

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD WEDNESDAY 22 JUNE 2022  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

**THE MAYOR – COUNCILLOR DOWSON**

**Present:**

Councillors Ansar Ali, Imtiaz Ali, Jackie Allen, Steve Allen, Ayres, Barkham, Bi, Bisby, Andrew Bond, Sandra Bond, Burbage, Casey, Cereste, Coles, Day, Dowson, Elsey, Mohammed Farooq, Saqib Farooq, Fenner, Fitzgerald, John Fox, Judy Fox, Harper, Haseeb, Hemraj, Hiller, Hogg, Howard, Hussain, Iqbal, Jamil, Alison Jones, Dennis Jones, Knight, Lane, Moyo, Gul Nawaz, Shaz Nawaz, Over, Perkins, Qayyum, Rangzeb, Ray, Robinson, Rush, Sabir, Sainsbury, Sandford, Seager, Shaheed, Sharp, Simons, Skibsted, Stevenson, Tyler, Warren, Wiggin, Yasin, Yurgutene

**20. Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence received.

**21. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

**22. Minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 May 2022**

The following minutes of the Council meetings held on 23 May 2022 were approved as a true and accurate record:

- Mayor Making Meeting,
- Annual Council Meeting, and
- Extraordinary Meeting,

subject to the following amendment to the Annual Council Meeting minutes:

14. 'Appointment to Committees and Other Authorities'

'9 abstained from voting' to be corrected to '0 abstained from voting' for the vote on the amendment and the vote on the substantive recommendation.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

**23. Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor promoted the events taking place at Cathedral Square over the weekend to commemorate Armed Forces Day, and encouraged Members to attend.

## **24. Leader's Announcements**

There were no announcements from the Leader.

## **QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

### **25. Questions from Members of the Public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

### **26. Petitions**

#### **(a) Presented by Members of the Public**

There were no petitions presented by Members of the public at the meeting.

#### **(b) Presented by Members**

There were no petitions presented by Members at the meeting.

### **27. 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) were raised and taken as read in respect of the following:

1. The Energy Rebate Scheme
2. Progress on St George's Hydrotherapy Pool
3. The opening and temporary closure of the Lido
4. Comments made about the Combined Authority Mayor
5. The felling of a Bretton oak tree (an urgent question, accepted by the Mayor)
6. Public transport to the Manor Drive development

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

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS**

### **28. Executive and Committee Recommendations to Council**

#### **28(a). Cabinet Recommendation – Council Climate Change Action Plan**

The Council received a report from Cabinet in relation to the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

Councillor Cereste moved the recommendation and reminded Members of the Climate Emergency that the Council declared in 2019 and its commitment to achieving a net-zero carbon impact by 2030. Since this commitment the Council had reduced its carbon emissions by 28%, as well as achieving more accurate measurements for emissions. 25

commitments were included within the Climate Change Action Plan, which it was hoped all Members could support.

Councillor Tyler joined the meeting at this point.

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

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

- Members were pleased that the work of the group was now to be taken up by the newly-established Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee.
- It was felt that the new committee would give the climate emergency a higher profile and would ensure that all meetings were held in public.
- It was noted that addressing climate change was a key commitment in the Corporate Strategy, which should influence all of the Council's decisions, including setting the budget.
- It was further noted that the Council had set an aim for the whole of the city to be carbon neutral by 2030, which would require significant further action.
- Carbon literacy training continued to be provided to both Members and officers across the Council.
- Members thanked officers for their work with the Working Group.
- It felt by some that the plan could go further in addressing the climate emergency.

As seconder of the recommendation, Councillor Simons advised that he had been pleased to take part in the working group and hoped that the new Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee continued to work well.

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

1. Adopt the Council Climate Change Action Plan, and
2. Give delegation to the Executive Director for Place and Economy to undertake any presentational, factual or other minor amendments to the documents associated with this report prior to publication, provided such amendments do not materially amend the content of the documents.

## 29. 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

Award contract for cloud based services hosting the Council's revenue & benefits - APR22/CMDN/99

In response to a question from Councillor Wiggin, Councillor Cereste advised that the appropriate steps were being taken to ensure that plans were in place for the renewal of IT contracts as necessary.

Laptop procurement

In response to a question from Councillor Hogg, Councillor Cereste advised that any

Chromebooks that were being replaced by laptops were then being provided to those who could use them, including schools.

