

PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD
21 DECEMBER 2009**

The Mayor – Councillor Irene Walsh

Present:

Councillors: Allen, Arculus, Ash, Benton, Cereste, Collins, Croft, M Dalton, S Dalton, C Day, D Day, S Day, Elsey, Fower, JA Fox, JR Fox, Goodwin, Harrington, Hiller, Holdich, Khan, Kreling, Lamb, Lane, Lowndes, Murphy, Nash, Newton, North, Over, Peach, Rush, Saltmarsh, Seaton, Sharp, Swift, Thacker, Todd, Trueman, Walsh, Wilkinson and Winslade.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Burton, Dobbs, Fitzgerald, Fletcher, Goldspink, Hussain, Lee, Miners, Morley, Nawaz, Scott, Sanders and Sandford.

The Mayor welcomed Councillor Arculus to his first council meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

Declarations were received from Councillors J R Fox, Benton and Goodwin in relation to Item 4 on the agenda as they were members of the Governance Arrangements Committee that had submitted recommendations to the Council.

3. Acquisition of Land in and around Peterborough United Football Ground

The Mayor advised Council of a typing error in paragraph 3.3.5 on page 5 of the report; the date “2008-01” should have read “2008-21”.

The Mayor further advised Council of her intention to vary the time limits specified under Council Procedure Rule 17.4.1 that would apply to speeches on this item of business whereby the mover would have 5 minutes and any subsequent speaker would have 4 minutes instead of the usual 3 minutes to address Council.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Cereste, moved the recommendations contained within the report. The Leader stated that the proposal to acquire the freehold interest of the land in and around Peterborough United Football Ground would open up the opportunities on the South Bank for university, leisure, shopping and residential development. However, it should be made clear to the public that the measure did not mean that the Council was purchasing the football club. The cost of the acquisition included the ground which contained a minimum of £5 million of assets and that, in addition, there would be a rental income for the Council from the football club.

The recommendations were seconded by Councillor Croft.

Councillor Fower sought assurances that the ground would continue to be used for football and that Peterborough United would not be forced to seek another location outside of the city centre. He moved the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor Holdich:

“That a third paragraph be added to the recommendations as follows:

- (3) at the termination of the current lease in 2014, there shall be a presumption that the existing legal covenant shall be re-imposed to ensure the continued use of the land as a football ground.”

On being put to the vote the amendment was approved.

During the debate on the recommendations, as amended, the main concerns expressed were as follows:

- (a) There had been previous opportunities to purchase the land at a lower cost and the valuation was perceived by some Members to be high at £8 million (£8.65 million in total including stamp duty, professional fees etc.);
- (b) Other areas and facilities in the city required financial support and reference was made to the recent sale of the Great Northern Hotel which the Council had been unable to secure;
- (c) Shortcomings existed regarding the transport infrastructure to support the development of the South Bank; and
- (d) There was a significant level of risk associated with the decision to purchase the site even though it was acknowledged that it could attract new businesses and employment to the city.

The main points raised in support of the proposed acquisition were as follows:

- (a) The development potential of the South Bank Area was immense and the acquisition of land in this part of the city was the key to realising the full development potential of this part of the city;
- (b) The provision of University facilities was important in retaining talented young people in the city;
- (c) There was an opportunity to provide enhanced stadium facilities on the site;
- (d) The purchase would provide certainty for the future of the football ground;
- (e) There was a need for the Council to take positive action and translate its ambition to develop the South Bank into reality; and
- (f) The cost was reasonable when balancing it against the assets acquired and the inward investment that would be attracted to the city.

At the conclusion of the debate, it was resolved that the report and recommendations, as amended, be approved (38 in favour, 1 against and 3 abstentions). On request, the vote was recorded.

4. Community Governance Review for Hampton Vale and Hampton Hargate

Councillor Benton moved the recommendations of the Governance Arrangements Committee, as set out within the report, plus a further recommendation that the Council:

“(3) authorises the Executive Director of Strategic Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources, to set the estimated council tax and precept for the Parish in accordance with the outline budget agreed by the ward councillors and Hampton parish steering group, by 31st January 2010 and to determine the level of direct grant payable by the Council.”

This was seconded by Councillor Seaton.

It was resolved that the report, as amended, be approved.

Meeting closed at 8.10pm

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