

COUNCIL	AGENDA ITEM No. 12
26 JANUARY 2022	PUBLIC REPORT

MOTIONS ON NOTICE

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

1. Motion with Major Implications from Councillor Murphy

“Council notes recent studies showing how the council has suffered because of a short-term focus in its decision making and believes that the Local Government Act 2000 gives council the ability to look at introducing different council models including an elected mayor which would address the short-term focus issue as this would be an all-out election for a longer term. Council believes that the elected mayor option (which can be enacted for elections in May, without the need for a referendum, with council agreement) should be considered as part of our current review and if appropriate put before council for consideration. The review of structure should also consider a committee or hybrid model if it is believed this will bring about more inclusive decision making and improved overview and scrutiny.”

Briefing Note from the Director of Law and Governance:

The option for local authorities to adopt an Elected Mayor and Cabinet System was introduced with the Local Government Act 2000 with subsequent changes made by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Localism Act 2011. It is one of the two forms of 'Executive Arrangements' permitted alongside the Leader and Cabinet System currently used by Peterborough City Council. Since 2011, Local Authorities have also been able to operate a traditional Committee System with no Executive.

There are two ways for a Local Authority to introduce an Elected Mayor and Cabinet system; via a local referendum or via resolution of Council. These two options are explored in more detail below.

Referendum - a referendum on switching to a Mayoral system may be triggered by Full Council, a petition signed by 5% of those on the local electoral roll or by order of the Government. For PCC the figure is 7,275.

Signatures for a petition must be collected over a period no longer than 12 months and all signatures must be dated to ensure this is the case. Once a petition has been received and validated, a referendum must take place before the next 'ordinary election day' which means the First Thursday of May each year regardless of whether a Council election was due to take place. If the next ordinary election day is less than 4 months away, the deadline becomes the ordinary election day of the following year. A Local Authority may hold a referendum earlier than the deadline if it wishes. Legislation does not contain any specific provisions for electronic petitions leaving it to each Local Authority to determine their validity.

Via Resolution - Since 2007, Local Authorities have been able to adopt a Mayoral System by a resolution in Council. This resolution requires a two-thirds supermajority.

Following a successful resolution or referendum, the first Mayoral election may take place separately to scheduled Council elections in May or October. However, subsequent mayoral elections must be run in parallel with local elections. Therefore, the Mayor's initial term may be shortened or lengthened from the standard four years from a minimum of 23 months to a maximum of 67 months.

Further information on Elected Mayors may be found in the House of Commons Briefing Paper Number 05000 from 21 May 2021, available here:

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05000/SN05000.pdf>

Details about what constitutes a valid petition are found in regulations - The Local Authorities (Referendums) (Petitions) (England) Regulations 2011, available here:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/2914/regulation/10>

2. Motion with Major Implications from Councillor Ansar Ali

“It is regrettable that PCC finds itself in such a difficult financial situation.

This situation has occurred because of ill-judged decisions of the Council’s Conservative administration for most of the last two decades including the decision not to increase council tax by the full amount despite being told on many occasions that our council tax banding is, on average, lower than our statistical neighbours, whilst funding from central government has reduced by 80% in the past ten years.

This situation is no fault of our Peterborough residents and Council taxpayers. Yet they are the ones who will be asked to pay a substantial increase in Council Tax for next year and future years, whilst the Council will continue to cut all but essential services.

The burden on our Council taxpayers is unacceptable.

Therefore the Council resolves to:

- **Ask the Cabinet to accept their responsibility for this unacceptable situation.**
- **Suspend payment of Special Responsibility Allowances to Leader Deputy Leader, Cabinet Members, Cabinet Advisers, Chairs of Committees and opposition Group Leaders for the next three years, commencing in 2022/23.**

This will, as the very least, send a clear, positive message to our residents and Council taxpayers.”