Delegated Authority to Enfortis for issuing Fixed Penalty Notices under Section 33(5) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990

In response to a question from Councillor Hogg, Councillor Simons advised that the Enfortis contract had been extended for a further three months.

Approval for contract to be awarded to Milestone to deliver Phase 2 outline business case for Peterborough University access improvement scheme

In response to a question from Councillor Hogg, Councillor Fitzgerald advised that due diligence had been completed in relation to the proposal, which was a vital project.

Amendment to Hotel Loan Facility

In response to a question from Councillor Shaz Nawaz, Councillor Fitzgerald advised that there had been a delay in the delivery of the hotel due to COVID-19 implications around the pace of construction work.

Councillor Coles further advised that the regulations around the pandemic had meant fewer staff were on site and therefore work had commenced at a slower rate.

New Street Cleansing Vehicles

In response to a question from Councillor Hogg, Councillor Simons confirmed that the £31,000 for re-painting had been removed from the budget, as the new vehicles would not be repainted.

Funding for Citizens Advice Peterborough for 2022/23

In response to a question from Councillor Hogg, Councillor Steve Allen advised that the level of funding for the Citizen's Advice Bureau from the Council had reduced, as the Council were provide space for the service at Central Library.

**30. Questions on the Combined Authority Decisions Made Since the Last Meeting**

The Mayor introduced the report which outlined the record of Combined Authority decisions made since the last meeting.

There were no questions asked on decisions of the Combined Authority.

**COUNCIL BUSINESS**

**31. Notices of Motion**

**31(1) Motion from Councillor Hussain**

Councillor Hussain moved his motion and in so doing recognised the work undertaken by many in the Peterborough community to support refugees. It was felt that the benefit of cross-sector organisations coming together to work more efficiently would reduce demand and speed up integration.

Councillor Jackie Allen seconded the motion and reserved her right to speak.

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

- It was advised that a potential amendment to this motion had been ruled out of order, which had included an addition to urge the Government to stop its policy of sending people trying to enter the Country to Rwanda.
- Members were supportive of the motion, which underlined the sentiment that Peterborough was a welcoming city.
- Concerns were raised about anti-refugee messaging from Government and Members were urged to consider their reaction to the Government's policies.

As seconder of the motion, Councillor Jackie Allen advised that the core aim of the motion was to provide sanctuary, this also included creating safe spaces in schools and libraries where the children of refugees could feel safe to bring their families also.

As mover of the motion, Councillor Hussain summed up by clarifying that the motion related to those seeking refuge legally, and did not relation to national policy designed to hinder people traffickers or those arriving in the country via illegal means.

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

“Peterborough Council recognises the contribution that refugees and migrants seeking sanctuary have made to the city of Peterborough throughout recent history. Peterborough City Council understands the important role it can play in welcoming people who are fleeing violence and persecution by offering them safety and sanctuary. In recognition of this, Peterborough City Council commits to support an initiative to make Peterborough into a recognised ‘City / Council of Sanctuary’.

A total of 99 cities and local authority areas across the country have formally signed up to this scheme within England and 21 cities / regions within Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

It is anticipated that through this pledge and the action plan that will be developed, our city will drive forward the following outcomes:

- Improved community cohesion and integration of refugees and other migrants within the city
- Reduced hate crime incidents relating to new arrivals
- Greater understanding of the experience of refugees and other migrants within the wider population
- Developing systemwide approaches to key challenges that refugees and new arrivals experience within the repatriation process, leading to improved socio-economic medium and long-term outcomes for new arrivals

Peterborough City Council has a track record of taking action consistent with ‘Sanctuary Status’ through past and existing programmes, including welcoming Refugees under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, and most recently, welcoming Afghan families resettled under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy, and most recently, welcoming families from Ukraine.

Peterborough City Council recognises that a comprehensive, co-ordinated and forward-looking approach is needed if the welfare of people moving into the city, and community cohesion between new and existing communities, are to be supported effectively.

