously restricted areas around the city where practicable thereby reducing journey times, cost to public and emissions.

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

Councillor Hogg moved a procedural motion under Standing Order 20 to refer Councillor Hussain's motion to the Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee. He explained that his reason for this was that the proposals needed to be explored in more detail, including whether there were major financial implications. He stated that Euro 6 vehicles were already permitted and questioned whether the actual aim that was being sought was for ULEZ and ULEV vehicles to be permitted for a longer period. Councillor Hogg also remarked that the Council was the highway authority and clarity was sought on what road layouts were being referred to and whether this was the network of bus lanes.

Councillor Day seconded Councillor Hogg's motion and reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Hussain emphasised that his motion had requested that the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licencing Policy Review be considered by the Licensing Committee and that the Highway Authority review the road layouts to allow private hire cabs access to previously restricted areas around the city where practicable thereby reducing journey times, cost to public and emissions. He was therefore not requesting that wider matters were considered at the current Council meeting.

Councillor Day stated in her capacity as seconder of the procedural motion that she wished to support the hard working taxi drivers of Peterborough. However, Councillor Hussain's motion required officer time and needed to be considered in detail, including with the receipt of officer reports. Further details were required of which road layouts were proposed to be reviewed. Councillor Day added that in the event the motion was taken to the Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee, she would also support it being taken to the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee as part of that work.

Councillor Hogg, in summing up, said that he had consulted licensing officers and they had informed him that the changes requested in Councillor Hussain's motion would require changes in the Council's net zero target policy. He had also consulted the Head of Highways Department on private hire and taxi cabs access to previously restricted areas and been advised that it would need a large body of work, including introducing Traffic Regulation Orders, changing signage if it included bus lanes and a wider consultation with the likes of bus companies and health and safety.

A vote was taken on the procedural motion moved by Councillor Hogg. (32 voting in favour, 18 voting against, 1 abstaining from voting). The motion was **CARRIED**.

60(5). Motion from Councillor Ray

Councillor Ray moved his motion, making the point that in local elections in Peterborough and elsewhere the public were able to cast their vote to elect councillors based largely on the political manifestos set out by each candidate and a general belief in the same principles of the party or person they choose to support. Generally, people voted for likeminded people, whether that be for a smaller party candidate or one of the main ones such as Labour, the Liberal Democrats or the Conservatives.

He expressed the view that it was simply not right that once elected, an individual Councillor was able to abandon that manifesto and swap to another party or claim to be independent of the party they stood for and the promises they made, without displaying accountability by going back to the public to face a further vote in the ballot box.

He believed it betrayed the trust of the people that voted for them when rather than displaying openness, individuals misled the electorate by standing on a political platform, only to cross the floor within a matter of weeks or months.

He asked that Council resolved to write to the City's MPs, Paul Bristow and Shailesh Vara, to take the necessary steps in Parliament to gain cross-party support and change the law to state "Any MP or Councillor that crosses the floor mid term should call a by election". This, he added, would hold elected representatives accountable and would ensure when they stand on a set of policies, funded by those that believe them and are elected by those that support them, they were doing so with honest and selfless intentions.

Councillor Steve Allen seconded the motion, commenting that it was particularly pertinent in terms of what had taken place at the Council meeting. He made the point that for every member that stood for a political party, people worked on their behalf and money was invested in them as a candidate. Crossing the floor was undemocratic.

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

- The comment was made that there had been no calls previously for legislation when members of opposition parties had crossed the floor.
- There would be a cost for any additional by-elections required.
- Members spoke about how they felt that their political views or values had not changed but that the parties they represented had or representatives of the parties, they believed, had acted in an unacceptable fashion. It was also felt that in certain cases the electorate voted for the candidate rather than the party. The member still represented residents no matter which party was represented.

At 10.45pm, in keeping with the Council's Standing Orders, there was no further discussion of the remaining business and a vote taken.

A recorded vote via the electronic voting system was taken on the motion moved by Councillor Ray (19 voting in favour, 32 voting against, 2 abstaining from voting.) The motion was **DEFEATED**.

