

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING
HELD WEDNESDAY 8 DECEMBER 2021
ENGINE SHED, SAND MARTIN HOUSE, PETERBOROUGH**

THE MAYOR – COUNCILLOR STEPHEN LANE

Present:

Councillors Ansar Ali, Imtiaz Ali, Jackie Allen, Steve Allen, Ayres, Barkham, Bashir, Bisby, Andrew Bond, Sandra Bond, Brown, Burbage, Casey, Cereste, Coles, Day, Dowson, Mohammed Farooq, Saqib Farooq, Fitzgerald, John Fox, Judy Fox, Harper, Haseeb, Haynes, Hemraj, Hiller, Hogg, Howard, Howell, Ishfaq Hussain, Knight, Mahboob Hussain, Iqbal, Jamil, Jones, Joseph, Knight, Lane, Moyo, Murphy, Gul Nawaz, Shaz Nawaz, Over, Qayyum, Robinson, Rush, Sainsbury, Sandford, Shaheed, Sharp, Simons, Skibsted, Tyler, Walsh, Warren, Wiggin, Yasin, Yurgutene.

62. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Elsey and Cllr Fenner.

63. Declarations of Interest

The Monitoring Officer granted a general dispensation for all members should they have had a pecuniary interest, to enable them to debate and vote on the budget item later in the meeting.

Cllrs Wiggin and Mahboob Hussain both declared an interest in agenda item 13, Motions 1, as they were employed by the Passport Office which was part of the Home Office. Following advice from the Monitoring Officer, both councillors would not take part in the debate or vote but would not have to leave the room for the item.

64. Minutes of the Council meeting held on 10 November 2021

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 10 November 2021 were approved as a true and accurate record

COMMUNICATIONS

65. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor made the following announcement:

“Members, I would like to start off with a reminder about the Salvation Army Christmas Day lunch, hosting over 100 elderly and homeless individuals from all over the city. These individuals come from all over the city, and to cover transport costs, I am asking Members to make donations where they can. Information on how to make a direct

donation have been emailed to Members, or you can drop off any donations with Executive and Members Services Officers.

I would also like to bring to Member's attention the Valentines' Dinner that will be taking place in February. More information on this will be sent through to you shortly, so please keep an eye out for that."

66. Leader's Announcements

Cllr Wayne Fitzgerald, Leader of the Council, made the following announcement:

"It is with heavy heart I sit here to say farewell to our out-going Chief Executive Gillian Beasley and to pay tribute to the significant contributions she has made to our great city. But Members may I just start with something, she is a 'cold' woman, because if there is a radiator anywhere in the Council, you will find Gillian sat on top of it, because she does not like the cold. One of the positives about Gillian going is our carbon footprint will be halved and the amount we will save in heating costs will be enormous, that might go some way to sorting our financial budget challenges. But even in a social setting you will find Gillian parked next to a radiator or anything else warm; she comes into my office, which, generally, has no lights or heating on and complains bitterly that I must march down to her office which is much warmer.

But on a serious point, throughout my time here as a councillor in Peterborough we have seen many changes, but one constant has been our chief executive Gillian Beasley and her tireless commitment to making the city the best place possible for everyone. When recommending Gillian to receive the Freedom of the City, which was granted earlier, we did ask if she was going to get a flock of sheep as a leaving present, now she has the right to drive them over the bridge. But the highest honour we could bestow Gillian was given tonight, as she has dedicated most of her life to public service, in a career spanning just short of 40 years. For almost half that time she has been at the helm of Peterborough city Council and indeed was responsible for the legal arrangements when we became a unitary authority in 1997. Her role as chief executive has been so much more than a day job also, she has been a tireless champion for Peterborough ever since she joined the Council. Working day and night, and I know, as she is often walking at 5am when most of us are sleeping, preparing for a busy day ahead, but she is doing it because she is up and about, she is active, she wants to improve the lives of everyone living in the city and to support us all as Members.

Even when she took on her role as chief executive of Cambridgeshire County Council and her work commitments went up, she still always made time to speak to Members and help them with any queries. It is that personal touch that added to her many skills which has made Gillian stand out.

The past few years have not been easy because of the council's severe financial crisis and the constant need to make savings to be able to deliver a balanced budget. However, Gillian has supported the council and its members in its quest to transform services, increase income generation and deliver savings so that we can continue to provide good services for our residents.

In 2019, and this will be a quiz question in future years, she ran 6 elections that year, which is rather unusual, that must be definitely one for the records, as I said and a quiz and even a book might come out there and of course for the past 18 months Gillian has led our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. So, it is no wonder with her in charge, Peterborough's been praised for how it tackled that pandemic; it will not have been the

way she would want to finish her time here, but it is a fitting legacy, and one which Gillian can be proud of.

Politics, especially local politics, can be an adversarial place, with plenty of arguments and we have had a fair few, but hopefully we will remain friends, but at times has divisiveness as well. But Gillian has always risen above this and judging by the responses when she announced her retirement, she is managed that rare thing of uniting people of all political persuasions. Maybe instead of retiring, she should be running for higher office. She should also be proud of the way she is brought communities together, spending many hours engaging with leaders and attending events during evenings and weekends, when it would have been so easy to go home and put her feet up after another long day. She has made lasting friendships with people from so many of our communities; friendships which I am sure will remain and it is also a time and I know she looks forward to, her daughter recently married, and she is looking forward to grandchildren and spending more time with her family which I know she is very keen to do. But she has also been to many charity fundraisers, too many that we can mention, she is carried out raising thousands of pounds for important causes, many of us will remember her up abseiling down the side of our cathedral, 150 feet, as part of the Peterborough 900 campaign, helping raise money to improve facilities for visitors and worshippers at the cathedral, like everything else, she did this with a smile on her face.

I and so many members and officers over the years have enjoyed working with Gillian she is kind and courteous and able to work with people from all backgrounds and unite them together. She is an inspiration to so many and people who meet her often ask the question, how does she do it managing 2 councils and being a friend, a mum, sister, and daughter, to be honest, I've no idea and I have been watching it all for 16 years as a member here myself and Nick and others, Jamil been here much longer, monitoring you know, everything that has happened with the council on her journey. So may I along with all my conservative colleagues here in the group tonight and this chamber and all the officers will all be sad to see Gillian, go it will be very strange at our next full council meeting in the new year, not having her reassuring presence, but at the same time I will be pleased to know she is finally getting a well-deserved rest. The strange thing is, at the last council meeting Gillian was put to one side, she thought she was getting nearer the exit, but it was all a ruse to surprise her of course, about other gifts. But she took it all in good humour and that is one thing about Gillian, she has a great sense of humour but overall, at the professional level in Gillian's competence as a chief executive is second to none. So, Gillian, thank you for everything you have done for the council and for Peterborough and I hope that the next stage of your life is as rewarding and successful as the one you are leaving behind.”

