

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD MONDAY 22 MAY 2023
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

THE MAYOR – COUNCILLOR SANDFORD

Present:

Councillors Ahmed, Jackie Allen, Steve Allen, Asif, Ayres, Barkham, Bi, Bisby, Andrew Bond, Sandra Bond, Casey, Cereste, Cole, Coles, Day, Dowson, Elsey, Mohammed Farooq, Saqib Farooq, Fenner, Fitzgerald, Judy Fox, John Fox, Harper, Hasseb, Hemraj, Hiller, Hogg, Howard, Hussain, Iqbal, Jamil, Alison Jones, Dennis Jones, Khan, Knight, Lane, Mahmood, Moyo, Nawaz, Over, Perkins, Qayyum, Rangzeb, Ray, Rush, Sabir, Sainsbury, Sandford, Shaheed, Sharp, Simons, Skibsted, Stevenson, Thulbourn, Tyler, Warren, Wiggin

5. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Strangward and Seager.

6. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

7. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2023

The minutes of the Council meetings held on 22 March 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

8. Mayor's Announcements

There were no Mayor's Announcements at this meeting.

9. Report of the Returning Officer

Council received a report in relation to the results of the Local Elections held on Thursday 4 May 2023.

A vote was taken and the Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to note the results of the Local Elections held on Thursday 4 May 2023 (Appendix 1 to the report).

10. Political Groups and Group Officers 2023/24

Council received a report in relation to the political groups and group officers for the 2023/24 municipal year.

It was advised that the documents in the agenda contained some minor errors and that Group Leaders would confirm with Democratic Services the correct information.

A vote was taken and the Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to note the membership of political groups (Appendix 1 to the report) and their officers (Appendix 2 to the report) for 2023/24, subject to any alterations received from Group Leaders.

11. Appointment of the Executive and the Leader's Scheme of Delegation

Council received a report in relation to the appointment of the executive and the Leader's Scheme of Delegation.

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation and began by thanking the elections team for their work during the recent local elections and congratulating all Members who won or retained their seats. It was hoped that the focus for the year would continue to be creating a sustainable Council and continuing the collaborative relationship established in the previous year. It was felt that the Council had achieved a great deal in the past year and, as such, had been shortlisted for 'most improved' Council. The Council was now financially stable with the next phase of work focused on transforming services in the most innovative manner, something in which all parties were to play a role.

Councillor Fitzgerald went on to thank Councillor Fox for his work as the Council's Armed Forces Champion, though he was stepping down this year. Councillor Ray would be taking on this role going forward.

A number of regeneration projects were cited for the upcoming year, as well as work to continue to support those in need. Councillor Fitzgerald highlighted the Council's commitment to transparent decision-making, with the continuation of the Financial Sustainability Working Group, as well as 'Ask the Leader' sessions.

It was hoped that the Council could continue to work together to succeed and to provide growth, prosperity and opportunity for all.

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

Group Leaders raised the following points in response:

- The upcoming year would be one of change, some of which was already happening. It would be up to the opposition to ensure that promises were delivered on and to hold the administration to account.
- It was hoped that the Council could continue to build on the successful collaborative work that had taken place around the budget. It was felt to be important to focus now on how the Council could deliver better value for its current services.
- Members were kept to see progress on issues such as a new pool, addressing homelessness, North West Gate and the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee.

As seconder of the recommendation, Councillor Steve Allen praised the spirit of collaboration within the Council and noted that the betterment of Peterborough should be the Council's key concern.

As mover of the recommendation, Councillor Fitzgerald summed up, advising that all Group Leaders had seen the draft delegations, though some changes were required, such as Councillor Coles taking on a greater level of responsibility. Deputy Cabinet Members, it was noted, would remain the same. It had been hoped to appoint a separate Cabinet Member for Children's Services, though this had not been possible, so would remain as one portfolio with Education and Skills. Councillor Jackie Allen was to take on an advisory role, as well as Councillor Ray as advisor to the Leader.

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

1. Note the decision of Full Council on 26 May 2021 'to elect Councillor Wayne Fitzgerald as Leader of the Council for a period of four years'.
2. Note the appointment of the Cabinet and the Leader's Scheme of Delegation to Cabinet Members and officers (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 to the report).
3. Note the appointments to the Shareholder Cabinet Committee (Appendix 3 to the report)
4. Note that the Constitution will be updated to include the Leader's Scheme of Delegation to Cabinet Members and officers (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 to the report), subject to:
 - a. The merging of the portfolios for 'Children's Services' and 'Education and Skills', to become 'Education, Skills and Children's Services'.
 - b. The addition of Deputy Cabinet Member positions for 'the Leader's Office', 'Community Cohesion', 'Culture and Communities', 'Legal Services', 'Corporate Services', and 'Children's Services'.

12. Committee Structure 2023/24

Council received a report in relation to the Council's committee structure for the 2023/24 municipal year.

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation.

Councillor Steve Allen seconded the recommendation.