**To become a Council/City of Sanctuary Peterborough Council pledges to take the following actions:**

- **Join the City of Sanctuary ‘Local Authority Network’. In joining the network, we are committing to work towards the Council/City of Sanctuary Award and are agreeing to sign up as a Supporting Organisation.**
- **Establish a Peterborough City of Sanctuary steering group, to be support by relevant officers and including a relevant Member of the Executive and people with the lived experience of seeking sanctuary, to co-produce an action plan which focuses on embedding the principles of City of Sanctuary into the City Council’s strategy, policies and services.**
- **Working with the Peterborough City of Sanctuary Steering Group, commissioned services, community groups, faith groups and charities to support refugees, and migrants seeking sanctuary in Peterborough City.**
- **Celebrate the contribution of refugee and migrant communities through annual events like Refugee Week.**
- **Include information about refugees, and migrants seeking sanctuary in our Equality & Diversity Training for new and existing staff.**
- **Fact-checking and challenging anti-refugee and anti-migrant attitudes wherever they are found.**
- **Reporting on progress for achieving the ‘Council/City of Sanctuary’ status as part of the Council’s monitoring report to the Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee.**

Peterborough City Council believes that through this pledge the Council will commit to working proactively with partners across the city to improving outcomes for migrants to our city. While this pledge does not automatically commit the Local Authority to accepting all refugees and migrant seeking sanctuary, the concept of ‘sanctuary’ suggests endeavouring to improve integration and wellbeing for migrants and therefore these outcomes will be the focus of this pledge.”

### **31(2) Motion from Councillor Shaz Nawaz**

Councillor Shaz Nawaz moved his motion and Councillor Sandford seconded the motion.

A vote was taken on the motion as moved by Councillor Shaz Nawaz. The Council **AGREED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) the motion as follows:

“Peterborough Council notes the recent announcement by the BBC to cease production of the Look East regional news output from Cambridge and only broadcast a regional news programme based in Norwich.

Peterborough is a key city in the East and having operations based in Norwich means vital and important local stories in Peterborough may be missed.

Peterborough Council expresses deep concern over the plans and believes that as a growing area our region requires more, not less, investment in local journalism.

**Peterborough Council therefore agrees.**

1. **To ask the Chief Executive to write to the Director General of the BBC to oppose these cuts to local and regional news.**

2. **To seek support from other local authorities to highlight the growing importance of our region and that more, not less, local journalism should be focussed on the area in general.”**

### **31(1) Motion from Councillor Jamil**

Councillor Jamil moved his motion and explain that, while he was proud of the city, discrimination was still an issue that needed to be addressed. The motion before Council asked Members to accept a clear definition of islamophobia. It was hoped that this would help begin to address the normalisation of islamophobia in media and politics.

Councillor Shaz Nawaz seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Hussain moved an amendment to the motion and stated that he had been personally affected by the issues raised within the motion, however, felt it was important that any definition must be accepted by all. The definition put for to Council in the motion was not agreed by the National Police Chiefs Council and it was felt it would be premature to agree the wording at this stage. It was noted that the All-Party Parliamentary Group working on this was due to meet shortly, and suggestion was made that further work be allowed for with this group prior to any agreement.

Councillor Rangzeb seconded the amendment and reserved his right to speak

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

- It was noted that Peterborough MP Paul Bristow was the current Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group, however it was suggested that the amendment was factually incorrect.
- Queries were raised about what was meant by claims that the proposed definition could present a hindrance to freedom of speech.
- It was felt that the amendment had left nothing of substance of the original motion.
- Comment was made that the amendment felt too much like party politics, and made reference to the local MP when it was not necessary to do so.
- It was suggested that the amendment had been proposed with practicality in mind, in order to ensure that any law which used the accepted definition would be enforceable.
- Comparisons were made to a previous motion in relation to antisemitism, which was agreed, though not a legally binding definition. It was suggested that, as such, this motion could also be agreed.

As seconder of the amendment, Councillor Rangzeb advised that it would be appropriate to engage with the local MP before agreeing to any definition.

As seconder of the motion, Councillor Shaz Nawaz advised that it was not complicated to agree a definition of islamophobia. It was felt, however, that the amendment submitted to Council was political point scoring. If Members had ideas for strengthening the definition of islamophobia, then they should lobby the Government to speed up their work with the All-Party Parliamentary Group.

As mover of the motion, Councillor Jamil summed up by suggesting that the amendment watered down the motion and removed any resolution to take action. It was felt that the Government weren't taking the issue of islamophobia seriously.