The Mayor invited Group Leaders to comment on the Leader's announcement:

Councillor Shaz Nawaz, Leader of the Labour Group, made the following announcement:

“Gillian may at times be cold, but I know she has a very warm heart and I can attest to that, and I'll speak from the heart tonight because as Gillian knows, it was highly unlikely that I would be here today, because I returned from a trip from Turkey and I was waiting for my result and it came through at 4:20pm, so I quickly got changed to be here for Gillian, and I'll start with a quote from Theodore Roosevelt who said, people don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care, and I've seen first-hand that Gillian cares deeply about people, politicians and most importantly about Peterborough and one of the greatest signs that you've achieved something to some extent, is how much people respect you outside your own section of the community and I know in the

Muslim community, every single person who I speak to, has the utmost respect for Gillian. She always participates during Ramadan, participates during most visits and whenever the Muslim community has needed Gillian she has always been there and not just been there for the sake of it, but she has been there from the heart and from my own experiences, sometimes people say to me, you work hard, but I can tell you, I do not think I have seen anybody work as hard as Gillian. She's working all hours, she's first in, last out, I've emailed her in the early hours in the morning and she's responded, I've emailed her late in the evenings, she has responded, I've called her odd hours during the day, weekends, sometimes for trivial matters, but she's always answered the phone and she's always been extremely supportive, not just told me but towards the entire labour group and of course towards other councillors and I've always seen Gillian to be cool as a cucumber and that is partly why you Gillian maybe appear to be a bit cold at times, because I've been in many meetings with you at group leaders meetings where sometimes people have asked difficult questions, challenging questions, they haven't upset, they've been angry, but you always come across as a proper professional; you've never lost your rag and you've always come across as you understand the other person and that to me is the ultimate professional and you've told me a number of things, but three stand out for me, one is to be extremely focused the second is to be disciplined and most importantly, to be understanding towards others and I thank you for that, and no doubt that you and I will remain friends, that's for sure, we will all miss you, things won't be the same, and I wish you all the best on behalf of the labour group Gillian, thank you for your service.”

Councillor Sandford, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, made the following announcement:

“On behalf of the Liberal Democrat group I'd like to endorse all that Wayne and Shaz have said but also to add a few personal thoughts of mine. For quite a lot of people here Gillian will be the best Peterborough City Council chief executive that you work with and that is because she is probably the only chief executive that you have worked with. I've known her for all but two of my 25 years as a Peterborough city councillor and I've worked with her much more closely in the period that I've been leader of the Liberal Democrat group, as I think has been mentioned earlier, she's been our chief executive since 2002 and I also work with her two predecessors Bill Samuel and Paul Martin and both of them went on to higher things, one at a regional development agency, one at a government office, but Gillian has stayed here and been loyal to Peterborough and maybe because she got a little bit bored, she decided to take on Cambridgeshire County Council as well and I'm really proud to say that since earlier this year she's had the privilege of working with a Liberal Democrat led administration in Cambridge and now someday that may happen here and I can dream and we can all dream, that would be really good. Gillian has been a really great chief executive, I have seen her manage some really difficult situations, not least of which was the Covid crisis which is still continuing and for a period during that, our democratic processes as were suspended, and in effect she was the council and fulfilled that role with great aplomb. I've also seen ample evidence of her ability to get on with and work with people and councillors of all ages, both sexes, all races and all political parties, in what certainly in the past has always been a strongly party political local authority and of course, she will always have the honour and privilege of having been the first female chief executive of our council and with all due respect to her successor, Matt Gladstone, I hope she's not going to be our last female chief executive and as a group leader, I've seen how seriously Gillian takes her role of guiding and supporting councillors, both when they first get elected to the council but also when they experience some crises or some issue at some time during their term and personally I've experienced, you know been politely told off by her, when I've overstepped the mark in some way, as does happen occasionally, but I also

recall really clearly, one incident back in the year 2000, when she was prepared to speak truth to power and tell the truth about an incident where as a young and inexperienced councillor, I was been subject to threats in a not very pleasant way by a senior councillor in an opposing party. I have seen also first-hand Gillian's passion for the natural environment and it is perhaps rather fitting that at our last full ordinary council meeting, we have not one item about trees, but two items of trees and currently Gillian's very active in promoting the Queen's green canopy, which I have to admit, as an ardent republican, just give me a few conflicts, but I generally come to the conclusion that planting lots of trees has to be a really good thing. Gillian is going to be missed by all I'm sure and I think going back to what happened earlier, of all the people to whom we've ever given the freedom of Peterborough, she must rank as one of the most deserving, a real iconic figure in Peterborough who will sit alongside people like Wyndham Thomas, Peter Boizot and Charles Swift and her successor Mr Gladstone has a name with a great history behind it, but I think he's got a very difficult act to follow, in taking on the role of our chief executive.

Councillor John Fox, Leader of the Werrington First Group, made the following announcement:

“I completely endorse what has been said and I'd like to just do add the fact that in my career in the Royal Navy and then Cambridge Constabulary and now 20 years on this council, I've served under a lot of officers, and you have my utmost respect and rank very high in the people that I look up to, and I say that with complete sincerity. Gillian, you are not only professional and dedicated, but you are also very very caring and recently you help me through a bad situation, so thank you very much.

Councillor Day, of the Green Group, made the following announcement:

“We wanted to thank Gillian for her longstanding service to the city, particularly during these last two years, her leadership has been solid and outstanding. Gillian is not only respected by members and colleagues, but also by residents and leaders across other councils and the community. I also want to thank Gillian from the green group, she has supported us as a fairly new group in a number of ways and has made our time in public service far easier, more understandable, and she has helped us in becoming and being effective counsellors. I also wanted to thank Gillian personally, I am not sure if she will remember this, but my mum Jane Day worked as a trading standards officer for the council for around 20 years, one year my dad who worked as a milkman, was attacked by youths in the early hours of the morning on his milk round, and he appeared on the front of the newspaper with a very bruised face. Gillian sent an email to my mum, sending her thoughts, and asking if he was okay, this meant a huge amount to my mum at the time and only recently she told me about it. It is this attention to detail, and compassion that I am sure has not only been recognised by my family and the green group, but by everyone Gillian meets and works with. We from the greens, wish you Gillian, a relaxing, exciting, and enjoyable retirement. Thank you very much.

QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

67. Questions with Notice by Members of the Public

Questions from members of the public were raised in respect of the following:

1. Decision making process for a planning application

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

68. Petitions

(a) Presented by Members of the Public

There were no petitions presented at the meeting.

(b) Presented by Members

There were no petitions presented at the meeting.

69. Petition for Debate - 'Save Bretton Oak Tree'

A petition had been received by the Council which contained over 500 signatures from people who live, work or study in the city. As such, the petition qualified for debate at a meeting of the Full Council in accordance with the Petitions Scheme set out in the Constitution.

The petition called upon the Council to 'retain the Oak Tree on Blind Lane, Ringwood, Peterborough.

Mr John Hopkins, lead petitioner, nominated Richard Elmer to speak on his behalf.