Councillors For – 19 – Ahmed, Jackie Allen, Steve Allen, Asif, Ayres, Cereste, Fenner, Fitzgerald, Hussain, Khan, Nawaz, Perkins, Ray, Sainsbury, Sharp, Simons, Trust, Tyler, Warren

Councillors Against – 32 – Barkham, Bi, Bisby, Andrew Bond, Sandra Bond, Cole, Day, Dowson, Mohammed Farooq, Saqib Farooq, Judy Fox, John Fox, Harper, Haseeb, Hemraj, Hiller, Hogg, Howard, Iqbal, Jamil, Alison Jones, Dennis Jones, Knight, Mahmood, Rush, Sabir, Seager, Skibsted, Stevenson, Strangward, Thulbourn, Wiggin

Councillors Abstaining – 2 – Lane, Sandford

The Mayor
6.00pm –10.47pm
1 November 2023

**FULL COUNCIL 1 November 2023
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

Questions were received under the following categories:

<u>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</u>	
<u>Questions from members of the public</u>	
1.	<p>Question from Sue Hamilton</p> <p>Councillor Marco Cereste – Cabinet Member for Growth and Regeneration</p> <p>Yes, good evening, everyone, I am here regarding the monopole and cabinets that have been erected on Coniston Road, Gunthorpe.</p> <p>My main concern is the siting, appearance and noise nuisance of this Monopole and Boxes. These have all caused me and others distress, and I fail to comprehend how anyone can agree this new siting which is less than 3m away from my dwelling would be acceptable!</p> <p>As well as the siting in such close proximity, and surely this is classed as a major material amendment, not a minor amendment due to the distance from the original siting, the appearance is not in keeping with the visual amenity of this area as not in scale with the low level housing and green space areas, and no attempt to hide the Monopole and Boxes from view, so bodes to be intrusive and not appropriate for this residential area.</p> <p>The noise nuisance of the constant motorised humming can be experienced in my back garden, which is unacceptable, preventing me from relaxing and enjoying the peace and quiet in my garden that I was able to experience before the installation. The noise can even be heard at nighttime in my back lounge and bedroom which again is unacceptable, even with the windows and doors tightly shut, and even worse in the summer months when windows have to be open. In addition to this, my neighbour living opposite has advised he too can hear this noise in his garden thus depriving us of our right to peace and quiet and enjoyment within our own properties which we are entitled to under the Human Right Act. He also has to view the Monopole from all 6 windows of his house. On 27 August 2023 Bristol Council ordered that a noisy Monopole that had been located at the rear of a resident's gardens be removed. If Bristol Council can do this for their constituents, then Peterborough Council can do the same for their Gunthorpe constituents. As you have advised, the devaluation of our properties due to the Monopole installation is not your concern, the cost of moving this Monopole is not our concern. The fact is it should never have been placed so close to a residential property.</p> <p>There are other areas where this Monopole and Boxes could have been erected such as:</p> <p>Woodland in Werrington Brook that has electrical supplies</p> <p>Open field opposite Barn Garden Centre</p> <p>East Coast Railway Area</p>

A15 Dual Carriageway

Various Industrial Sites

We have been advised that other areas were not even looked into.

Surely from the number of objections received when you sent another proposal this July, you can see the residents are unhappy, as majority were unaware of the existing Monopole being erected, so did not have opportunity to comment. They have since had issues with TV signalling at a cost to themselves, and have commented on the noise, siting and appearance not in keeping with the area in their objections for the new proposal. I cannot even paint my fence that side as the Monopole and Boxes are so close to it, and when I complained to the Council, I was treated with contempt and no empathy, and advised to go to a DIY store and buy extension poles! I cannot use these poles to clean the dirt off the fence beforehand!

Why was it authorised to be located so close to a residential dwelling? I feel Senior Officers should have arranged a site visit including Surveyors involved in the inspection.

The Cabinet Member responded:

Thank you, Mr Mayor, thank you Miss Hamilton.

Well, a number of investigations have been carried out into the erection of the telecommunications mast at Coniston Avenue both by the planning enforcement team (through the Council's formal complaints procedure) and by the Local Government Ombudsman (who determined not to investigate the matter). These investigations confirmed that the Council had acted properly in following planning legislation and in how it assessed both the original application and the changes to the proposed location submitted as a minor amendment. The revised site layout plan was made available on the Council's Online Planning Register since 17 October 2023. Site visits were made to the site during the assessment of the application and following its erection.