A vote was taken on the amendment from Councillor Hussain (26 voted in favour, 31 voted against, 2 abstained from voting) and the amendment was **DEFEATED**.

A vote was taken on the motion as originally moved by Councillor Jamil. The Council **AGREED** (31 voted in favour, 22 voted against, 6 abstained from voting) the motion as follows:

“Peterborough City Council is proud of its diversity and has a huge asset and a source of great strength. A substantial proportion of its residents are Muslim, who are an integral part of its make-up, playing a huge role in all aspects of the Peterborough City’s life.

Peterborough has a strong history of promoting cohesion and welcoming people from all over the world. Its residents have always united and supported each other in the fight against racism and discrimination in all its forms.

**This Council therefore welcomes, endorses and adopts the working APPG (All-Party Parliamentary Group) definition of Islamophobia, including all of its examples in full, cited as follows:**

**"ISLAMOPHOBIA IS ROOTED IN RACISM AND IS A TYPE OF RACISM THAT TARGETS EXPRESSIONS OF MUSLIMNESS OR PERCEIVED MUSLIMNESS."**

Contemporary examples of Islamophobia in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in encounters between religions and non-religions in the public sphere could, considering the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, instigating or justifying the killing or harming of Muslims in the name of a racist/fascist ideology, or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Muslims as such, or of Muslims as a collective group, such as, especially but not exclusively, conspiracies about Muslim entryism in politics, government or other societal institutions; the myth of Muslim identity having a unique propensity for terrorism and claims of a demographic ‘threat’ posed by Muslims or of a ‘Muslim takeover’.
- Accusing Muslims as a group of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Muslim person or group of Muslim individuals, or even for acts committed by non-Muslims.
- Accusing Muslims as a group, or Muslim majority states, of inventing or exaggerating Islamophobia, ethnic cleansing or genocide perpetrated against Muslims.
- Accusing Muslim citizens of being more loyal to the ‘Ummah’ (transnational Muslim community) or to their countries of origin, or to the alleged priorities of Muslims worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying Muslim populations, the right to self-determination e.g., by claiming that the existence of an independent Palestine or Kashmir is a terrorist endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of Muslims behaviours that are not expected or demanded of any other groups in society, eg loyalty tests.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic Islamophobia.
- Holding Muslims collectively responsible for the actions of any Muslim majority state, whether secular or constitutionally Islamic.

**This Council asks the Chief Executive of the Council to:**

1. **Write to our two local members of Parliament and the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities asking them to listen to Muslim communities and the cross-party group of MPs and peers and to adopt this definition of Islamophobia which classifies discrimination against Muslims as a form of racism.**
2. **Continue to prioritise tackling hate crime and Islamophobia in partnership. Peterborough City Council works with partners such as Cambridgeshire Police, on a rolling basis, and will now coordinate future actions in line with this definition of Islamophobia for all Muslims.”**

## **32. REPORTS TO COUNCIL**

### **32(a) Consultation to Change Scheme of Elections**

The Council received a report in relation to the consultation to change the scheme of elections.

Councillor Coles moved the recommendation and advised that agreement of the recommendations would allow for consultation to commence on moving from elections every three years, with one fallow year, to an ‘all-out’ election every four years. This followed a recommendation from Government to consider ‘all-out’ elections as an option for the avoidance of short-termism, cost saving, greater engagement, stability in leadership and greater support for small party candidate pools.

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:

- It was confirmed that Werrington Neighbourhood Council, though not a formal Parish Council, would be included on the consultee list.
- It was advised that the Liberal Democrat group were happy to support a review, however, would be advocating for the status quo once the results of the consultation were brought back to Council for review.

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

- i. Agree to commence a consultation process with relevant stakeholders on a proposal to change the Council’s scheme for elections by thirds to a scheme for whole council “all-out” elections, with views also sought on the commencement year for such elections being given as either 2023 or 2024, and
- ii. Delegate authority for running the consultation process and reporting back to a special meeting of Full Council to the Head of Constitutional Services in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Director of Law & Governance.

### **32(b) Report of the Peterborough City Council Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel**

The Council received the first report in relation to the work of the Peterborough City Council Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel.

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation and welcomed Eleanor Kelly to the

Chamber, as Chair of the Panel.

Councillor Steve Allen seconded the recommendation and reserved his right to speak.