Mr Richard Elmer stated he was a resident of Ringwood in Bretton; Peterborough and his house was in view of the ancient oak tree which the Council wished to fell. He stated that when planning permission was given to the houses in Barnard Way it was a condition that they be built a minimum of 14 metres from the trees to protect the trees and that no buildings or extensions (including sheds) were to be erected at the rear of the houses. This condition was broken by the erection of a conservatory some years ago to which the Council have chosen not to enforce removal of. The homeowners building insurance company have claimed damage to the conservatory has been caused by the remaining tree, the other ancient tree having already been removed. The report contains information which suggests heave caused by saturated soil and removing the remaining tree would cause the soil to be more saturated and potentially make the problem worse. The Council want to remove the tree to remove their liability, but it would not solve the problem of the heave. The Council are not responsible for heave, these would be undertaken by the householder's insurance company. The Council have issued a statement stating there may be a possibility of damage to other houses, this is not mentioned in the report, and there is no of any other homeowners or insurance companies having filed any claims. After speaking to Paul Bristow Mp, he asked why the Council findings differed to theirs and Mr Richard Elmer could only suggest it was because the Council's tree officer was salaried by the Council so he would report what the Council want to hear whereas their expert was independent and had received no financial remuneration. Mr Richard Elmer asks the Council to keep both the tree and the conservatory and make the correct decision.

Councillor Simmons moved the proposal.

As mover of the proposal, Councillor Simons thanked the petitioner for his extraordinary efforts in raising awareness on this matter and for personally attending Council and explained the Council faced an exceedingly difficult decision, he was aware that the loss of the tree would be felt deeply by the community and of its biodiversity and climate value but sometimes in extreme cases and through no one's fault, the Council has to

act. Therefore, he stated he had tabled a motion to ask the Council to refer the petition to Cabinet and the appropriate scrutiny committee in January to make a final decision.

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

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

- Members suggested that expert external advice be considered when deliberating the decision.
- Councillor Murphy questioned as to whether the lead petition had a particular recommendation.
- Members were happy to see this issue referred to the relevant scrutiny committee with independent expert advice consulted on.

As a seconder of the proposal, Councillor Sandford, commented he supported Councillor Simons' proposal with the issue being taken to scrutiny and people being given the opportunity to speak at committee, with all the relevant information provided. Trees provide a massive amount of ecosystem services and therefore many more should be planted and those already planted should be protected. He stated that the Council had admitted that the tree had a value of £330,000; the insurance state on the Council's portal that retaining the tree would cost the council £75,000. The Tree Preservation Order (TPO) was overridden in a non-democratic way and the structural surveyor's report was not shared with all councillors.

Mr Elmer, nominated by Mr Hopkins, lead petitioner, responded, stating he would like to see this issue go to committee so that it could be properly debated. The residents just want to save the tree and not turn on the homeowner as the insurance company should put their problem right. Having spoken to Paul Bristow MP, he stated the Council would like to resolve this; we have demonstrated this can be done with the Council leading contributions towards the repairs, the insurance company towards the building. This tree cannot be removed due to alleged damage as it is not proven damage. If the Council should clear and maintain the drainage ditch, this would allow the water to close over a large area and not collect in one area, sitting behind the house, where the tree is; the tree is not the problem.

As mover of the recommendation, Councillor Simons summed up and commented that Councillor Sanford was aware of this issue on the 6th of April therefore this issue could have been resolved a long time ago.

Cllr Sandford raised a Point of Accuracy by challenging the fact that he was unaware of the issue on the 6th of April.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to refer the issue to the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee to consider prior to Cabinet, offering suitable but proportionate arrangements to allow interested parties to express their views to the Committee; and ask Cabinet to determine whether or not this Council should proceed to implement the consent already in place to fell this tree, taking account of the cost-benefit implications of either retaining the tree or implementing the felling consent.

70. 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) to the Leader or Member of the Cabinet were raised and taken as read in respect of the following:

1. Public Toilet Provision
2. Temporary Accommodation
3. Peterborough United and the embankment
4. Peterborough United Football Club
5. Political Ideology
6. Regional Pool
7. Embankment Masterplan
8. Library Opening Hours
9. Gay Conversion Therapy

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

RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS

71(a). Cabinet Recommendation – Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25 - Phase One

The Council received a report from Cabinet in relation to phase one of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2022/3 to 2024/25.

Councillor Coles moved the altered recommendation and advised that proposals before Council incorporated comment from the public consultation and Joint Scrutiny of the Budget. Reference was also made to the Capital Programme Moratorium, which was to be considered at the Extraordinary Council meeting on 16 December 2022. The report included an update in response to the Government reports that were issued in relation to Peterborough City Council's financial position. Proposals had been debated within the Financial Sustainability Working Group. Councillor Coles outlined the recommendations received from the Joint Scrutiny of the Budget, and work undertaken on these to date, as set out in the additional information pack. It was further advised that the Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel would be reporting to Council on a six-monthly basis to support the financial planning of the Council.

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

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

- Members suggested that now was the time to change the way Members thought and to look and move forward as the Financial Sustainable Working Group had instructed them to. To undertake to work together, to look for proposals to help bridge the gap and make Peterborough a better place
- It was suggested that proposals should be suspended and reviewed in light of the CIPFA and DLUHC reports.
- Members echoed the comments above and asked for information on the status of ring-fenced funding.
- Members were advised that the original Council expenditure of £2m had been

reduced to £500k. This could also be classified as an Invest to Save programme via rental income from the university, enabling this sum to be repaid.

- Members suggested that the recommendations were inappropriate given DLUHCs instruction to suspend all capital expenditure and the Council's Corporate Priority to address climate change. Concerns were also raised about the potential size of the car park and whether spaces intended for the Regional Pool would be gifted to the University in the future, following the pool's closure. Council should consider referring the proposals back to Cabinet for further explanation.
- Members expressed concern about how the scheme would be justified to the DLUHC.
- Members challenge the assertion that the reduction of £2m to £500k capital expenditure represented a saving when new money was being spent.
- Members challenge the points raised above, stating the DLUHC would consider any proposal that did not incur a net cost to the Council such as this. The reduction in capital cost to £500k would produce savings in revenue costs that could factored into the Budget. There were also no firm plans to close the Regional Pool.
- It was suggested that more attention should have been paid to Council Tax levels, increasing reserves, and forward financial planning, as much of the current Council situation was not a surprise.
- Concern was raised in relation to proposals to sell assets, rather than utilising the assets of the Council to generate income.
- Members suggested that spending money on external advice would only be successful if the Council took the advice provided.
- Comment was made that the Capital Programme Moratorium should be brought in immediately, including a halt on Community Leadership Fund spend.
- Members praised the atmosphere of the Council debate, following the establishment of the Financial Sustainability Working Group.
- Queries were raised as to how a budget could be agreed without a Corporate Strategy or a Local Government Financial Settlement. It was suggested that Members needed to see everything together before a final budget could be agreed.
- Comment was made that Aragon service reductions were short-sighted and would not benefit the Council's situation in the long run, though a recommendation in relation to this was not agreed at the Joint Meeting of Scrutiny Committees.