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

1. Appoint the following Committees for the 2022/23 municipal year:

Ordinary Committees subject to political balance seat allocations:

Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee
Growth, Resources, and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee
Children and Education Scrutiny Committee
Employment Committee
Licensing Committee (Regulatory)
Planning and Environmental Protection Committee
Appeals and Planning Review Committee
Audit Committee
Corporate Parenting Committee
Constitution and Ethics Committee

Other bodies to which Section 15 LGHA does not apply

Joint Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Health and Wellbeing Board/Integrated Care Partnership
Licensing Committee (Licensing Act 2003)

2. Agree the committee terms of reference set out in the Regulatory Committee Functions and the Overview and Scrutiny Functions (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 to the report).

13. Political Balance and Allocation of Committee Seats

Council received a report in relation to the political balance of the Council and the allocation of committee seats for the 2023/24 municipal year. Members were advised by the Monitoring Officer that, while the original report referred to 59 Members within the proportionality calculation, the calculation included within the additional information pack included 60 Members.

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation.

Councillor Steve Allen seconded the recommendation.

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

1. Note that there are 109 seats on committees
2. Agree the allocation of seats on those committees subject to political balance arrangements (Appendix 1 to the report).
3. Agree the allocation of seats on those committees not subject to political balance arrangements (Appendix 2 to the report).

14. Appointments to Committees and Other Authorities

Council received a report in relation to appointments to committees and other authorities.

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation and noted that some appointments to other authorities may change in-year due to the involvement of other partners.

Councillor Steve Allen seconded the recommendation.

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

1. Agree that appointments to those committees where the allocation of seats has been determined under Agenda item 9 (Appendix 1 to the report).
2. Appoint the Chair and Vice-Chair of each of the Council's committees (Appendix 1 to the report).
3. Confirm the non-elected members of committees, as described at paragraph 2.3 of the report.
4. Make the following appointments or nominations for the 2023/2024 municipal year:
 - a) Appoint the Leader of the Council to act as the Council's appointee to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and one substitute member (Appendix 4 to the report).
 - b) Nominate two members to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and two substitute members from the same political parties as those nominated (Appendix 4

to the report).

- c) Nominate one member Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Audit and Governance Committee and one substitute member from the same political party (Appendix 4 to the report).
 - d) Appoint three members to the Police and Crime Panel and three substitute members from the same political parties as those appointed (Appendix 4 to the report).
 - e) Appoint four members to the Fire Authority and four substitute members from the same political parties as those appointed (Appendix 4 to the report).
5. Appoint to the position of Armed Forces Champion, as set out in Appendix 4 to the report.
 6. Authorise the Monitoring Officer as Proper Officer, in respect of any other appointments to be made, to carry out the wishes of the Leaders of Political Groups in allocating Members to committees or other authorities, and to appoint those Members with effect from the date at which the Proper Officer is advised of the names of such Members.

15. Calendar of Meetings 2023/2024

Council received a report in relation to the calendar of meetings for the 2023/24 municipal year.

A vote was taken and the Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to approve the Calendar of Meetings (Appendix 1 to the report) for 2023/2024.

16. Acquisition of Sand Martin House

Council received a report in relation to the acquisition of Sand Martin House.

The Mayor advised Members that, should any Member wish to discuss details included within the exempt appendices, the Council would need to consider whether to move into exempt session.

Councillor Coles moved the recommendation and advised that Fletton Quays, where Sand Martin House was situated, was a flagship development. Sand Martin House was currently owned by Legal and General, at a value of around £50million. A financial review had been undertaken, as well as an independent review and view from the Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel. The cost of the purchase would be from borrowing, with at least £7million saved in comparison to continuing the lease. The Council would also be more secure than as tenants, with greater flexibility.

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:

- A question was raised regarding why the Council was not currently opening up the building to offers from the wider market.

- Members suggested that they were broadly supportive of the proposal, having been scrutinised and considered by the Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel.
- Comment was made that the initial decision to agree to such a long-term lease was ill-advised and ‘shackled’ the Council. It was felt that the Council needed to return to the basic of delivering the services that residents needed.
- It was noted that the development of Fletton Quays had been a collaborative project and was considered to be a success. At the time, it was suggested, it was anticipated that the Council would eventually buy the building back.
- It was suggested that if such a deal to lease the building hadn’t been made at the time, the Council may be in a worse position.

As seconder of the recommendation, Councillor Fitzgerald advised that there were restrictions in place on the current lease to the Council, regarding what could and could not be done. If the Council were to own the building, these restrictions would not be in place. It was noted that at the time of agreeing the lease, it was considered the right thing to do to launch the Fletton Quays development. The proposal before Members now would be saving the Council £10million over the lifetime of the lease.

As mover of the recommendation, Councillor Coles summed up, advising that the acquisition demonstrated a clear benefit to the Council. Should Members wish for any further information, the Section 151 would be happy to provide this.

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

1. Approve an increase of the Capital Programme to cover the cost of acquiring the freehold interest of Sand Martin House which is currently leased.
2. Approve the resulting budget virement between Corporate Property (rental cost) and Capital Financing (borrowing cost).
3. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Corporate Services and Director of Law and Governance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Governance to take all necessary steps including agreeing final terms and entering into all necessary agreements to facilitate the decision in Recommendation 1.

7:17pm – 19:55pm
22 May 2023
Mayor