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

- Members welcomed the report and it was felt that a significant corner had been turned with the work of the Financial Sustainability Working Group.
- It was recognised that there was still progress to be made in putting the Council's plans into action.

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

1. Ask the Cabinet to consider the report and respond with the action it wishes to take as a result.
2. Request the Growth, Resources, and Communities Scrutiny Committee to review the report, the Cabinet's response to it and the progress being made with the delivery of the Improvement Plan.

### **32(c) Establishment of a Joint Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Health and Wellbeing Board**

The Council received a report in relation to the establishment of a joint Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Health and Wellbeing Board.

Councillor Howard moved an altered recommendation, with the agreement of the Chamber, which included an additional Member representative on the Board from the opposition, to maintain the spirit of collaboration.

Councillor Hussain seconded the altered recommendation.

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

- It was considered that the alteration, while positive, had come to Council in a sub-optimal manner as a last minute change. It was hoped that in future such matters would be properly discussed with Members prior to coming to Council.

A vote was taken on the altered recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to:

1. Approve the Terms of Reference, as set out in Appendix A to the report, for inclusion in the Constitution, subject to the addition of 'PCC Opposition Member' to the list of Local Authority Members, and
2. Authorise the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Constitution and Ethics Committee, to make any other minor or consequential amendments to the Constitution necessary for, or incidental to, the implementation of these proposals.

### **32(d) Revised Political Proportionality and Committee Seat Allocation**

The Council received a report in relation to the revised political proportionality of the

Council and the committee seat allocation.

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation and Councillor Coles 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 the allocation of seats on committees subject to political balance arrangements (Appendix 1 to the report).

### **32(e) Notification of Changes to the Executive Delegations**

The Council received a report in relation to changes to the executive scheme of delegations.

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation and Councillor Coles seconded the recommendation.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to note the changes made by the Leader of the Council to the Executive Scheme of Delegations (Appendix A to the report).

The Mayor  
6:00pm – 7:52pm  
22 June 2022

**FULL COUNCIL 22 JUNE 2022  
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

Questions were received under the following categories:

<b><u>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</u></b>	
<b><u>Questions from members of the public</u></b>	
1.	<b>None</b>

## **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 Shaz Nawaz (1)**

##### **Councillor Coles, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Governance**

The £150 energy rebate scheme is a step in the right direction but is nowhere near sufficient to address the crisis most people are facing. In view of the significant increase in living costs, what representations have you made to government for further support for those who are struggling in Peterborough?

##### **The Cabinet Member responded:**

The council continues to work directly and with others to always secure the best possible funding for Peterborough and all of our residents especially at this time of such financial difficulty times.

More specifically with regards to the £150 energy rebate, that you mention, I can confirm that Peterborough has been allocated £11,757,900 to make payments to local residents in accordance with the scheme. To date £7,817,400 has been paid directly into bank accounts or credited to council tax accounts with payments & credits being made every week to ensure those most in need receive this help as quickly as possible.

From October 2021 to March 2022 the council administered the Household Support Fund which supported 7822 individuals with Food, Fuel and Essential supplies as well as vouchers in the school holidays for those eligible for Free School Meals.

The Household Support Fund was recently extended which has enabled the council to continue our holiday support with over 26,000 vouchers being issued in Easter and May holidays. A renewed £100k scheme for those not eligible for free school meals was launched on 20<sup>th</sup> June in partnership with Citizens Advice Peterborough and will give up to £50 support for fuel or food as well as access to advice and guidance to maximise income. As well as this we are on track to launch our £550k scheme for pensioners in partnership with Age UK on 27<sup>th</sup> June which will support those of pensionable age who are in need with vouchers of £100.

Additionally, the council work with the Local Government Association and the Society of Unitary Treasurers and collectively lobby for additional funding for the whole sector.

##### **Supplementary question:**

Thank you Councillor Coles for your answer but I don't think you fully answer the question because the question was what representations have you made to government for the support, so if you could answer that question after I ask my

supplementary question. My question is, I'm interested to know in the next 30 days what three things you're going to do to support people with the cost of living crisis?