As seconder of the recommendations, Cllr Fitzgerald commented that the benefit of the Financial Sustainability Working Group was clear. It was clarified that no position had been expressed by the Conservative Group on any particular planning application in relation to the football stadium. Members were assured that there was no "fire-sale" of Council assets, and that a Capital Programme Moratorium was already in effect, practically. It was advised that the budget had been balanced for the past number of years, as this was a legal requirement. Comment was also made that housing had been built in the city, while recognising the more needed to be done nationally to address the housing crisis.

As mover of the recommendation, Cllr Coles summed up by advising that Members needed to take collective ownership of the budget.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** to approve:

1. The Phase One budget proposals as outlined in Appendix B to the report.

2. The updated budget assumptions, to be incorporated within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 – 2024/25. These are outlined in sections 5 of the report.
- ~~3. The revised capital programme outlined in section 5 and referencing Appendix C to the report.~~
3. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25 - Phase One, as set out in the body of the report and the following appendices:
 - Appendix A – 2022/23-2024/25 MTFS Detailed Budget Position Phase One
 - Appendix B – Phase One Budget Consultation Document
 - ~~Appendix C – Capital Programme Schemes 2022/23-2024/25~~
 - Appendix D – Financial Risk Register
 - Appendix E – Equality Impact Assessments
 - Appendix F – Carbon Impact Assessments
 - Appendix G – Budget Consultation Feedback

Council **RESOLVED** to note:

4. The strategic financial approach taken by the Council outlined in section 4 of this report.
5. The forecast reserves position, and the provisional statutory advice of the Chief Finance Officer outlined in section 6, The Robustness Statement for Phase One.
6. The feedback received on the budget proposals, received via the consultation detailed in Appendix G to the report.
7. A revised capital programme outlined in section 5 and Appendix C will be presented to the Extraordinary Meeting of Council on 16th December to ensure that the Council places a temporary moratorium on some of the capital spending pending the presentation of a revised capital programme at its meeting in March 2022.
8. The final responses to the consultation received via the budget survey up to the 6 December 2021.
9. The recommendations made at the Joint Meeting of the Scrutiny Committees and the responses to these recommendations.

71(b). Cabinet Recommendation - Tree Management: Limited Review of the Trees and Woodland Strategy (Including Revised Tree Planting Targets)

The Council received a report relation to tree planting and the Trees and Woodland Strategy.

Councillor Hiller moved the recommendation.

Councillor Simons seconded the recommendation.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to agree that the Trees and Woodland Strategy, in addition to any amendments arising from Cabinet resolution 1, be further amended by way of (a) an updated Tree Risk Management Plan, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report; and (b) introduction of new operational guidelines in respect of daylight loss and vegetation encroachment, as set out in para 4.24 of the report.

71(c). Cabinet Recommendation - Peterborough Cultural Strategy 2021 to 2030

The Council received a report relation to the Peterborough Cultural Strategy.

Councillor Steve Allen moved the recommendation.

Councillor Howard seconded the recommendation.

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

71(d). Constitution and Ethics Committee Recommendation - Update Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules

The Council received a report relation to the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation.

Councillor Steve Allen seconded the recommendation.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to approve the updated Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, as outlined in Appendix A to the report.

71(e). Constitution and Ethics Committee Recommendation - Update to Civic Protocol

The Mayor advised that he had been informed that this recommendation would not be moved.

71(f). Licensing Committee Recommendation – Statement of Principles – Gambling Act 2005

The Council received a report relation to the Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles.

Councillor Warren moved the recommendation.

Councillor Ayres seconded the recommendation.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to approve the revised post consultation Statement of Principles.

72. 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

Eastern Industries Access Improvement Scheme – Development of Full Business Case and Detailed Design

In response to a question, Cllr Hiller advised that the decision was taken to ensure that the Council could effectively continue to deliver the Eastern Industries area. This would

enable the Council to secure further funding to improve the performance of the highways network. Should the scheme go forward, this would be wholly funded without Council contribution.

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

The Mayor introduced this report in relation to the Record of Combined Authority Decisions.

Members asked questions on the following decisions:

Closing Statement from the Mayor and Chair

In response to a question, Cllr Coles advised that the conversation of the Committee was wide ranging. Those on the committee would also like that level of detail, but would need to wait a while longer for that level of detail.

Budget Monitoring Report November 2021

In response to a question, Cllr Fitzgerald advised that it was understood that there had some money set aside to provide for affordable housing, however, there had been a change in the way the money was to be awarded. As such, the funding hadn't been lost, but would be provided through a different vehicle.

COUNCIL BUSINESS TIME

74. Notices of Motion

74(1) Motion from Councillor Amjad Iqbal

Councillor Qayyum moved the altered motion on behalf of Councillor Iqbal and detailed how the both Councillors were approached to raise the issues set out in the motion with Members. It was recognised that a flag-raising ceremony had already been established on 22 June in honour of the Windrush Generation. It was considered vital redouble efforts to support this generation and their families. The Windrush Compensation scheme was felt to be unfit for purpose, resulting many not receiving justice in their lifetime. The proposals before Members set out ways in which the Council can support the process of reform and calls upon MPs to bring the matter before Parliament.

Councillor Steve Allen seconded the altered motion and acknowledged the contribution to the city of the Windrush Generation and their descendants. The Afro-Caribbean community played a significant role in Peterborough's culture, civic and social life since the Second World War. It was noted that there had been injustices towards this community, which were now being addressed, which the Council was urged to support.

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

- The contribution of the Windrush Generation to British society was acknowledged, recognised and appreciated, and Members supported the proposal to provide assistance to those in Peterborough who had suffered.
- A key part of the motion was highlighted, to advocate for no cap to be placed on the level of compensation that could be awarded, particular with the compensation scheme itself under threat.
- MP's were urged to support the proposals and raise queries in Parliament about

the progress being made.

- It was noted that the Windrush Generation was completely supported, however, was not the only community that had experienced injustices through multiple generations.

A vote was taken on the altered motion moved by Councillor Qayyum on behalf of Councillor Iqbal. The motion was **AGREED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) as follows:

“The term Windrush generation refers to those invited to relocate from their homes in commonwealth countries to settle in Britain between 1948 to 1971. The first significant number arrived at Tilbury docks aboard HM Empire Windrush on 22 June 1948, from the Caribbean, however, migration was from Africa and Asia as well as the Caribbean.

The 1948 British Nationality Act established the status of UK citizens and its colonies - anybody who could prove they were born within the British Empire had the right to settle and work in Britain. Indefinite leave to remain was granted in 1971. At the time, it was not unusual for children not to have their own documents travelling on their parents' passports. It has subsequently come to light that Home Office has not kept detailed records of arrivals.

The Home Office's failure to keep detailed records of the arrivals in the UK created an issue for the 'Windrush generation' unable to evidence or demonstrate their lawful status when facing immigration checks to continue working, access services or even to remain in the UK.

