

COUNCIL	AGENDA ITEM No. 12
5 FEBRUARY 2019	PUBLIC REPORT

MOTIONS ON NOTICE

The following notice of motion has been received in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders:

1. Motion from Councillor Amjad Iqbal

"On 5th August 2019 the Indian Government, in a surprise move, abolished Article 370 and 35A of the Indian constitution.

The Kashmiri Community of Peterborough express deep concerns about the ongoing reports of human rights violations, and a communication blockade of over eight million people of Jammu and Kashmir since 5 August 2019 resulting in serious risk to life, liberty and security of persons in Kashmir.

The Peterborough Kashmiri community are concerned that the steps taken by the Indian Government are unconstitutional, unlawful and against the agreed principles of the UN Security Council resolutions which safeguard the rights of the people of Kashmir.

Moreover, the way the Indian government has enforced the abolition of the relevant Articles of the constitution is very alarming and concerning to members of divided families living in Peterborough. Since 5th August 2019, strict curfew has been imposed, a large population has been reportedly imprisoned in their home with no access to telephone, internet and other media and people were reportedly denied offering the rituals of (Eid al Adha) on the 12th August 2019, which is a violation of basic human rights in addition to the aforementioned acts. The people of Kashmir were reportedly not consulted prior to imposing this change.

Peterborough houses thousands of families, who are hardworking taxpayers of this city, and are directly affected by this through their loved ones living under a curfew situation. We owe it to them to ensure their communication at the very least be reinstated.

In view of this the Council resolves to call on Peterborough's MP to write to the UK Government:

- 1) To make urgent representations to the Indian Government, through all available routes, to ensure safeguards against human rights abuses are immediately put in place by restoring telecommunications, allowing full access to international humanitarian aid and human rights observers, releasing all political prisoners and finding a bi-lateral resolution taking into account the wishes of the people of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the UN charter and resolutions.
- 2) To Insist that all sides permit unimpeded access for international human rights to be monitored throughout Kashmir;
- 3) To seek a permanent resolution to the Kashmir dispute which would bring considerable benefits to the people of Kashmir, enhance the overall peace and security of the region, and bring comfort to many British Kashmiris who have family connections there;
- 4) To seek to protect civilians, promote peace, and work towards a negotiated and democratic solution with the assistance of the United Nations that will allow the people of Kashmir to exercise their right to decide their own future free from coercion and intimidation.

To provide ongoing reassurance to the Peterborian Kashmiri residents that their concerns are being adhered to, Council also resolves to ask the Leader to appoint a Councillor to act as a “Kashmir Champion” for Peterborough to be the first point of communication between the Council, MP and other relevant agencies both in and out of the City.”

2. Motion from Councillor Hogg

“Council notes:

Fireworks are used by people in the Peterborough City Council area throughout the year to mark different events. While they can bring much enjoyment to some people, they can cause significant problems and fear for other people and animals. They can be a source of fear and distress for many animals (including pet animals, farm livestock and wildlife). Animals affected not only suffer psychological distress but can also cause themselves injuries – sometimes very serious ones – as they attempt to run away or hide from the noise.

The unpredictable, loud and high intensity noises that many fireworks make can cause fear. For example, studies have found fireworks to be the most common cause for fear responses in dogs, and it is estimated that 45 percent of dogs show signs of fear when they hear fireworks. A New Zealand survey recorded 79 percent of horses as either anxious or very anxious around fireworks or over the Guy Fawkes Day period.

Debris produced by fireworks, if found on the ground, can also pose a hazard to animals, such as horse and farm livestock. Although there is limited direct evidence, it is also likely that fireworks and their debris will cause disturbance to wildlife, and are likely to cause suffering or distress, depending on the distance from the explosive and the noise level.

The short-lived nature of firework noise can make it difficult for the police or local authority officers to pinpoint locations and take action. The RSPCA believes that a licensing system would help with better enforcement of the law by allowing enforcement bodies to know where licensed events are being held so they can focus on locations and incidents elsewhere.

