

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING
HELD WEDNESDAY 26 JULY 2023
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

THE MAYOR – COUNCILLOR SANDFORD

Present:

Councillors Ahmed, Jackie Allen, Steve Allen, Asif, Barkham, Bi, Andrew Bond, Sandra Bond, Case, Cereste, Coles, Day, Dowson (left 9:37pm), Elsey, Mohammed Farooq, Saqib Farooq, Fenner, Fitzgerald, Judy Fox, John Fox, Harper, Hemraj, Hiller, Hogg, Howard, Hussain, Iqbal, Jamil, Khan, Lane, Mahmood, Moyo, Nawaz, Over, Perkins, Qayyum, Rangzeb, Ray, Rush, Sabir, Sainsbury, Sandford, Seager, Shaheed, Sharp, Simons, Skibsted, Stevenson, Strangward, Thulbourn, Tyler, Warren, Wiggin

29. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dennis Jones, Councillor Alison Jones, Councillor Cole, Councillor Haseeb, Councillor Bisby, Councillor Knight and Councillor Ayres.

30. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

31. Minutes of the Meetings held on 21 June 2023

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 21 June 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

COMMUNICATIONS

32. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor introduced the Mayor's Announcement report, outlining the recent civic events attended by the Mayoral Party, and made a number of further announcements, including:

- US Forces Visit to the Mayors Parlour
- Bondholder Breakfast at Lynchwood Park
- Meeting the MP of Peterborough Paul Bristow at Westminster
- Meet the Mayor open days (2pm–4pm first Friday of the month inc August)
- Mayor of Peterborough Facebook page; please like and share posts and photos

Members were further prompted to attend a cricket cohesion match organised by Cricket East taking place on Saturday 2 September 2023.

33. Leader's Announcements

The Leader made a number of announcements on the following areas:

- Welcome to John Gregg, joining the Council as Executive Director for Children's Services.
- Message of good luck was given to Pippa Turvey, Democratic and Constitutional Services Manager, as she leaves the Council for her new job in Democratic Services at South Cambridgeshire District Council
- Congratulations to Emma Rogers and wishing her well in motherhood
- Peterborough was on the cusp of a growth and regeneration revolution with significant regeneration plans for key areas of the city (station quarter and university). Peterborough had a clear vision on how to expand and attract private investment and was ready to grow.
- Three family hubs have been launched at the First Steps Children Centre in Welland, further hubs to be opened in Paston and Orton
- Three of the city's parks and open spaces have received a green flag award, with thanks to Aragon and their hard work and dedication that these spaces are maintained to such high standards.

Other Group Leaders responded to the Leader's announcements and raised the following points:

- Members welcomed John Gregg, the new Executive Director of Children's Services.
- Best wishes were given to Pippa Turvey from all group leaders.
- Congratulations were given for the opening of the family hubs
- Members were pleased that three city parks had received green flag awards

QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

34. Questions from Members of the Public

One question was received from members of the public in respect of the following:

1. The Armed Forces Covenant and the bus service in Wittering.

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

35. 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.

36. 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. Need for voluntary litter pickers
2. Maintenance of Council trees overhanging residential property
3. Budget gap
4. Hilton Loan
5. Sale of the Vine
6. Exempt documents/Transparency
7. Cabinet Member attendance at Health Scrutiny
8. Cost of 'decoupling
9. Station Quarter update
10. Cabinet attendance
11. Plan for All-out Elections

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

RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS

37. Executive and Committee Recommendations to Council

37(a) Audit Committee Recommendation – Annual Audit Report

Council received a report from the Audit Committee in relation to the Annual Audit Report for 2022/2023.

Councillor Rangzeb moved the recommendation and advised that in March 2023 the Audit Committee considered the Annual Report. Chris Brooks, the independent chair had unfortunately stood down and Members thanked him for his hard work over the last 18 months which has had a real impact on the functionality of the committee.

The report was presented to the Council to raise awareness of the work of the committee in scrutinising and challenging processes in place to govern the organisation.

The Mayor endorsed Councillor Rangzeb's comments about Chris Brooks' contribution, stating that he had made a tremendous difference to the committee.

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

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

- When would Audit Committee see an end to the regular reports received regarding the resolution of a number of opportunities for improving control procedures outlined in reports from Internal Audit.

As seconder of the recommendation Councillor Perkins confirmed he had nothing

further to add.