This Council notes:

1. The enormous contribution of members of the Windrush Generation to British society following the Second World War.
2. That the many thousands of members of the Windrush Generation who made their homes in this country to build a better life and contribute to our society were granted indefinite leave to remain in 1971.
3. That members of the Windrush generation residing in Peterborough may have suffered loss and unfair treatment with regard to their immigration status, including threat of deportation due to the failure of the Home Office to maintain records of their lawful right to remain in the UK.
4. The ongoing implications of this treatment for many people and their families.
5. The Governments Windrush Scheme (get a document showing your right to be in the UK & apply for compensation) (<https://www.gov.uk/windrush-prove-your-right-to-be-in-the-uk/windrush-helpline>)
6. That the Council holds an annual civic event to commemorate the Windrush generation on 22nd June.

This Council therefore resolves:

- a. To continue to mark Windrush Day on 22nd June in the City of Peterborough annually as a civic celebration to recognise and honour the enormous contribution of those who arrived between 1948 and 1973.
- b. To call upon our local MPs to make representations to the government to:
 - support advice agencies fully and financially in their work to achieve support, advocacy, and justice for all Peterborough residents affected by the Windrush Scandal,

- not to cap compensation amounts payable to victims under its compensation scheme or to apply confidentiality agreements, time limits and other arbitrary restrictions, and
 - To waive fees for naturalisation to be waived for all who have been affected and provide legal aid for those who have been affected.
- c. To thank third sector organisations within the city for their support and advocacy for victims of the Windrush Scandal.

This Council further resolves to ask the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities:

- d. To offer support and signposting of the City of Peterborough residents affected by the scandal who may be seeking help, including to third sector organisations which provide support, advice, and advocacy.
- e. To promote the Windrush Compensation Scheme to help ensure that all Peterborough residents who may be eligible for compensation are aware of it.
- f. To identify the Windrush Generation residents and their descendants who are in receipt of adult social care support, or are in education or being looked after, and that the council will target its support towards those. To identify and address inequalities specifically targeting work with our Windrush Generation residents.

To work with the Peterborough Windrush Support Group, Legacy of Windrush Descendants, to develop its activities to celebrate and give recognition to the Windrush generation.”

74(2) Motion with Major Implications from Councillor Saqib Farooq

Councillor Saqib Farooq moved the altered motion and provided an overview of the detail of the proposals.

Councillor Hiller seconded the altered motion and acknowledged the alteration of the motion to take into account the current situation of the Council and officer workload, and considered that the proposals were a good and practical idea.

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

- Some reservations were expressed over the wording of the alteration, which had the potential to delay a very positive scheme.
- It was suggested that preliminary work could begin on such a scheme, and would assist the Council in recovering from the current financial situation.
- It was suggested that green finance was raised in the previous budget agreed in March 2021, and that climate targets could not simply be dropped by the wayside as a result of the financial situation.
- Comment was made that similar proposals had been raised in the amendment to the MTFS in March 2021.
- It was noted that such schemes are already in place in other parts of the country, and experience could be drawn from them.
- It was advised that the alteration was a practical approach, bearing in mind the current priorities of the Council.

A vote was taken on the altered motion moved by Councillor Saqib Farooq. The motion was **AGREED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) as

follows:

“Peterborough City Council should look to set up a process in the medium term, offering green bonds to local residents and businesses, giving them an opportunity to invest into greener Peterborough, while earning back on their investments.

People and businesses can buy from as little as 5 pounds into the new security and collect interest on their investment. The money will be put toward new green community infrastructure, including electric vehicle charging points, tree planting, solar panels on public buildings etc. PCC will also aim to develop a zero carbon recycling and waste collection. This will help us achieve our commitment of reaching our goal of net-zero carbon by 2030.

Green bonds are becoming popular with institutional investors, with governments globally issuing \$181 billion of debt so far in 2021.

More than a quarter of local councils in UK are considering their own climate bonds.

The bonds issued will pay fixed interest of 1.5% per annum over a 5/10 year period. That's more than double the interest paid by the UK government's green bonds and high street banks, making it more attractive for residents to buy green bonds from PCC. For PCC this interest paid will also be considerably lower than typical loans from state backed entities. Other authorities who have implemented this scheme have found that many residents/investors donated back their accrued interest to the council, further increasing funding to use for green initiatives.

For PCC and its lenders it will not just be about money, 'PCC can look at the engagement it will get from local residents (bondholders). For example, if we get one thousand investors in the local green bond, we have a thousand people who are supporting the green projects locally and will do other things in their lives to support the drive to net zero by 2030.

After consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources, and the current financial pressures on PCC, it is agreed that our priority should be achieving financial sustainability by 2023/24, and considering this scheme in the medium term (or once resources allow).

The Council resolves to ask the Cabinet Member for Finance to consider the establishment of a Green Bond scheme, in the medium term, once financial sustainability is reached in 2023/24.”

The Mayor
6:45pm – 10: 29pm
8 December 2021

**FULL COUNCIL 8 DECEMBER 2021
QUESTIONS**

Questions were received under the following categories:

<u>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</u>	
<u>Questions from members of the public</u>	
1.	<p>Question from Collette Francis</p> <p>Councillor Harper, Chairman of Planning Environmental Protection Committee /Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Commercial Strategy and Investments.</p> <p>This relates to planning application 20/00652/TRE of the Oak. We have contacted an independent specialist to review the documents on evidence submitted like us, he has found many discrepancies within reports to name but a few. The tree itself measures 1.64 metres not one metre in diameter as stated along with fabricator measurements of a tree that hasn't existed since about 2013 so this raises concerns of the overall accuracy of any measurements within the report moisture and demand and zone influence has also been left out of the report which would become a practise where subsidence is suspected. It also does not list other species of influence for example the eucalyptus tree which is visible from the site, but not listed. This has staggering influence of 22.5 metres and a very high moisture demand.</p> <p><u>Suspected subsidence</u></p> <p>level monitoring from reports suggests a positive figure, which would actually indicate heave but not subsidence of clay soil does unfortunately contract and expand with the seasons and moisture content. That being said, having matched level records with the weather records with Cambridge NIB weather station. So that being said having matched level records with the weather records from Cambridge NIB weather station the measurement would be in line with this: The Conservatory the original planning application 9801011FUL in condition 9 states that no domestic enlargement shall be constructed within plots four or five other than those expressly authorised by this permission whilst we understand the conservatory had been built some years ago and not by the current owners we wondered why this has not been raised with conditions set out not only there to protect the ancient tree but also protect the property from damage.</p> <p>Planning and Environmental Meetings.</p> <p>Unfortunately, this consultation period also fell within covid pandemic, which brings me to my question, how did this informed decision come to be made given the previous meetings were cancelled with only meeting in May was on the 12th which only discussion was put in a temporary measure to allow the head of planning sole authorization to pick the agenda within a 48-hour window to raise concerns by members nor was this item raised in meetings in June or July. If this planning application had been discussed then it should be made available in the public record minutes to give those a chance to raise their own concerns. Furthermore, your written replied to the petition contradicts documents, it states planning was decided on the 16th of July when it is signed off as a third of July 2020 on the application.</p>

The T1s felled 18 months ago prior to application despite this also having a TPO this was felled in around 2013 as Mr Hopkins and Mr Elmor had returned home from holiday, I remember clearly seeing it as it could be seen from their property. You also state that the Council didn't know it was until January 2021 but you still decided that it was your responsibility to fell it in 2020 after a planning application with made the 9 Barnards way, not Blind Lane where this tree is situated.