**The Cabinet Member responded:**

Perhaps in responding to the first part, I would just remind you what's already been done by government to support people who are poorly paid or low incomes. There's a £650 payment for all around the means tested benefits, there's a National Insurance card for low earners, there is a £400 off energy bills, there is a £300 for all pensioner households, that there's 5 pence off per litre fuel duty, and as you've mentioned £150 off council tax which supports 80% of the population on band D or below. Now that's a very big and very expensive package. If you put it all together it really does look that a full time work on the minimum wage should be better off. If you look at median earnings of £29,000, such workers should be only slightly worse off. In answer to what I am going to do in the next 30 days; if you'd like to write to me with any suggestions you have I'd be very happy to receive and put them into a response that I can send off on my behalf too. But as you know with the financial sustainability working group I am very happy to work with you on any suggestions that you might have.

2. **Question from Councillor Yasin**

**Councillor Fitzgerald, Leader of the Council**

Following the extra-ordinary Full Council meeting on 23 May, can the Leader and/or relevant Cabinet Member please provide an update on the reopening of the St George's Hydrotherapy pool.

**The Cabinet Member responded:**

Thank you Mr Mayor, I will defer this to Councillor Allen as it is in his portfolio.

**Cabinet Member, Councillor Allen responded:**

I can confirm to members that officers are indeed undertaking a comprehensive review of the options including those put forward by the labour group leader. It is anticipated that their findings and recommendations will be presented to cabinet in July. As portfolio I can confirm to the chamber I have not been idle on the issue of hydrotherapy provision in the city. I recognise that it's encouraging there is a proposal by a medical practitioner to open a new purpose built facility providing the service where it really belongs namely in the health sector, and I am conscious that in the short term that users are left without a local provision. To that end we are investigating an alternative option which would offer access to hydrotherapy in the city to those that need it. We're looking to trial use of the teaching pool at the regional swimming pool later this year so that it can be used for hydrotherapy. Hydrotherapy requires warm water pool with a temperature of between 32 C 35.5. This we have been advised in our exploratory discussions, could be provided at the teaching pool. I'll be able to tell you more when plans are fully developed. Be assured, we will certainly be talking to the user group about the proposals as they develop in order to establish the practicality of the option and whether available times can be mutually agreed. I hope this will be a solution for people in our city and benefit provider therapy and provide practical alternative facility.

**Supplementary question:**

	<p>So from the answer that you've given, it's quite apparent that we don't have a solution anytime soon, so can you please advise me on where the users of the hydrotherapy pool are supposed to go to attend and get the service that they need in the meantime please?</p> <p><b>The Cabinet Member responded:</b></p> <p>Thank you Councillor Yasin and I share your concerns about the current availability of hydrotherapy in our city. I'm sure many of the users will indeed have made alternative arrangements at facilities around our city but we are working and indeed, the officers are working undertaking a comprehensive review of the options included those put forward by the labour group leader as I mentioned and we will use every endeavour to facilitate and obtain a facility for users. So at the moment I think that some people will indeed have made other arrangements, but we're working strenuously to find alternatives and will have a better answer a more comprehensive answer to your question with alternatives for the July meeting.</p>
3.	<p><b>Question from Councillor John Fox</b></p> <p><b>Councillor Steve Allen, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communications, Culture and Communities</b></p> <p>With the financial restraints PCC are under at this time I would like to ask the following questions to the Cabinet Member.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Why was the Lido open two months earlier than normal this year?</li> <li>2. What was the running cost to the public to heat the pool and staffing it for those two months?</li> <li>3. What was the income from the attendance figures for those two months?</li> <li>4. Why was it later closed temporarily for maintenance work, is this the case or am I mistaken and should this work not have been carried out prior to opening the Lido?</li> </ol> <p><b>The Cabinet Member responded:</b></p> <p>We all agree that the Lido is a fantastic facility for our city both architecturally and from the perspective of being a cultural and heritage asset. It was originally opened in May 1936 and the building was granted a grade two listing in 2002.</p> <p>As well as being an iconic building the Lido has provided fun an exercise for generations of Peterborough's children and families and long may do so. Now to answer your question with the stats have asked for.</p> <p>This year the Lido opened in late March, one of the few venues which could do so in line with Government COVID restrictions at the time. The weather was favourable and the opening very well received with good attendances. The popularity was probably in part to the pent up demand which builds up during the Covid restrictions, but we wanted to understand if this was the case, so different ideas were trialled, including extending early morning swims and full Easter holiday opening all intended for us to understand the potential for longer seasons in the future and better use of the Lido throughout the year.</p>