The telecommunications cabinets are permitted development. This means that the Council cannot control the location of their installation. Nevertheless, such cabinets do not normally issue noise to levels that would disturb residential amenity. Local residents have been advised to contact the Radio and Television Interference Service who are the national body that investigates problems in receiving domestic TV services.

As the mast has been lawfully erected, the Council does not have the grounds to seek its removal. The government is committed to ensuring that there is a good coverage of mobile phone signal across the country and that it is updated to meet the latest technology, such as 5G.

Supplementary question from Pauline Hinchcliffe:

Pauline Hinchcliffe who will be speaking, she will be mentioning about a supporting information document, but what I wanted to mention was that the planning department advise that the re-site location was on the PCC website on the 17th of October 2022.

However, I have an email from my neighbour that he checked on the 3rd of February 2023 and the location map still showed the original site, it didn't show the new location.

I have this email which you are very welcome to see and also, he does state on there

	<p>that he never received a letter, a proposal letter regarding the mast proposal as others in the area have advised that they never received a letter and he actually lived opposite the grass verge so he should have received a letter he could oppose.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>I am not sure what response you want, you know, I mean, I absolutely sympathise with what you have said this evening and your situation and if it is my place to do so, in the very near future, I will ask my Officers to check out all the things you said to make sure that you have been given the correct information at the correct time, thank you Mr Mayor.</p> <p>Mr Mayor: It would be helpful if you could obtain that information and pass it through to her, thank you.</p>
2.	<p>Question from Alan Wilson (1)</p> <p>Councillor Marco Cereste – Cabinet Member for Growth and Regeneration</p> <p>Please can the council explain what criteria they used in deciding what area of land is suitable for these masts and how Coniston Road fitted into these criteria?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>Thank you, Mr Mayor, and thank you Mr Wilson.</p> <p>Central Government has set the planning rules for 'permitted development' equipment, and in particular Class A of Part 16 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) sets the rules concerning mobile phone equipment. In this case, the equipment cabinet is permitted development, and the Council had no control over its location. The government is committed to ensuring that there is a good coverage of mobile phone signal across the country and that it is updated to meet the latest technology, such as 5G.</p> <p>As far as the mast is concerned, Paragraph A.3 sets out that before beginning the development, i.e. the installation of the monopole, the developer must write to the Local Planning Authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the siting and appearance of the development. This means that the only issues the planning authority was allowed to consider were appearance and siting.</p> <p>The officer report considered the visual impact, as well as residents' amenity, and concluded that the impact would be acceptable having also carried out public consultation before determining the application.</p> <p>Supplementary question:</p> <p>Yeah, I would like to know how they considered the mast in an area full of bungalows would have no impact on the area.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>I can't answer that question, you know, an Officer goes, makes a determination and makes a decision based on what they or he/she sees. Again, I am quite happy, if it is my position to do so, I would be quite happy to dig a bit to see if I can get you some more information, happy to do that but it may not be my position to do so tomorrow, but if I can, I will help.</p>