The Cabinet Member responded:

I'm sorry Mr Mayor no I can't. I listened to that diatribe, was there a question in there? I've absolutely no idea, I'm sorry Mr Mayor and if I'm at fault, then I'm at fault but in my 16 years as a member I've never heard anything like it.

Mayor reads out original question:

Given all the evidence available, with the Covid pandemic In 2020, please could you explain what decision process you used to come to the informed decision to grant planning application as quoted.

Cabinet Member responded:

To answer Lady Colette Francis's specific questions about the decision process I can tell her that in accordance with best practise guidance and following all due council process including public consultation the application was assessed by a delegated planning officer with the appropriate arboricultural knowledge and experience.

In considering the application the officer will have aimed to assess the amenity value of the tree and the likely impact of the proposal on the amenity of the area and in light of his assessment consider whether or not the proposal is justified having regard to the reasons put forward its support of it. In additionally officer would be required to consider whether any loss or damage is likely to arise if consent is refused. Naturally the greater the impact of the proposal on the amenity of the area, the stronger the reasons needed before consent is granted.

In short Lady Frances, for this tree a valid application was submitted, due process to consult was undertaken, and a valid decision to fell was reached, which is still valid. The second part of your question about the Covid impacts, there were no Covid impact or alternative processes arising due to the pandemic in this decision making methodology. Councillor Harper, may wish to comment but I think I've answered your specific question.

Supplementary question:

Just to query, you say there was no influence in Covid, but meetings were cancelled and you can see in the minutes that the only one in May was to give the Head of planning sole authorization to pick the agenda. This wasn't discussed in May, June or July.

Along with a supplementary question I'd just like to inform you that we have requested a legal review into the denial of the request of the view, the structural report under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Given this is heave and not subsidence, as seen in your reports, would you not agree that this issue has been caused by the removal of T1 in 2013, along with the neglect for many years of the drainage ditch along the back of the property? Would also agree

that removal of T2 would aggravate this issue further as it will no longer be there to remove excess amount of moisture, risking much greater damage to property?

The Cabinet Member responded:

No I wouldn't.

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 Councillor Sandford (1)**

Councillor Allen, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities

A poll of 2,000 adults, commissioned by specialist hygiene services provider Citron Hygiene, has found that one in three are unhappy about the cleanliness of the public toilets in their nearest town or city.

Carried out by OnePoll, the survey found that seven in 10 adults would prefer to buy something from a nearby coffee shop to use the facilities than visit a free public toilet.

The study found that found 76% of UK adults believe a good quality public toilet is something their area can be proud of and 82% want more investment from local councils to ensure their public toilets are clean and safe.

A freedom of information request by Unison last year discovered that more than a fifth (22%) of public toilets have been closed down since 2010 due to council funding cuts.

In the light of these shocking statistics, could the relevant cabinet member tell me how many public toilets have been closed in Peterborough in the past five years and what is being done to improve public toilet provision in Peterborough, both in terms of numbers of toilets and quality and cleanliness of provision?

The Cabinet Member responded:

In the last 5 years 2 public toilets have been closed within Peterborough these being in Itter Park and Northminster, the cleaning regimes in our toilets you refer to are to a high standard and it is important to recognise, the Car Haven Toilets have won Toilet of the Year accolades on several occasions.

We are very much investigating toilet provisions and given the current financial climate looking at options on how these could be funded. The toilets that we are investigating also include self-cleaning options to ensure they are kept to a high standard.

Supplementary Question:

I'm pleased he mentioned the actual Itter park toilets because they're in my Council Ward and the ward of Councillors Shaheed and Councillor Barkham. These have been closed for quite a number of years and it's really ironic that they just been refurbished when they were closed.

Now I understand about issues about cleaning the toilets but what local people keep asking me is what is the point in having toilets in a brand-new condition in a park that's heavily used by members of the public. Could I ask the Councillor if he could liaise with his colleagues and try and find ways of getting these toilets open as soon as we can?

The Cabinet Member responded:

I have great sympathy with your point that public toilets should be available. Indeed, the Leader and I are investigating options for public conveniences in the City with ageing population, we should have that facility.

With regard to the specific point about Itter Park, I think I'm quite happy to take forward your proposal, but I'd also say you should think along the lines of Think Communities perhaps and see if any local residents, park users and the park user group could perhaps assist with the cleaning in the short term to move that forward.

2. **Question from Councillor Murphy**

Councillor Allen, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities

During the COVID-19 pandemic additional provision for homeless was made available and the City Council provided shelter for street homeless people into temporary accommodation. After a number of months this provision finished.

How many people were in temporary accommodation at this time and subsequently had the emergency accommodation taken away?

Why did the Council in the preceding months not assist them in successfully finding more suitable or permanent accommodation, or do the humane thing and extend the provision rather than see them homeless and vulnerable and living on the streets once again?

The Cabinet Member responded:

Although the Governments "everybody in" initiative ended earlier in the year the Council have continued to provide accommodation to anyone who was eligible for homelessness assistance and accommodation at that time as well any new rough sleepers identified.

The Housing Needs Team have successfully accommodated and resettled over 100 single homeless people during the pandemic and continue to work hard to ensure that an accommodation offer exists for all eligible, verified rough sleepers.

At the peak of the pandemic, we were accommodating 130 individuals in hotels across the city. The team have been successful in bring that number down to single figures, and indeed, just last week with no families being accommodated in B&B at all.

Unfortunately, since the UK left the EU and the transition period ended, we are unable to offer the same service to those who are ineligible for assistance. However, we continue to support with advice and assistance through outreach services and our partners in the faith and voluntary sector and are working with the Department of

Levelling Up Housing and Communities and the Home Office to support with reconnection or acquiring settled status.

Supplementary Question:

Thank you very much for your quite comprehensive response. I sent you an email today following my email of 27th of November to give you a heads up. this question arose from the coverage I saw from community first when they found two people at three o'clock in the morning on a cold night. One of them, I'm not going to give the names, they clearly knew these people, have known for years. I don't know whether you've seen it, but other councils have, and she was found under a slide and in central ward but on a very cold night. They warmed the car up and put her and another homeless person in it. I've got no reason to disbelieve what I'm told of what you said you haven't either. When the COVID rules changed the temporary accommodation which they'd been in for months had been withdrawn. Why then didn't we continue to engage and help them? Do you regret that we were unable to do the humane thing and the fact that as a Council we saw these people be turfed back out on the streets?

The Cabinet Member Responded:

I have extreme sympathy with your concern Councillor Murphy the problem with EU citizens who don't have permission to stay in our country, they are ineligible for assistance. However, we do rely very much, and value very much the help of the faith sector and the outreach officers sterling work in identifying people with the homelessness issue. So, I didn't receive your email, if I did receive it, I haven't opened my inbox because I've been in meetings all day, but I will look at that email tomorrow and respond by email. Content this evening, I understand your concerns and have a lot of sympathy for your point of view.

