

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD MONDAY 16 JUNE 2014**

**THE MAYOR – COUNCILLOR DAVID OVER**

**Present:**

Councillors Allen, Arculus, Ash, Brown, Casey, Cereste, Davidson, Day, Elsey, Ferris, Fletcher, Forbes, Fower, Frances Fox, John Fox, Judy Fox, Harper, Harrington, Herdman, Hiller, Holdich, Iqbal, Jamil, Johnson, Khan, Knowles, Lamb, Lane, Lee, Maqbool, Martin, Miners, Murphy, Nawaz, Nadeem, North, Okonkowski, Over, Peach, Rush, Saltmarsh, Sanders, Sandford, Scott, Seaton, Serluca, Shabbir, Shaheed, Sharp, Shearman, Stokes, Swift, Sylvester, Thacker, Thulbourn and Walsh.

The Mayor addressed the meeting and requested Members consent to the filming of the meeting by a local news programme. Members agreed to the filming of the meeting.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Fitzgerald.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 April 2014**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2014 were approved as a true and accurate record.

**4. Mayor's Announcements**

There were no announcements from the Mayor.

**5. Chief Executive's Announcements**

There were no announcements from the Chief Executive.

**6. Report of the Returning Officer**

Members received and noted a report which detailed the results of the Local and Hampton Parish Elections held on Thursday 22 May, 2014.

**7. Political Groups and Group Officers 2014 / 2015**

The membership of Political Groups and their Officers for the Municipal Year 2014 / 2015 were noted.

## 8. Motions Relevant to the Business of Annual Council

### 1(a). Councillor Harrington moved the following motion:

That this Council:

- i) Acknowledges the work undertaken by the Executive Leader;
- ii) Recognises however that there is a changing political landscape across the city council area which is reflected in the current political makeup of the Council; and
- iii) Agrees that the leadership of the council ought to reflect the cross party majority held collectively by the opposition groups, **therefore** the Council agrees to remove the existing Leader from office.

In moving his motion, Councillor Harrington stated that the leadership of the Council should be reflective of its cross party make up. The Council's assets needed to be protected and substantial savings could be made by the removal of a number of Cabinet Members, as was mirrored within Councillor Harrington's proposed scheme of Cabinet delegations. There was a grave situation to be faced going forward and action needed to be taken before any further decisions were made to the detriment of the city. The motion was seconded by Councillor Fletcher who reserved his right to speak later in the debate.

Members debated the motion and in summary raised points including:

- There had been a number of financial cuts, meaning it had been a difficult time of leadership, however too many Councillors now put party politics before anything else;
- The local leadership should reflect the recent changes in political makeup. To support the motion would be to move forward in the right direction;
- The Leader of the largest political party should form the Council's administration, even if that meant there only being one seat of overall control;
- The main issue was the Cabinet system style of decision making, the Committee System should be implemented;
- There should be strong opposition, but also engaged opposition. A removal of the current Leader would push out opposition members and would go no way towards a positive move forward;
- There was no other viable option in relation to the removal of the current Leader, however the citizens of Peterborough did deserve better;
- The citizens of Peterborough did not vote for a coalition. The Conservatives as the largest Group should manage the Council's finances with strong, but constructive opposition;
- Removal of the Leader would not be sensible at the current time. A vote of no confidence could be moved later down the line if this was deemed necessary;
- The citizens of Peterborough voted for the majority Conservative, that being democracy. This motion was in no way democratic;
- Although the Leader could not be agreed with on all issues, a cross party administration would be chaotic for the city;
- There had been very little mention of the situation with regards to the current Leader during the election canvassing period, that was in comparison to the issues raised around brown bins etc.;

- Any leadership campaign needed to be appropriately thought through and the most important people were the electorate. This was not what they had voted for at the recent elections; and
- There needed to be effective leadership in the city, leading to positive lasting change.

Councillor Fletcher exercised his right to speak and advised that the city electorate had made it plain in their voting that they wished for the administration of the Council to be changed. What message would Members send to the electorate if this motion was voted against?

Councillor Harrington summed up as mover of the motion and stated that back in 2006, when there were 42 Conservative Councillors in the Chamber, Council Tax had been held at a low point. This had proved to be a costly mistake, meaning the loss of vital services due to the Council Tax levels being unable to sustain them. The Conservatives had had a vision for the city, however it had been a severely misguided one.

Following debate, a recorded vote was requested and Members voted as follows:

**Councillors For:** Ash, Brown, Fletcher, Frances Fox, Harrington, Herdman, Knowles, Miners, Murphy, Nawaz, Okonkowski, Saltmarsh, Sanders and Sharp.