The RSPCA believes there is a real need to raise awareness amongst owners of animals about fireworks phobia. This phobia can be treated (in dogs at least) in the long term but owners need to prepare themselves and their pets sooner, rather than just before the fireworks are let off. There is a need to raise awareness about the impact of fireworks on animals to the wider public to encourage them to be more considerate of those with pets, horses and livestock as well as local wildlife.

The RSPCA believes the law is failing as it does not prevent or sufficiently reduce the risk of fireworks causing distress, injury or anxiety to people, as well as death, injury or distress to animals. The RSPCA believes that further research is needed to properly understand the impact of noise on animals and a number of things can be done to improve the situation for animals and people by:

- introducing a limit on the public use of fireworks on or close to specific dates and times
- tightening restrictions on the sale of fireworks in the run up to Bonfire night
- reducing the maximum noise level of fireworks sold to the public, ensuring they are labelled accurately
- licensing all public firework displays – and ensuring displays are better advertised to the public.

Council resolves:

- to require all public firework displays within the boundaries of Peterborough City Council to be

advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people

- to actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks
- to write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays
- to encourage Peterborough area suppliers of fireworks to stock ‘quieter’ fireworks for public display”

3. Motion from Councillor Walsh

“Peterborough City Council is rightly proud of its efforts to tackle discrimination and hatred in all its forms.

Peterborough City Council expresses concern about the rise in antisemitism in recent years across the UK. As well as physical manifestations through violence and criminal damage, it has also been seen in the use of antisemitic language and characteristics which criticise Israel. It may be legitimate to criticise the policies and practices of Israel, but not if this involves using language and imagery that is antisemitic.

Peterborough City Council therefore resolves to join with the Government, the Crown Prosecution Service, the Police and Judiciary, as well as other Local Authorities, in signing up to the internationally recognised International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism, which states that:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, towards Jewish Community institutions and religious facilities.”

The IHRA highlight manifestations as including:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extreme view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanising, demonizing or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective – such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other social institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens as being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g. by claiming that the existence of the State of Israel is a racist endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g. claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterise Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for the actions of the state of Israel.

Council resolves to:

- 1) Adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism as the working model for challenging and confronting incidents of this form of racism
- 2) Restate its condemnation of **all** forms of racism and hate in all its manifestations
- 3) Oppose racism and hate against all communities, in keeping with our commitment to eradicate all acts of hatred on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sex or sexual orientation.”

4. Motion from Councillor Walsh

“Peterborough City Council is rightly proud of its efforts to tackle discrimination and hatred in all its forms.

This council acknowledges the work carried out nationally in 2018 and 2019 by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims to create an agreed definition of Islamophobia, and notes that this has not yet been formally adopted by the national Government. The APPG definition is as follows:

“Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.”

This council also acknowledges the intentions of the Government to appoint independent advisors to lead a review into the definition drafted by the All Party Parliamentary Group, and that Imam Qari Asim MBE, Deputy Chair of the Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group, is the first such adviser to be appointed. We understand that additional advisers will join the Imam in this important task.

Peterborough City Council will therefore debate a Motion at a future Full Council with a view to adopting the official definition of Islamophobia once it has been adopted by national Government, and will, in the meantime, note the All Party Parliamentary Group definition as set out above. We also support the earliest possible ratification and adoption of the official definition by Government.

Council therefore resolves to:

- 1) Note the All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslim’s definition of Islamophobia as the working definition for challenging and confronting incidents of this form of racism
- 2) Request that the Chief Executive closely monitors the ongoing national review of the APPG definition, in order to ensure a Motion to adopt the new definition is brought to Full Council at the earliest opportunity
- 3) Restate its condemnation of **all** forms of racism and hate in all its manifestations
- 4) Oppose racism and hate against all communities, in keeping with our commitment to eradicate all acts of hatred on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sex or sexual orientation.”