Briefing Note from the Director of Law and Governance:

The current level of SRA payments for the positions set out in the motion are as follows:

Leader of the Council £31,524

Deputy Leader - £21,017

Cabinet Members - £15,762 x6

Cabinet Advisers - £7,881 x4

Chairman Planning & Environmental Protection Committee - £9,457

Chairman of Licensing Committee - £7,881

Chairman of Audit Committee - £7,881

Chairman of Corporate Parenting Committee - £7,881

Chairman of Employment Committee - £1,970

Chairmen of Scrutiny Committees - £7,881 x4

Leaders of Opposition Groups (to be distributed on a pro-rata basis) - £7,881

Total payment of these SRA’s per annum would be £253,112. This figure does not include any sacrificed SRA payments due to Members holding double roles.

Members should note proposals also to be considered at the Full Council meeting on 26 January 2022 to appoint an independent Chair to the Audit Committee, with an allowance of £3,000 per annum.

As set out in the constitution, it is a function of the Full Council meeting to determine the scheme of payment of allowances to Members. The Members scheme of allowances is to be considered as a separate report to Council at the meeting on 26 January 2022, following a resolution in January 2021 to defer consideration of the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations by one year.

The proposal of the Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to SRA's can be found at the relevant agenda item. In essence, the recommendation is that all SRA's continue to be based on a percentage of the Leader's SRA. The Leader's SRA payment would be calculated as 3 times the basic allowance (as current). It is recommended that a formula be introduced to calculate the level of basic allowance, based on the average time spent on Council business and a PSD applied at 40%.

The Council must 'have regard' to the Panel's recommendations when considering any action it wishes to take in relation to allowance, but may resolve as it sees fit.

The Council is required by law to have a balanced budget and therefore operate within its funding envelope. The issues facing Peterborough City Council is not unique and is common across Local Government where difficult decisions on services are required to deliver a balanced budget. The Council agreed in December 2021 an Improvement Plan which will ensure that the Council continues to deliver the right services for those that need them in an efficient, cost effective and sustainable manner.

3. Motion from Councillor Day

"Two crises, inextricably combined, are challenging humanity on a planetary scale.

The Climate Crisis is certainly the higher profile of the two. The Ecological Crisis is perhaps less well understood, but its correction is equally urgent and requires profound change.

Ecosystems might be considered as the planet's 'life support system'. Ecosystems provide the oxygen in the air that we breathe. They 'host' the carbon cycle by fixing gaseous carbon dioxide. They provide pollination for our food crops and maintain a stable climate. Climate change should be viewed as the consequence of humans exceeding the natural capacity of the planet's ecosystems to take in CO2.

The UK Government's Environment Bill received Royal assent in Autumn 2021 and recognises the need to reconstruct ecosystems across landscapes. The Act will give Councils the legal responsibility to maintain a 'Nature Recovery Strategy' (a map-based exercise showing opportunities for recovering and enhancing biodiversity).

On the 30th June 2021, the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee published its report Biodiversity in the UK: Bloom or Bust? that states "Since 1970 there has been a 68% decrease in population sizes of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and fish" and "15% of UK species are threatened with extinction. Of the G7 countries, the UK has the lowest level of biodiversity remaining"

The large majority of Council services impact upon the functionality of natural systems at some level: we own and maintain large amounts of land associated with highways, parks, open spaces and land rented to tenants via Corporate Property and Land; as a Local Education Authority, we are able to influence local education provision; as a Planning Authority we are able to influence developmental decision making; and as an investor we are able to influence the practice of other organisations.

In 2004, Peterborough City Council cabinet agreed a biodiversity strategy which, amongst other measures, proposed that alternative ways of managing council owned landscapes across the city should be trialled in order to promote biodiversity. This resulted in the setting up of eight "biodiversity areas" in different parts of the city, where various management regimes, often involving reduced grass cutting

frequencies, have been trialled. More recently PECT has promoted tree and wildflower planting at various locations through the Forest for Peterborough and B-lines projects.

