

COUNCIL	AGENDA ITEM No. 12
12 OCTOBER 2022	PUBLIC REPORT

MOTIONS ON NOTICE

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

1. Motion from Councillor Imtiaz Ali

"This council notes:

Local government has endured central government funding cuts of more than 50% since 2010. Between 2010 and 2020, councils lost 60p out of every £1 they have received from central government. UNISON research found that councils in England had to fill a combined funding gap of £3 billion when setting budgets for 2022/23.

Over the last two years, councils have led the way in efforts against the Covid-19 pandemic, providing a huge range of services and support for our communities. Local government has shown more than ever how indispensable it is. But Covid has led to a massive increase in expenditure and loss of income, and as we emerge from the pandemic, local authorities and schools need far more support from Westminster.

Council and school workers kept our communities safe through the pandemic, often putting themselves at considerable risk as they work to protect public health, provide quality housing, ensure our children continue to be educated, and look after older and vulnerable people.

Since 2010, the local government workforce has endured years of pay restraint with the majority of pay points losing at least 25 per cent of their value since 2009/10. Staff are now facing the worst cost of living crisis in a generation, with inflation hitting 10% and many having to make impossible choices between food, heating and other essentials. This is a terrible situation for anyone to find themselves in.

At the same time, workers have experienced ever-increasing workloads and persistent job insecurity. Across the UK, 900,000 jobs have been lost in local government since June 2010 – a reduction of more than 30 per cent. Local government has arguably been hit by more severe job losses than any other part of the public sector.

There has been a disproportionate impact on women, with women making up more than three-quarters of the local government workforce.

Recent research shows that if the Government were to fully fund the unions' 2022 pay claim, around half of the money would be recouped thanks to increased tax revenue, reduced expenditure on benefits and tax credits, and increased consumer spending in the local economy.

This council believes:

Our workers are public service super-heroes. They keep our communities clean and safe, look after those in need and keep our towns and cities running.

Without the professionalism and dedication of our staff, the council services our residents rely on would

not be deliverable.

Local government workers deserve a proper real-terms pay increase. The Government needs to take responsibility and fully fund this increase; it should not put the burden on local authorities whose funding has been cut to the bone and who were not offered adequate support through the Covid-19 pandemic.

This council resolves to:

- Call on the Local Government Association to make urgent representations to central government to fund the NJC pay claim.
- Write to the Chancellor and Secretary of State to call for a pay increase for local government workers to be funded with new money from central government.
- Continue to meet with local NJC union representatives to discuss negotiations towards an equitable pay review.
- Encourage all local government workers to join a union.”

2. Motion from Councillor Day

“Peterborough City Council recognises that fossil fuels have played a central role in the past 150 years of social and technological development but that their continued use poses a serious risk to the stability of the climate upon which our well-being and economy depends. Climate change endangers the health of local residents in Peterborough, directly through impacts such as heatwaves and floods, like we have seen this year, and indirectly through impacts on food systems and global security. Research demonstrates that 80% or more of the world’s fossil fuel reserves will have to remain unburnt if we are to meet targets for climate change mitigation. A rapid large-scale shift away from fossil fuels towards energy efficiency and alternative sources of energy is needed to avert catastrophic climate change. This will soon render investments in fossil fuel reserves ‘stranded assets’, representing substantial risk for investors and pensioners. Research also shows that divestment actually reduces carbon emissions. Therefore, having declared a climate emergency in 2019, Peterborough City Council, should fully support this shift to a zero-carbon economy, which also presents significant opportunities for Peterborough in its mission to become Environment Capital.

In response to this Peterborough City Council pledges:

- to develop and implement an ethical investment policy, including a commitment to not knowingly invest directly in businesses whose activities and practices pose a risk of serious harm to individuals or groups, or whose activities are inconsistent with the Council’s mission and values. This will include avoiding investment in the top 200 publicly-traded fossil fuel companies. It may also include other companies associated with environmentally or socially harmful activities.
- Call on the Cambridgeshire County Council’s Pension Fund to divest from fossil fuels by requesting its representative(s) on the Pension Fund Committee to call for the development and adoption of responsible investment policies which:
 1. Immediately freeze any new investment in the top 200 publicly-traded fossil fuel companies.
 2. Divest from direct ownership and any commingled funds that include fossil fuel public equities and corporate bonds within 5 years.
 3. Set out an approach to quantify and address climate change risks affecting all other investments.
 4. Actively seek to invest in companies that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and minimise climate risk.
- to instruct the chief executive to write to the Leaders and Chief Executives of all other councils that use the Cambridgeshire County Council Pension Fund outlining this Council’s position and asking for their support to adopt the same policies.
- with respect to its indirect investments, to work with a ratings agency to develop a workable ethical policy aligned with the above mission and values with the aim of achieving full divestment within 5 years.

- to work with local businesses and community groups to support further positive investment in local companies and projects, including community energy schemes, which are hastening a rapid shift to a zero-carbon economy.
- to undertake the above pledges in the context of a city-wide energy descent plan and energy security policy which will be developed with local business and community groups.
- to call on the Cambridgeshire Pension Fund to adopt a similar ethical investment policy and divest from fossil fuels.
- to call on the national U.K. government to support the principle of fossil fuel divestment, to stop subsidising the fossil fuel industry and to advocate for all other countries to commit to this in the wake of the Paris Agreement, which was reaffirmed at the 2021 Glasgow Climate Summit.”

3. Motion from Councillor Sandford

“Council notes that:

1. The electoral system used for local elections in England and Wales, First Past the Post (FPTP), is not a fair system, because it means that votes do not have equal weight and many votes are wasted.
2. The alternative to FPTP is a system of Proportional Representation (PR), where votes cast for parties translates more or less directly into seats won. There are many variants of PR. The Single Transferable Vote System (STV) variant of PR is already in use for local elections in Scotland and Northern Ireland. With this system, voters rank candidates in order of preference and those who receive the most backing (including second and subsequent choices) are elected to serve in multi-member wards.
3. Peterborough City Council (in common with most other district and unitary councils) already has multi-member wards and thus the transfer to a proportional system would be easier than if the wards were single-member.
4. The introduction of PR for local elections in Scotland has led to an increase in turn-out, which was 44.8% at the last elections held in 2022. In contrast turn-out in the Peterborough City Council election in 2022 was only 30%. This suggests that the improved representation offered by PR encourages greater engagement in local democracy.

Council believes that there should be a move to the use of a system of proportional representation for local elections as soon as is practicably possible as this would boost turn-out and elect a council which is more representative of the range of political views of Peterborough’s residents.

Council resolves to:

1. Call upon the UK Government to commit to changing electoral law to permit such a move and to introduce such a system of voting in any reforms to local government presented to Parliament.
2. Instruct the Chief Executive to write to Peterborough's two MPs to ask them to call for a change to electoral law to permit such a system and promote the matter for debate in Parliament.”

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