3.	<p>Question from Alan Wilson (2)</p> <p>Councillor Marco Cereste – Cabinet Member for Growth and Regeneration</p> <p>We have in Peterborough an excellent road system in our Parkways. Have the Council considered putting these masts on the grass verge along the Parkways where they wouldn't intrude on residential areas.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>Thank you, Mr Mayor, and thank you Mr Wilson.</p> <p>In its role as the Local Planning Authority, the Council is not responsible for determining where mobile network operators decide to submit applications for telecommunication masts. It can only respond to Prior Approval and Planning Applications submitted by the operators. If an application is received for a telecommunications mast located on a parkway, then we would consider its impact in terms of siting and appearance. There may be other factors for the telecommunications operator to consider such as the presence of trees which would necessitate a higher structure, the ability to secure access for maintenance, and highway safety, thank you Mr Mayor.</p> <p>Supplementary question:</p> <p>I would just like to know if it has been considered, have you spoken about it. When you talk to these telecommunications companies, have you talked to x to look into these areas.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>I can only be honest with you and say that when it has been brought to my attention that a planning application has been made for these masts, I have suggested to the applicant via the their agent obviously as you never speak to the applicant that perhaps there may be better sighting and in one or two cases they have listened to the advice that our planning officers have given them but I must say that in one or two cases they have not and this is probably one of them but as I say, I will ask my senior director to make sure you get an answer to your question as far as we can answer it.</p>
4.	<p>Question from Pauline Hinchliffe</p> <p>Councillor Marco Cereste – Cabinet Member for Growth and Regeneration</p> <p>Yes, thank you, good evening, Mr Mayor.</p> <p>Many investigations have been carried out and have concluded that Peterborough City Council has failed in its duties to ensure that the development does not cause visual harm or nuisance to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.</p> <p>A resident at 25 Ennerdale Rise, adjacent to the mast and associated equipment, is currently suffering the noise emitted from the transmitter cooling fans located next to her garden fence which operate 24 hours a day. Owing to the situation Ms Hamilton's property would be considerably devalued.</p> <p>The mast was not installed where shown on the original plan. It is vastly different and does not merge with the existing features, ie lighting columns and telegraph poles. This is, in fact, a MAJOR change and not a MINOR one.</p> <p>They may just as well have erected the mast in the garden of 25 Ennerdale Rise: it is</p>

so close. And the existing trees do not hide the mast and will not grow any larger with age (they are already fully grown).

The Peterborough City Council did not investigate any other sites and failed to publish the revised layout plan for the site which featured MAJOR location changes. Therefore, residents were deprived of their right to comment on the revised proposals. The site plan as submitted by the developer is also grossly inaccurate.

A Peterborough City Council Planning Officer was contacted by my colleague, Richard Olive, and admitted that the department had insufficient resources to examine the proposals adequately and to check the accuracy of the application plan within the timescale allowed. This means that the Gunthorpe community must now face the consequences!

Whom from the PCC Planning Office has bothered to visit the site after the revised location of the mast? It seems no-one can answer this! And no one has contacted Ms Hamilton at number 25 Ennerdale Rise either.

Gunthorpe residents, knowing full well about the dispute, have recently lodged 89 objections to a mast proposal. Local Councillors and Paul Bristow MP admit the mast should not have been erected there in the first place. It would appear that Ms Hamilton could have a good legal case to fight.

In conclusion, I would like to know when will the Peterborough City Council be removing the mast which is still causing such anguish and nuisance to the residents of Gunthorpe?

The Cabinet Member responded:

Thank you, Mr Mayor, thank you Ms Hinchcliffe.

What I would be happy to do, and our senior officer is sitting here so he is going to hear what I am about to say, what I would be happy to do is to get the whole thing looked at and see if there is something that we can do about it. You know, from the answers I have got, there is nothing that we can do about it, but you know, let's have a look, let's have a look again, let's make sure you should have been given the information when you should have been given it and in a timely way and in a way that you can understand it. There is no point in people giving you information which you can't understand. So, let's look at that. I absolutely sympathise so you know, I can't say any more than that. We will do it, it will get done and if somebody does not contact you very shortly, please contact me personally irrespective of what may happen this evening.

Supplementary question:

Yes, in September, we enquired about the alternative sites which had been considered by the applicant. We were informed by a senior planning officer that this information was on the Council's website, but it might be concealed in another document, we tried in vain to find it. We contacted the same officer again. He pointed us to a supplementary information document which I have here which had been received by the Council on the 17th of July 2022 before the prior approval had been granted on the 18th of August 2022 but due to an oversight it was not published until the 20th of October 2023. It is a 30-page document which contains a lot of information about the design and location of the proposed mast. Amazingly, much of it was at variants with the submitted drawings. We are disturbed that residents were unable to view and comment upon this most important document before prior approval was granted.