**Councillors Against:** Allen, Arculus, Casey, Cereste, Davidson, Day, Elsey, Fower, John Fox, Judy Fox, Harper, Hiller, Holdich, Iqbal, Lamb, Lane, Lee, Maqbool, Nadeem, North, Over, Peach, Rush, Sandford, Scott, Seaton, Serluca, Shaheed, Stokes, Swift, Thacker and Walsh.

**Councillors Abstaining:** Ferris, Forbes, Jamil, Johnson, Khan, Martin, Shabbir, Shearman, Sylvester and Thulbourn.

Following the vote (14 For, 32 Against and 10 Abstentions) the motion was **DEFEATED**.

As motion 1(a) had fallen, motion 1(b), as outlined within the agenda papers relating to the election of a new Leader, was not taken.

## 2. **Amended Motion from Councillor Harrington:**

The Mayor advised that there had been an amended motion submitted by Councillor Harrington to that which was detailed within the agenda papers. This being:

That this Council:

- i) Moves to a committee system of governance **within 6 months at the earliest opportunity**; and
- ii) That there is a further report to Council within 6 months allocating seats to defined committees according to the political balance of the Council.

Members were requested to signify their consent to the amended motion being debated.

A vote was taken (15 For, 25 Against and 11 Abstaining) and it was **AGREED** that the amended motion be **not** permitted for debate.

### 3. Amended Motion from Councillor Holdich:

The Mayor advised that there had been an amended motion submitted by Councillor Holdich to that which was detailed within the agenda papers. This being:

That this Council agrees:

- i) To explore a change in its current governance arrangements;
- ii) To set up a **cross party** working group to consider **all options available to ensure that Peterborough City Council is equipped both now and in the future to fully serve our community and report back on the options available (including the move to a committee system or continuation of the current arrangements with or without change)**;
- iii) To report back to Council within six months to review proposals for changes to the governance system; and
- iv) Subject to a resolution to adopt the proposals in the report, to set a timetable for implementation of these proposals.

Members were requested to signify their consent to the amended motion being debated.

A vote was taken (40 For, 1 Against and 4 Abstaining) and it was **AGREED** that the amended motion be permitted for debate.

In introducing his motion, Councillor Holdich stated that it was similar to the one submitted by Councillor Harrington and it was hoped that it would garner cross party involvement. To move to a Committee system straight away would be costly and further exploration needed to be undertaken in order to identify all options and how best to proceed. This was seconded by Councillor Thulbourn who reserved his right to speak.

Members debated the motion and in summary raised points including:

- A concession was to agree to look at the implementation of a Committee system going forward, the Cabinet and Scrutiny model was by no means perfect;
- The new Councillors needed to be given the opportunity to see how the Committee system worked;
- Support was forthcoming, however there was a danger that delaying implementation would lead to no implementation in the long term;
- There were a number of successful councils operating under the Committee system and these should be researched;
- The review needed to be undertaken prior to the 2015 elections;
- The Committee System would allow for Councillors to better air their views on important issues;
- A move to the Committee System was sensible in line with the proportionality changes;

- The Cross Party Working Group should explore all avenues as when implemented, the system would be in place for five years;
- The Committee System had been previously implemented up until 2002 and had been extremely successful, with all main decisions being made by Full Council; and
- The public should be involved in any proposals going forward.

Councillor Thulbourn exercised his right to speak and stated that it needed to be ensured that the right method of governance was implemented going forward for the city of Peterborough, ensuring adequate connection with both Councillors and residents.

Councillor Holdich summed up as mover of the motion and stated that, should the motion be agreed, he would proceed to contact Group Leaders as soon as practicable for nominations for the Cross Party Working Group. The best option for the city of Peterborough was to undertake extensive and proper exploration into the options available.

Following debate, a vote was taken (unanimous) and the motion was **CARRIED**.

## **9. Appointment of the Executive and Leader's Scheme of Delegations**

Councillor Cereste addressed the meeting and moved the recommendations as detailed within the report and presented his Scheme of Delegations advising that he would be retaining responsibility for 'Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement'. Councillor Cereste further named his Cabinet Members and advisors and their responsibilities and key areas to be addressed, these included:

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

Councillor Cereste further advised that a cross party team would be created in order to look at the budget proposals going forward.

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

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

Councillor Khan addressed the meeting and commented that more investment was needed in the city and development at the North Westgate site should be progressed as a priority.

Councillor Harrington addressed the meeting and stated that it could not be denied that the Leader had tried to do good things for the city, however the Council was in crisis. Further reductions in services could not be avoided; assets would be sold off going forward; there had been an inordinate amount of money spent on a number of schemes that would never get off the ground and the Joint Venture Scheme was a risky venture. It was hoped that opposition Leaders would be fully engaged in the budget proposals going forward.