In order to contribute to preventing the collapse of global ecosystems, it is now imperative that this Council acts locally and reviews all services to ensure cessation of any activities that negatively impact upon ecosystems, and to bring about a 'net gain' in biodiversity.

This motion proposes that the Council adopts a parallel approach to addressing the ecological emergency as was agreed to address the related climate emergency.

Full Council agrees to:

- 1. Declare an 'Ecological Emergency'.**
- 2. Request that the Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene and the Environment consider:**
 - **Following the 'Independent Commission on Climate Report's' recommendations for the CPCA to work with partners to significantly accelerate the delivery of the 'doubling nature' ambition.**
 - **Conducting a cross-service review to identify opportunities for service modernisation that will benefit biodiversity.**
 - **Working with partners and stakeholders across the county and the whole Eastern region to identify greater opportunities to implement closer partnership working and innovation.**
 - **Recognising the importance of the John Clare Countryside project, PECT and the Forest for Peterborough and how the Council can use new policies such as biodiversity net gain to create a local nature recovery strategy to enhance people's appreciation of nature and access to high quality natural places, designed not only to help nature recover, but also help people relax and improve their physical and mental health.**
- 3. Request that the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee consider a report within nine months with details of potential actions the Council may implement considering their costs and broader implications associated with implementation.**
- 4. Request that Cabinet consider an Ecological Emergency Response Plan within one year."**
- 4. Motion from Councillor Moyo**

"County Lines are gangs who operate highly sophisticated criminal networks. The criminals export illegal drugs from big cities into smaller cities such as Peterborough and towns across the country. Child Criminal Exploitation is common in county lines. It occurs where an individual or group coerces, controls, manipulates or deceives a child or young person under the age of 18 to move, sell, store drugs and money for those higher up in the network. The hierarchy is designed to protect the leaders to evade capture by the police and to distance themselves from the criminal act of physically dealing drugs. Nonetheless, vulnerable adults can be victims too of the criminal networking.

The Council notes:

1. Perpetrators operating county line networks are commuting to the city of Peterborough, frequently evolving their techniques to groom and exploit young people and vulnerable adults to deal Class A drugs such as crack cocaine and heroin.

2. According to Cambridgeshire Constabulary, in the last 12 months there were approximately 791 drug related crimes reported.
3. The exact numbers of young people affected by County Lines is unknown and there is currently no systematic data collection.
4. Children aged 15 to 17 years are those most commonly identified as victims of County Lines exploitation, although those younger and older are also at risk of exploitation.
5. Studies show the coronavirus pandemic is driving a rise in inequality, poverty, and mental health conditions, particularly among already vulnerable groups, pushing more people into drug use and exacerbating existing dependency issues.
6. There are now county line gangs originating from Peterborough operating networks across Cambridgeshire.

The Council resolves:

1. **To support Operation Spotlight a pilot scheme co-ordinated through the Safer Peterborough Partnership (SPP) to examine and publish a review of the scale and impact of County Line exploitation of young people and vulnerable adults in Peterborough.**
2. **To assist Safer Peterborough Partnership with applying for external grant bids to fund for a dedicated officer to manage Operation Spotlight's delivery plan effectively and report back to the Council.**
3. **To take a more co-ordinated public-health approach in identifying risks and protective factors for preventing County Lines exploitation within Peterborough by working collaboratively with Operation Spotlight to deliver key strategic aims.**
4. **Provide Operation Spotlight with better intelligence and research to:**
 - **identify children most at risk and those already exhibiting signs of involvement with County Lines.**
 - **understand safeguarding needs of children exploited through County Lines.**
 - **assist young people to gain early help and advice and ensure young people know how to access help.**
5. **Support Neighbourhood Support Teams (NST), the local Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) and Neighbourhood Watch Teams with identifying vulnerability indicators and encouraging residents to report drug suppliers or suspicious activity through better training and communication.**
6. **Evaluate and measure the impact of working with schools, community groups, public health teams, police officers and youth services as well as, develop contingency plans to address areas of improvement."**

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