	<p>Is this in line with the Council's democratic policies? Thank you for listening.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>Only Mr Mayor that my briefing note tells me that the document wasn't on the website until October 2023, that is what my document says too. What is clear, that we need our people to have a look at it again. Our officer is sitting there, our senior officer is sitting there, and I am absolutely certain that someone will have another look at it and they will try and help if it is possible.</p>
5.	<p>Question from Ed Murphy</p> <p>Councillor Steven Allen – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities</p> <p>Thank you, Mr Mayor.</p> <p>I understand that Councillor Coles isn't here tonight. There are some financial parts to the questions, I am not sure who is going to take it.</p> <p>I spoke to the Council Leader who was the Council Leader yesterday evening, and he has assured me that it wasn't a politician or him that made the decision, but I am going to read out the question. I know Councils have copy of it, but members of the public and other people here tonight don't.</p> <p>So, last month the Council, on the Sunday, I think it was, posted on its Facebook page that it had changed the lighting in Peterborough city centre and also displayed the Israeli flag icon in its communication that went out. At the same time, other authorities chose to take actions which were deemed by folk to be non-partisan such as the Paris authorities actually switching off the lights on the Eiffel Tower which I think was a good way to show empathy with people that had been slaughtered.</p> <p>City Council then received a number of complaints from residents about what folk perceived to be the Council had taken a partisan and inappropriate action on this.</p> <p>Now, I heard earlier on a number of people speak about the situation since that post, thousands of people have been killed by what amounts to war crimes and the siege continues and a number of people including the Green Party parliamentary candidate for Peterborough and others tonight I think were talking about a need for a ceasefire.</p> <p>I am wondering if that is the general view of people in this chamber here tonight. Certainly, we need to do something to stop the mass killings that are going on in Palestine and the Gaza Strip at the moment.</p> <p>So, the question goes onto ask, how much does the Council spend on its communications team each year. Yesterday evening I checked, and I saw a post saying it was £538,000 pounds a year being spent on marketing and communications. In my question I asked whose decision but as Councillor Fitzgerald, the Leader of the Council told me last night it wasn't him or a politician, I don't think I want an officer name, I don't think that would be appropriate but I want to know was it a corporate decision that was subsequently decided then not to display the peace flag that people talked about having on the Friday.</p> <p>A number of local residents were quite upset. I think there was an action in the town centre on Friday so perhaps the relevant councillor can accept that mistakes have been made and apologise.</p>

The Cabinet Member responded:

Thank you, Mr Mayor, and thank you Mr Murphy, it is good to see you in the chamber again all be it as a member of public on this occasion.

It is awful to see the events unfold day after day and witness the impact this is having on people across the globe including in our own city. The loss of life is incomprehensible.

Regarding the street lighting and raising the flag query, on Monday 9 October the council chose to change the lights in Bridge Street to blue and white following a directive from central Government. This was to show support for all those who had lost their lives or had been affected by the events in Israel over the weekend of the 7th and 8th October. Many councils chose to do exactly what we did in Peterborough.

However, we know that this caused concern in some parts of our community and was not received in the way that we intended. As a result, we issued a further statement from the Council Leader on Friday who incidentally is still the Council leader at this time, which expressed concern and sympathy for everyone affected by the events in Israel and Gaza.

It remains a very distressing time for many people in our community and it was agreed that it was best that the council made no further statement, for example raising flags, in relation to the events in Israel and Gaza.

Regard to your second part of the question, in terms of the funding for the council's communications team, the net cost of the council's comms team as you have alluded to in the current year is £546,000 and I would add that I believe the team do a very good job for our Council and for the city, thank you.

Supplementary question:

Yes, it will be a supplementary question. Rather than spending £548,000 on communications and marketing and making mistakes like this, wouldn't the council be better focusing on its job – cleaning the streets, repairing the pavements and housing the homeless rather than putting up what many thought was partisan, political propaganda and bearing in mind the ongoing killings and the war crimes that have been committed, would you join me and others in asking for the siege to stop now and a ceasefire.

The Cabinet Member responded:

Thank you, Mr Mayor, thank you again Mr Murphy.

I agree, we all arbore the killings and the distressed caused and if it was within our power, we may be able to affect it but as a City Council that is not within our remit and with regards to the cost of comms, any successful organisation needs a communications process and indeed we maintain that, and I consider we should continue to do so.

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 Cllr Christian Hogg (1)

Councillor Nigel Simons – Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change.

Regarding the recent cabinet member decision for the charging of new and replacement bins OCT23/CMDN/49.