3. **Question from Councillor Qayyum**

Councillor Fitzgerald, Leader of the Council

It's reported in the local media that the Chairman of Peterborough United is 'angry' about Peterborough City Council not yet offering him an interest-free £30m loan to build their proposed arena and that the council should also give them the Embankment land for nothing.

Can the Leader explain what involvement the administration has had and is having on this issue with the private embankment property firm and confirm what knowledge he has about Mr McAnthony's reported requests as specified in the media?

The Cabinet Member responded:

Thank you councillor Qayyum for your question, which I see as is in two parts. Can the leader explain what involvement the administration has had and is having on this issue with the private embankment public firm? None. And confirm what knowledge he has me about Mr MacAnthony's reported requests as specified in the media? The same as you, I read them in the paper.

What I would add, although it's not part of the question but just the context, the council master planning process is engaging with Peterborough United Football Club as it is with any number of stakeholders on a spatial planning basis as they're an interested stakeholder. No conversations whatsoever regarding funding of a stadium have taken

place through that process either. Great deal of respect for Mr MacAnthony, but the notion is somewhat fanciful, because is one of the things even if you stop to consider for a moment, all he actually asks for, who would pay the interest on the interest we pay? so to be strictly truthful about the matter, it's fanciful nonsense. However, if the council at some point were to start discussing things like that, it would come through the right channels, and everybody would know about it.

Supplementary Question:

Thank you very much for that comprehensive reply Councillor Fitzgerald. You have publicly expressed your administrations backing for this huge privately owned and commercially run arena to be built on our cities protected environment green space. My question is, on the understanding it would not be Peterborough United football club who own this arena, are you able to now confirm that all the conservative members in this chamber agree with you in the interests of a private profit making firm, are more important than protecting publicly owned assets and obviously other than planning committee members; could I possibly request Mr Mayor that we have a show of hands, purely in the interests of public transparency of course thank you.

The Cabinet Member Responded:

My personal view and it's nothing to do with Peterborough United per se, if a company wants to come and invest, create jobs, generate/stimulate the economy I am personally for that, but that's my personal view. I know, many in my group share the same view. The only people unlike the mistake the Labour Party made, which bars them from any future discussion and planning in my view, none of the planning committee on the conservative group had been canvassed or spoken to by me or anybody else about the possibility of a future planning application that may or may not come forward.

What we're doing about the master planning process is looking at all the options this is the public's input into this process, but I personally and again I'll put on record here, but I can't gift anything to anybody without proper process.

I personally support the development of the embankment it doesn't mean I want concrete it over. I want to sensitive sensible look at that which is why we've set the master planning process going. And I would support a multi use arena that may also be home to the football club which is being mooted, that's my personal opinion I am entitled to it. I understand the Labour Party have actually come out against such a development, so I'm perfectly happy to state on record, but I'm not going to talk for members of my group. They can do so themselves on an individual basis or should a planning application come forward.

Point of information raised by Cllr Shaz Nawaz:

There was something in the press that I would demonstrate or share with the public that the labour group were not in favour of the item moving to the embankment, however, Councillor Harper pointed out that that would preclude members on the planning committee and I responded by saying that those members were not part of that conversation. So, although Councillor Fitzgerald says those planning committee members will not be able to enter into that conversation when it comes to planning committee, I think he's wrong.

Cllr Fitzgerald offered a point of personal explanation:

	<p>My point is, the public may conclude, as you said all and then realised, you'd made a mistake to correct it, but there will always be a doubt about the impartiality of your members going forward on that issue.</p>
4.	<p>Question from Councillor Wiggin</p> <p>Councillor Coles, Cabinet Member for Finance</p> <p>Representatives of Peterborough United Football Club have been in the media asking Peterborough City Council for an interest free loan to fund the building of a new stadium. What response has been given by the Council?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>The Council has been informally asked this question, neither have I been approached by the football club, about an interest free loan to fund building the new stadium. With regards to any request for loans from the council by the football club, the present financial position the council finds itself in, is that this is not possible. If the council were to offer a loan to any commercial organisation, it would not be an interest free loan. It would need to be at the appropriate commercial rate. It would also need to be for an appropriate purpose and have the required security to protect the council's investment.</p> <p>Supplementary question:</p> <p>I have a lot of respect for Mr MacAnthony, he's done a lot of brilliant work for the football club if you compare where they were a decade or two ago. And you can't blame me for asking can you, it makes business sense to ask. Can we ensure as a council, that the football club are made aware of our financial situation, if they're not already, because as has been pointed out we can't afford to pay the interest on any loan. We've seen with other developments that we've made money on them by charging a creative interest rate, that makes sense for the council, but just giving money away doesn't, so can that be clearly communicating please?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>I'm very happy to make that absolutely clear, but I'm sure that the Leader will be doing that.</p>
5.	<p>Question from Councillor Barkham (1)</p> <p>Councillor Fitzgerald, Leader of the Council</p> <p>The Leader has referred to his ideology several times. Can the Leader share with Members what his political ideology is?</p> <p>The Leader responded:</p> <p>What a fantastic question. I'm a Conservative. Thank you,</p> <p>Supplementary question:</p>

Thank you for a very comprehensive answer from Councillor Fitzgerald. So he just regards to make the public aware who is really running the Council and what their particular agenda is going to be. So I'm guessing what the answer might be, would the Cabinet Member agree with me that conservative right wing political ideologies are destructive, they are non progressive, they promote issues of elitism, sexism, racism, speciesism, which I think is something that Councillor Fitzgerald knows about being a fox hunting promoter. Thank you.

The Cabinet Member responded:

I'm a conservative because I believe in people power, in free enterprise, keeping taxes low so that people can make their own choices about their lives, to start a business, buy property, give to charity or save for their children and grandchildren's future. I'm a conservative because I'm a patriot that loves my country, and unlike other parties, I'm not obsessed with tearing down the past and sowing division by the Cul de SAC of identity politics.

I support the family unit, our armed forces are hard pressed Police and other emergency services. As a Conservative, I also believe in a health system free at the point of need, but not one that can be reformed to put the patient front and centre and only the Conservatives can keep the NHS well funded and successful.

It was the Conservatives as a historic party, nearly 200 years old, which has enacted so many social reforms on water and sewerage, Employment laws, Council housing, national living wage to name but a few. As conservative, I believe in levelling up, children's education and levelling up the poorest in society. Thank you.

6. **Question from Councillor Hogg (1)**

Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Commercial Strategy and Investments

With plans for relocating the Regional Pool to a new location now cancelled can we be updated on the future for the existing regional pool, specifically the budgeted costs involved as it was reported that "over the next ten years, the Regional Pool will cost the Council £13.2m to keep it going, which includes £6m of capital finance to address works identified in the Council's June 2020 condition survey of the building?"

The Cabinet Member responded:

We're working with Peterborough Limited on a short-, medium- and indeed a long-term plan of works required for the existing Regional Pool facility so we can better understand the capital works that will be required to keep it operating as it is currently. The £6m capital costs you cited, were based on the conditions survey completed early 2020.