Councillor Sandford addressed the meeting and stated that in future, it would be of beneficial for the Scheme of Delegation to be made available to Members prior to the meeting, rather than tabling the document on the evening of Annual Council. With regards to the Cabinet makeup, the Council was in a state of financial hardship and the Leader's Cabinet was still deemed too large for the city, this was not a positive message to be sending to the electorate. Councillor Sandford further advised that he was not in agreement with a number of the grandiose investment schemes which had been agreed over the year, investment should be put back into the basic services in the first instance. It was also advised that the proposals for a cross party group to look at the budget was welcomed.

Councillor John Fox addressed the meeting and advised that he did not have any major concerns bar the issue regarding solar panels.

Members were given an opportunity to comment and the following key points were raised:

- It was reiterated that there had been a lack of regeneration in the North Westgate area and this needed to be addressed;
- A number of decisions made had been overtly negatively viewed by residents including, children's centre closures, the removal of brown bins and the solar farm proposals;
- The proposals for a cross party group to look at the budget was welcomed;
- The number of Cabinet Members was too high, this needed to be re-addressed;
- Could the Cabinet Members run a number of small open evenings?; and
- There had been budget issues faced for the past five years and Members would need to be committed to cross party working with regards to the budget as difficult decisions would still need to be made.

Councillor Holdich addressed the meeting and stated that the cross party team would be set up as soon as practicable.

Councillor Cereste summed up and stated that there had been no cuts due to debts, but rather due to shortfalls in funding. He advised that the suggestion to re-instate Cabinet Member open evening type events would be explored, however in the past Councillors attendance had been poor. He further advised that there would need to be effective cross party working going forward in order to address the £19m deficit faced by the Council and to address the point about North Westgate, work would be underway prior to Christmas 2014.

Following debate it was **AGREED**:

- a) To note the decision taken at Annual Council, held on 16 May 2011 to elect Councillor Marco Cereste as Leader of the Council for a period of four years; and
- b) To note the appointment of the Cabinet and the Leader's Scheme of Delegation to Cabinet Members.

## 10. Committee Structures, Delegations and Allocations

Councillor Cereste addressed the meeting and moved the recommendations as detailed within the report along with a proposed amendment to remove the Planning Review Committee from the political balance seat allocations to allow for cross party representation, the revised figures for which were tabled for Members. This was seconded by Councillor Holdich.

The Mayor addressed the meeting and advised that the proposal to remove the Planning Review Committee from the political balance requirements, was required, by law to be unanimously agreed by all Members when put to the vote. It was therefore advised that a separate vote would be taken on that part of the motion in the first instance.

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

The Planning Review Committee be removed from the political balance requirements.

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

- (a) The Council agrees the Committee structure:
  - (i) as set out at paragraph 3.1 of the report (*as amended to remove the Planning Review Committee from the political balance calculations*); and
  - (ii) that the terms of reference of those committees and the Council's Scheme of Delegations remain as currently set out in the constitution, subject to any changes tabled at the meeting.
- (b) Council notes the programme of meeting schedules as attached to the report.
- (c) The allocation of seats on Committees of the Council, in accordance with political balance requirements as set out paragraphs 4.3 to 4.10 of the report, be agreed; and
- (d) The allocation of seats on Committees and other bodies to be appointed to by the Council as set out paragraphs 5.1 to 5.5 of the report be agreed.

## 11. Appointments to Committees and Other Bodies

Councillor Cereste addressed the meeting and moved the recommendations as detailed within the report along with the tabled Committee Membership document and an amendment to reflect Councillor Peach being nominated to the Fire Authority rather than Councillor Over. This was seconded by Councillor Holdich.

Councillor Sandford requested that the Cross Party Working Group being implemented to explore the Committee System should also look at cross party Chairmanships.

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

- (a) Where the allocation to different political groups of the seats on committees and other bodies has been determined under Agenda Item 10, that Council:
  - (i) make appointments to those Committees so as to give effect to the wishes about who is to be appointed to the seats on each Committee which are allocated to a particular political group as are expressed by that group;
  - (ii) in respect of any appointments to be made other than under (a) above, appoints the Monitoring Officer as Proper Officer to be authorised to carry out the wishes of the Leaders of the Political Groups in allocating members to each Committee; and
  - (iii) appoints those Members with effect from the date at which the Proper Officer is advised of the names of such Members;
- (b) The Chair and Vice-Chair of each of the Council's Committees be appointed; and
- (c) The membership of elected and non-elected members of committees, as described at paragraphs 4.1 to 4.4, be confirmed.

The Mayor  
7.45pm – 10.00pm