	<p>The pool tanks had been refurbished over the winter months, and had to be refilled immediately once finished to maintain structural integrity. Calculations showed that to keep the pool “ticking over” via low chemical dosing and water circulation, but NOT heating, would be more cost effective than filling the tanks, emptying at the end of the season, and refilling the pool in May. This meant that the commissioning phase was shorter and the pool ready for use earlier.</p> <p>The cost of utilities to date is not yet known. Staffing cost were around £28K inclusive of work carried out by the maintenance team, and a proportion of the managers time which is split over a number of sites. Income was around £15K, which was lower than anticipated due to a colder than average Easter, and a short period of shut down which you have mentioned in your question.</p> <p>Indeed, the Lido did have to shut for a short period from 3rd to 5th May due to a pump failure within the plant room. Due to the age and complexity of the Lido unfortunately it is difficult to predict which piece of equipment may fail at which time.</p> <p>Be assured that at the end of the Summer a full review will be completed of the costs and visitor numbers through the season, to help plan for the future seasons.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question</b></p> <p>So what you're saying your figures say that you lost £13K in two months, basically. And also you haven't given me the full costs, which I would like if you wouldn't mind because that does concern me because for obvious reasons which I won't go into because I might lose my temper, so we'll leave it at that for the moment.</p> <p><b>The Cabinet Member responded:</b></p> <p>In any commercial activity it's impossible to predict whether you're gonna make money or lose money on a commercial exercise, if you opened and people don't come you don't make money and that's how the Lido is but it's a fantastic asset to our city and the more we have it open the better.</p> <p>If you want the additional costs that you've asked for, I will get information from the officers and report to you offline Councillor Fox thank you.</p>
4.	<p><b>Question from Councillor Shaz Nawaz (2)</b></p> <p><b>Councillor Fitzgerald, Leader of the Council</b></p> <p>As Leader of the Council, our representative on the Combined Authority and former deputy Metro Mayor, your role is to lead by example. On reflection, do you feel referring to the Combined Authority as a “basket case” was inappropriate to say the least?</p> <p><b>The Leader responded:</b></p> <p>At the time Mr Mayor, I do think it was probably a fair reflection on the state of affairs the combined authority, which is now well publicized, I would have thought Shaz Nawaz here would have not wanted to highlight this even further. But when taken in context of the Ernst Young letter which was published recently in fact on the day of that meeting, I thought it was entirely appropriate, because there are serious</p>

problems there. However, as I said at the public meeting and I have said it numerous times, I will be doing all that I can to help matters and get the combined authority back onto a sound footing both financially and in Governance terms.

**Supplementary question:**

Thank you Councillor Fitzgerald for your response although I am disappointed with that. I did share the definition of plastic basket case with members and the leader and the definition is: a person or thing regarded as useless or unable to cope; or it's a country or organisation that is in severe financial and/or economic difficulties. With that in mind Councillor Fitzgerald, do you think it would be fair for us to sit here 12 months ago call your administration a basket case? And more importantly, second part of the question are you going to take a clear undertaking tonight that you're going to be more mindful and careful with the language you use as the leader of Peterborough City Council?

**The Leader responded:**

In terms of the basket case unable to cope, I would draw everyone's attention to this letter from the auditors Ernst & Young, which says the combined authority is at severe risk of being unable to cope and operate. So if your definition is correct, then my language is correct.

I could have gone further and there were other members that said worse in terms of their damning comments about what is going on there and I'm restricted in what I can say in order to keep confidentiality.

But look be assured, be assured, that in my time at the combined authority, I've helped bring millions to this council in what have been challenging and difficult circumstances. Those challenging and difficult circumstances prevailed today if you talk about this authority, ok I would accept that months ago before I set on the journey of bringing this council round but later in the meeting Mr Mayor we will hear how this council has turned a corner and that we are making progress so that does not apply to us. And the circumstances in which we find ourselves on are one of financial the combined authority not only has financial problems but it has severe governance problems.

These are well reported, so my comments were entirely accurate and if you haven't read it Councillor Nawaz, there's a personal copy of the Ernst Young letter for you which talks about all sorts of manner of issues and I suggest you read it and digest it.