This item has had a long and complicated path through the decision-making process first being put forward in 2021 and was agreed as part of a MTFs in November 2021, there was a previous cabinet member decision SEPT22/CMDN/24 in September 2022, this was pulled as it had been due to return to the Financial Stability Working Group (FSWG).

It was discussed at the FSWG meeting Wednesday 19 October 2022 where it was agreed to amend it to include a reduction for residents in receipt of Council tax relief.

Can the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change please explain why it has taken so long to get this decision made and what is the loss of income to the council over the last year caused by this decision not being in place?

The Cabinet Member responded:

Thank you for your question Cllr Hogg. This is really simple, we were not in a position to implement the decision. This was due to supply issues to fulfil the existing demand.

Supplementary question:

Yes, I do, so you are saying that we have not supplied any new bins in the last year, is that what you are saying?

The Cabinet Member responded:

Of course, not Cllr Hogg, I mean, in fact, I think it is something like 160 requests for new bins a week with a notice obviously being recognised you can imagine the demand went up and we just couldn't get the supply to you know, fulfil the existing demand. We have actually managed to catch-up now, so we are able to obviously implement the decision.

2. Question from Cllr Chris Wiggin (1)

Councillor Steve Allen – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities.

Please could the cabinet member provide an update on the implementation of the Small Homes in Multiple Occupation Article 4 Direction?

The Cabinet Member responded:

	<p>Thank you, Mr Mayor, and indeed thank you Cllr Wiggin.</p> <p>I have been asked by Cllr Cereste that he takes the question as it is responsible for his portfolio and also his ward connections.</p> <p>Thank you, Mr Mayor, as we all know, there has been a huge consultation taking place during the summer relating to the proposed Article 4 Direction. The responses have been collated, and a small number of minor changes have been made as a result of the consultation and the responses. The survey results supported the implementation of the Direction, and so we have now submitted it to the Secretary of State as of today for approval and I am sure, I am relatively confident that we should get the go ahead but if we don't your guess is as good as mine Cllr Wiggin.</p> <p>Supplementary question:</p> <p>Yes, thank you Mr Mayor and I thank Cllr Cereste for that response. When this was originally put out to consultation there was much fanfare about a working group which met once and has not met again since. The Member working group was due to review the content of the consultation results before they went onto to government to give us a chance to have cross-party view on any changes that we would want. This has not happened, could I ask why this has not happened?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>I can give you a completely honest answer, I have no idea. We have been working very hard to get the work ready to go to government and I must admit that no one suggested to me that it goes back to the working group, and I got an email yesterday explaining what had happened and what was happening, and I was asked to approve it going off to the Secretary of State which I have done.</p> <p>I personally, as you know been away for a few weeks, and I wasn't aware that you hadn't been consulted but anyway I am assured that you can see the documents if you want to see them, it is never too late to make any changes if we need to and we got what we wanted. It is off to the Secretary of State and its very, very much what we all agreed in the first place, the amendments are so minor I would imagine that is why the officers probably thought it wasn't any point in them taking any more of your time.</p>
3.	<p>Question from Cllr Christian Hogg (2)</p> <p>Councillor Wayne Fitzgerald, Leader of the Council</p> <p>On 21 January 2023 I asked what the status was of the gravel car park at the front of the POSH ground as it was clearly being used by the club, including the use of marshals on match days for allocated parking. This land is still in the ownership of PCC and was not part of the sale for the ground back to POSH in March 2021 (MAR21/CMDN/91)</p> <p>It was decided to lease the car park, with a capacity for circa 100 vehicles. Can the Cabinet Member for Legal, Finance and Corporate Services please inform council if this lease is now in place and from what date did it commence?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>Thank you Mr Mayor and I rise for Cllr Coles who is currently on holiday.</p> <p>So, I can tell you that the lease has been signed by the tenant but not yet engrossed. The lease commencement date was or will be Wednesday, 18th October. The tenant has not yet completed the Statutory Declaration (it needs to be notarised by an</p>