5. Motion from Councillor Qayyum

“My experience as a GP has shown me that the number of young children referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health services as a result of the repercussions that bullying was having on their emotional wellbeing has risen sharply. As part of my work I have explored the anti-bullying policies in place at our local authority run schools.

Council resolves to recognise:

- That good mental health within young school going aged children both at the primary and secondary age level is an important factor in their development.
- That a mentally healthy child is able to thrive and progress in educational attainment standards thus contributing to the improvement of educational standards (a current need to be met)

- That an addressing of bullying within schools in a constructive and organised fashion promotes communication skills and acceptance of diversity, and truly places Peterborough in a pivotal position to promote those values of cultural acceptance reflective of its diverse population.

Council resolves to propose:

- That the Council requires its maintained schools to review their anti-bullying policies annual and requires logs to be held of all incidents of bullying cases within each school. A child case file should be opened for those who are subjected to bullying and a bullying care plan put in place to follow up their progress, including any action to be taken (which should be communicated to families), any contributing social factors, and how these factors can be mitigated or have support provided for.
- That anti-bullying policies are made available on the Peterborough city council website, similar to the strategy already adopted by Central Bedfordshire Council, and which are deemed to be useful (source: https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/3/schools_and_education/532/virtual_school/4).

6. Motion from Councillor Hemraj

“To combat loneliness that can cause a number of health conditions, local authorities across the county have introduced “Chat Benches”. It would support the work currently being undertaken to tackle loneliness and would encourage Peterborough residents to communicate more with each other if some existing benches within the Peterborough area were converted into “Chat Benches.”

Council resolves:

- To look at designated areas in all Peterborough wards and green spaces where “Chat Benches” could be placed or some existing benches could be converted, by placing a sign on the benches stating, “Happy to Chat Bench. Sit here if you don’t mind someone talking to you.”
- To encourage Ward Councillors and community groups to get involved in the scheme.
- To approach local businesses to sponsor a “Chat Bench”.
- To request that Councillors consider using their Community Leadership Fund to fund a “Chat Bench” in their ward.”

7. Motion from Councillor John Fox

“The campaign to end homelessness in the veteran community was launched last year as it is estimated that 3000-4000 veterans are rough sleeping across the country, making up 2-3% of the veteran population. However, in Peterborough we are seeing a much higher percentage of veterans rough sleeping, with over 10% of those accessing the Garden House services being from a military background.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced a new homelessness advice and information duty, which includes a requirement to provide advice designed to meet the needs of people who are former members of the regular armed services. Some funding was provided to the county to tackle veteran homelessness but this was a small amount and will be used to have a dedicated support officer for the Armed Forces homeless community. This includes those rough sleeping and those who are hidden homeless (using cars and sofa surfing), as well as military families who are being evicted from military accommodation.

However, the only way to properly tackle the situation is to be able to provide more properties. Hostel temporary accommodation is not always suitable for veterans, particularly those with PTSD or other service-related mental health conditions, as the environment they provide is not compatible with the treatment and needs associated with this type of trauma.

Other areas in the country have got dedicated housing for their veterans and they are seeing great successes, including a self-build project in Wiltshire, a Housing First housing estate in Hampshire specifically for the veteran population and more locally Corby Borough Council is in the process of building 18 social rent properties, specifically for the military community. These are just a few of the examples of how lettings policies can be amended to provide housing for our veterans.

Our veterans have given so much, in service of this country, and we should be ensuring that they do not end up at crisis point. There is now a good system through the Armed Forces Covenant Partnership to get support for the individuals that they need and the STOLL (the leading provider of supported housing to veterans) nomination scheme could be applied here in order to support relevant individuals access housing. It would be beneficial for the council to review its Housing Allocations Policy to ensure all possible support is given to support the armed forces community.

Council resolves:

To ask our officers, as part of Peterborough City Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, to consider proposing amendments to the council's Housing Allocations Policy in order to enable the assignment of a proportion of properties for specific rental to the armed forces community."