I'm doing all I have can to help the Mayor and to help the board. I've just been in a meeting today, the Chief executive was at that meeting, very cordial, very positive but there is a long way to go to fix the problems so much so that they voluntarily asked for help from DLUHC now and that hopefully will help to move matters on and bring stability in terms of how that combined authority works.

I am mindful and careful of the language what I'm telling you is I thought the language was entirely appropriate.

**URGENT QUESTION from Councillor Day**

**Councillor Simons, Cabinet Member for Waste and Street Scene and the Environment**

Can I ask the Cabinet why the Bretton Oak Tree needs to be felled when the Council's own expert says that there is no conclusive evidence linking the Oak to the damage and that there is only a future risk of damage to properties - is this not unacceptable?

The Cabinet Member responded:

In relation to the felling the Breton oak tree, this is been a difficult decision I must say. The damage already seen in the two properties clearly demonstrates that the houses have subsided. The monitoring undertaken to date shows a pattern of movement consistent with drying shrinkage of clay soils, all other potential causes have been dismissed unless thus, the only possible cause is drying shrinkage associated with moisture extraction from their two oaks trees T1 and T2 at the rear of the properties.

The third expert report also confirmed that damage is probably caused by root induced subsidence. In addition we are aware that the zone of influence of the oak trees roots beyond the two damaged houses and thus further properties may be implicated in the future. This suggests that the problem may get worse not better and the corresponding financial risk to the council is exposed to could increase.

The privately owned oak tree T1 has already been removed by the homeowner, however, uncertainty has been expressed that without DNA analysis it cannot be conclusively proven that roots the oak T2 has caused subsidence to the nearby properties.

The body of evidence did clear however that the balance of probabilities is strong that T2 is the primary cause of the now fully accepted subsidence. That such additional proof was not necessary or reasonable to obtain.

**Supplementary question:**

The council commented that there are four other houses which could possibly be affected in future. To minimise risks they want to remove this ancient oak. Would the cabinet member agree that felling an ancient oak tree to avoid possible risk is like using a sledgehammer to crack a nut.

If other UK councils took the same approach, many thousands of trees could be felled removing carbon sequestration, shade, habitats and all services provided by trees

Would he agree that money cannot possibly be a justification for this approach and why does this oak tree need felling when costings as low as £36,000 have been quoted to put in root barriers? Why are the legitimate concerns of local residents being ignored thank you.

**The Cabinet Member responded:**

The root barrier, sorry. the insurance company have discounted root barriers so there's no, we can't do root barriers. The only reason the ancient oak is to be felled to remove our liability. I can assure you that if there was any way we can get rid of our liability without felling this ancient oak we would have done, I can assure you of that.

	<p><b><u>Questions on notice to:</u></b></p> <p>d. The Combined Authority Representatives</p>
1.	<p><b>Question from Councillor Sandra Bond</b></p> <p><b>Councillor Fitzgerald, Representative on the Combined Authority Board</b></p> <p>It is now over ten years since the new development at Manor Drive Paston was started and many hundreds of new homes have been built in that period. Significant sums of money in Section 106 contributions were paid to Peterborough City Council to provide a bus service for the development and bus stops and shelters were put in place but to date no bus service has been provided.</p> <p>Given that this is now a Combined Authority responsibility and they have the relevant funds, could our Representative on the board tell me what is being done to provide a bus service to Manor Drive as local people are getting fed up with waiting years for it and we assume that the developers would not be happy if they knew that the money has not been used for the purpose for which they were asked to provide it for.</p> <p><b>The Combined Authority Representative responded:</b></p> <p>Unfortunately, as most people know the Manor Drive estate is currently inaccessible for buses as there is nowhere for buses to turn round. Once the nearby development at Norwood has been completed and the spine road there completed, as the combined authority speaking, they hope to then provide a service and improve the bus provision for residents in that area.</p> <p>Supplementary question:</p> <p>Should the Leader agree with me that the establishment of a bus service for this development is well overdue and needs to be given the upmost priority to reduce any further delay?</p> <p><b>The Combined Authority Representative responded:</b></p> <p>I could give you a very simple yes, but I'll do a little bit more. I entirely agree and I think everybody in the chamber, so if we were not making this party political, I think we should all be doing what we can counsellors across the ward from all parties and cabinet members and anybody with influence to try and hurry along that development and try and get a better provision of services for that area which is indeed sadly lacking at the moment. So yes I agree with you!</p>

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