	<p>independent solicitor) but the lease start date will be backdated once engrossed to the date I have given.</p> <p>Following negotiations, terms were originally issued in March but not agreed until July. The delay between issuing those terms and completing the lease were due to the Council agreeing to pause the letting whilst the tenant resolved some financial issues, there was a subsequent delay over the clarification of liability and amount of business rates due on the car park, this has now been resolved.</p> <p>The original terms also included a rent-free period, but this was subsequently removed due to the delays in completing the agreement.</p> <p>Supplementary question:</p> <p>I do, is Cllr Fitzgerald aware of whether or not the lease will make good on the carpark, I understand there is a number of quite large potholes in the carpark concerned.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>No, why would I be and why would you think I would be, I am not an engineer or a surveyor, I suggest you ask the property team but what I would say, what is normal business, if it was me taking the lease, I would expect to receive it in good order from the owner. Now, if there has been something else agreed, you will have to check with the property team Cllr Hogg.</p>
4.	<p>Question from Cllr Chris Wiggin (2)</p> <p>Councillor Wayne Fitzgerald, Leader of the Council</p> <p>Where companies go into administration, creditors can be left with only pennies in the pound. Can the Cabinet Member for Legal, Finance and Corporate Services reassure Council about the status of our loan to the developers of the Hilton Gardens Hotel and confirm what status we have as creditors, presumably we are secured creditors, but do we have a fixed or floating charge on assets?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>Again, I am responding on behalf of Cllr Coles who I think is in mid-air as we speak.</p> <p>The Council is a secured creditor of the Borrower, and so ranks ahead of any unsecured creditors.</p> <p>The Council has a fixed charge over the land on which the Hotel stands. In addition, it held a floating charge which crystallised into a fixed charge when the administrators were appointed by the Council. Overall, the Borrower's present and future business, undertaking and assets. So, it is over all of those things.</p> <p>Supplementary question:</p> <p>Yes, thank you Mr Mayor, I thank Cllr Fitzgerald for that answer. Could he just confirm in simpler words, for those of us that aren't quite into the details of large borrowing – how likely are we to get all of our money back and are we sure that any future contracts we enter into will have sufficient due diligence.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>Well, I would respectfully say to you in the first place that this council gave full due</p>

	<p>diligence to this agreement at the time. To suggest otherwise is a on the officers let alone the Council.</p> <p>The best person to talk to is that lady over there – Cecile Booth who will give you all the answers to the questions you raised. What I would say to you is I am repeating – we have security on the property, and I think I have made it publicly clear that we intend to with officers to see the hotel, built, delivered, and make a profit.</p> <p>That is the aim and ambition of the Council, it hasn't changed.</p>
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	<p><u>Questions on notice to:</u></p> <p>The Combined Authority Representatives:</p>
1.	<p>Question from Cllr Christian Hogg</p> <p>Councillor Wayne Fitzgerald – Leader of the Council</p> <p>Can the Council Leader please explain why he voted against the adoption of the new combined authority's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), despite giving assurances to various group leaders and the Chief Executive that he was happy to support it?</p> <p>The Leader responded:</p> <p>Happy to Mr Mayor although Cllr Hogg seems to have a lot to say for himself in the media about this issue because he seems to know all the answers on it, and I heard something he said earlier today which simply wasn't true. So, I shall say I cannot support the plan or could not at the time because it could lead to road user charging in Peterborough. I have never been supportive of this policy, in fact we put a motion to Council that all of you on that side of the chamber did not support and why was it included within the LTCP, Cambridge has now abandoned or Cambridge Liberals and mainly Labour their plans to introduce congestion charging so, if no council has any intention of introducing it, then just take it as a document, simple.</p> <p>Supplementary question:</p> <p>I would just like to ask what steps you took to have those paragraphs removed from the report?</p> <p>The Leader responded:</p> <p>Again, you are badly informed Cllr Hogg. I went to great lengths to discuss and negotiate the precise wording in that document to appoint where it may have been acceptable to perhaps consider doing it affording the protection to this council, the other councils in the district that aren't transport authorities. However, your Liberal Democrat colleagues in Cambridge changed it. They changed the version I had approved. Secondly, the decision to finally reject it was based on the magnificent seven photo which I thought to myself, why am I approving a policy that is so unpopular when there are people looking to remove me in the administration, let them do it.</p>