Supplementary question:

Thank you for your answer, just kind of drill down a little bit on that. Are you anticipating that the £6m capital cost that was identified in 2020 is going to go down substantially? or go up substantially? Or do you think that it's going to be about the same? The point I'm trying to make is, that was this estimate a kind of Rolls Royce solution to the pool and that maybe we can bring that figure down as much as possibly considering

our financial situation, but yet keep the pool open? Clearly that has to be a priority that we keep the pool open for the citizens of Peterborough.

The Cabinet Member responded:

My natural answer to that would be, I guess, supported by the majority of Members if not all Members in here this evening. Obviously, a publicly accessible pools is a much valued element of the sports and leisure offer in the city. So without an immediate prospect of an alternative, I suggest all efforts need to be made for its retention, its maintenance and hopefully its improvement.

7. **Question from Councillor Hogg (2)**

Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Commercial Strategy and Investments

The recent phase of the consultation for the Embankment masterplan shows a removal of the athletics track and the two football pitches on all four of the options. What are the plans for moving these facilities and where are they being moved to?

The Cabinet Member responded:

The options recently proposed at the public consultation do explore the possibility for the track to be relocated to potentially re-provision more land in the north of the Embankment. This would include room for a growing university which is a longstanding priority and need for the city and is really gathering momentum to enhance our educational and skills access and further education attainment. The reason for this is that land at Embankment is obviously finite and if we are to safeguard much of it as a green asset for the city and for other technical reasons which planners take into account including heritage views and ecological and environmental considerations only some of it will be suitable for built development. The track is land hungry and is located in a less sensitive location those when factors are taken into account.

The independent team held an early briefing session for group leaders Councillor Hogg. Councillors Fox and Nawaz were attendance along with Councillor Fitzgerald and myself. I imagine that Councillor Sandford was otherwise engaged and it was a shame he didn't take the opportunity to forward that invitation to another Liberal, possibly yourself. At that very comprehensive briefing, there was of course the opportunity to ask any questions one might have. I must remind Councillor Hogg, that these aren't the Council's plans or suggestions as they are indeed, a result of the initial public commentary and interpreted in the form of visuals for further consultation and comment.

The consultants of course welcome views on the track as a city asset and are working with the club and England Athletics to understand how many and how users travel to the track and if a central location is absolutely necessary.

I understand that no alternative placing has been considered at the moment, because and I will repeat, these suggestions are part of the current, transparent Master Planning consultation process and are just ideas for comment and consideration at this time, genuinely.

As an element of this very open exchange of ideas, consultants met with representatives of the club in November and also welcome responses to public consultations. In addition, the consultant team will set up a further meeting to discuss the track use and explore other options, including, where the track could potentially be relocated within the city if indeed that option is a favoured option.

Supplementary question:

So we've just heard from the Leader about how the, people carrying out the master plan process have been talking to stakeholders such as the football club and yet it's been reported, widely reported, that the athletics clubs were not given prior notice, prior to the plans coming out, and they haven't been engaged with about their needs for the track.

Maybe you could go into why it is that the football club seems to be getting, especially as they are currently on the site and it is only the football club's ambition to be on the site, why they are getting a preferential treatment?

The Cabinet Member responded:

I think there's a lot of assumptions there, to be frank, and I know nothing of any preferential treatment that's being given to any stakeholder, or indeed potential stakeholder or interested party on either side of whether there's going to be arena there or not, or where the track is. My information is from officers that the club has been consulted, so I'm not sure. We only seem to have a difference of opinion there so we can drill down on that and find out whether they have or not. But the master planning process, in my experience, since we first commissioned it. Has been very, very open and transparent with proper public consultation. As I alluded to earlier, one of the initial consultations was with group leaders is unfortunately your leader didn't turn up for whatever reason, probably working whatever but that post could have been reprovisioned for somebody like yourself perhaps that obviously has an interest in what happens to the embankment, as we all do here this evening.

8. **Question from Councillor Sandford (2)**

Councillor Allen, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities

When library opening hours were cut a few years ago, additional opening time was provided for many libraries in Peterborough by use of an unsupervised access facility.

Since libraries have re-opened following the peak of the Covid pandemic, these additional unsupervised opening hours have not been reinstated. This means that, for example, Werrington Library, which serves my council ward, is only open for three hours each day.

Could the relevant cabinet member tell me when full library opening hours, including unsupervised access time, are likely to be restored?

The Cabinet Member responded:

Staffed opening hours have been returned to pre-covid levels. However, following the change in operator we have taken the opportunity to review the unstaffed opening hours arrangements. Customers have fed back that they don't always feel safe and that many have been followed into a library by another person, and some of the older

library users have reported issues using the technology. It is a fact that 50% of the technology itself is now 12 years old and is no longer supported by engineers, and none of the terminals can take cash card payments. Alongside these issues, whilst we remain in a Covid-alert situation, the unstaffed access to libraries is uncontrolled insofar as number are concerned, which could potentially lead to lack of social distancing, and we would be unable to encourage hand sanitising. We are working with the operator to determine the future of unstaffed library opening hours.

Meanwhile, the Select and Collect service, which was introduced during the lockdown, is still available for customers. It allows customers to select and reserve books which are then picked by library staff. So customer can then collect them from a site convenient to them.

Supplementary question:

I obviously take the point about, in the current period of heightened awareness of COVID that things may have to change, but that's not always been the case. Over the last two years or so, and I think my problem with his answer is that when the staffed opening hours were cut, but the on supervisors were added on the administration was crowing about how that was an increase in library services.

Given the fact that we don't have the unsupervised hours, we've now got a library, a number of libraries only open for three hours per day. Would he recognise that's not a very good service, and would he undertake to try and get us back to something like normal library services as soon as is practical.

The Cabinet Member responded:

I sympathise with your concerns with regard to the opening hours. I am a protagonist of libraries and think that we need to perhaps review the whole overall presentation of libraries to make them libraries of things, rather libraries of books. And so I think that we need a root and branch review of how library services are provided in this city and I would support you in taking that forward.

9. **Question from Councillor Barkham (2)**

Councillor Walsh, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Public Health

Could the Cabinet Member for Health tell me what assessment the Council and the various health organisations in Peterborough have taken of the current prevalence of gay conversion therapy in Peterborough and what measures these organisations are taking to prevent this practice from being used?

The Cabinet Member responded:

In May this year the Government announced, through the Queen's speech, its commitment to ban gay conversion therapy. The legislation to ban this therapy will follow a period of public consultation. NHS England and other health professional bodies [*have warned that all forms of conversion therapy are "unethical and potentially harmful"*](#) and the Church of England has said that these practices have "no place in the modern world". We fully support the Government's intent to bring forward this legislation and would want to see this take place as soon as possible.

We are currently unaware of any examples of gay conversion therapy in Peterborough. However, if this is taking place and drawn to our attention, then we stand by the Government's position in believing these to be abhorrent practices. We, and our partners, would do all we can to identify appropriate support for anyone who has experienced this coercive and harmful practice.

	<u>Questions on notice to:</u> d. The Combined Authority Representatives
	Nil

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