As mover of the recommendation Councillor Rangzeb stated that officers would look into the reports outlined by Councillor Iqbal and report back, however there was nothing further to add to the recommendations.

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

1. Approve the Annual Audit Committee Report.

37(b) Constitution and Ethics Committee Recommendation – Honorary Recorder of the City of Peterborough

Council received a report from the Constitution and Ethics Committee in relation to the appointment of Honorary Recorder of the City of Peterborough.

Councillor Hiller moved the recommendation and advised that the Constitution and Ethics Committee, on 17 July 2023, agreed the appointment of His Honour Judge Bishop as the Honorary Recorder of the City of Peterborough for the duration of his term of office.

Councillor Sainsbury seconded the recommendation and reserved his right to speak later in the debate.

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

1. Agree the appointment of His Honour Judge Bishop as the Honorary Recorder of the City of Peterborough, for the duration of his term of office.

38. 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.

Financial System Procurement 2023

In response to a question from Councillor Iqbal around the contract awarded to the Financial Management IT to Unit 4 Business Software Limited, Councillor Coles advised that a response would be provided in writing, to ensure the full details would be given.

Acquisition of Homes

In response to a question from Councillor Skibsted, around whether the money was ringfenced or there would be an opportunity to use this money for modifying homes for the disabled, Councillor Coles advised that extra money had been received to provide the service to refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine and therefore had not impacted on any funding that the Council had for other service.

Termination of the Council's Agency Worker Contract

In response to a question from Councillor Iqbal, Councillor Coles advised that the relationship was changing in order that the Council would be able deal with more than one company resulting in savings being made.

Delegation of Functions to Cambridgeshire County Council: Commissioning Real-Time Suicide Prevention Surveillance System

In response to a question from Councillor Qayyum around how the surveillance system would be communicating with other key stakeholders, Councillor Coles advised that a response would be provided in writing, following a change in Cabinet positions.

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

There were no questions asked.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

40. Notices of Motion

40(1) Motion from Councillor Fenner

Councillor Fenner moved his motion and outlined that the city had a fast-growing population. There were a number of families in the city who had children with complex needs and it was difficult for them to find suitable accommodation. At the current time there were 65 households in band 1 that had an overriding medical need. There were a number of adaptations needed to make these properties suitable. The Council, Cross Keys Homes and private landlords needed to come together to look at the needs of these families and that properties advertised were suitable. Those properties that had the space but not the required facilities should be adapted to try and meet these needs.

Councillor Tyler seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Hogg moved a procedural motion, without notice and advised that the Council should already be carrying out everything contained within the motion and therefore the motion should be referred to the relevant scrutiny committee, as a matter of urgency, for the Cabinet Member to be properly scrutinised to ensure the items within the motion are being achieved as quickly as possible.

Councillor Jamil seconded the procedural motion and reserved his right to speak.

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

- Council was advised that the administration had been in power for over 20 years.
- Members were keen to prioritise the issue given giving the long-standing problems including the extensive housing waiting list, vast number of forced evictions and lack of support from the administration.
- Council noted the important role Officers had to play in tackling the key issue.
- Members of the Committee were happy for the item to be presented at a future scrutiny meeting.

- Given the urgency and seriousness of the issue, it was advised that the matter would be best resolved collaboratively – with different groups and officers coming together and without huge amounts of capital being injected into the system.
- Council was keen to tackle the Local Housing Allowance. It was recommended that a letter be written to Government, letter to seek clarification on the housing allowance for Peterborough City Council.
- It was noted that Council was the best public forum to scrutinise the matter given the presence of all party members.
- A Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny meeting would enable Members to examine the issue in further detail and gain cross-party support.

As mover of the motion, Councillor Fenner reiterated the importance of further scrutiny and called for the issue to be resolved as a matter of urgency.

Cllr Jamil reserved his right to speak as seconder of the procedural motion and asked for the motion to be referred to the Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

A vote was taken on the procedural motion moved by Councillor Hogg **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) that the motion be referred to the Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

40(2). Motion from Councillor Asif

Councillor Asif moved the motion pertaining to fly tipping and advised that it was a persistent issue throughout the city of Peterborough, its implications were also highlighted. The Member called for policy change and recommended that a letter be written to MPs to make fly tipping a more serious offence, thereby facilitating greater enforcement action.

Councillor Khan seconded the motion, thereby reserving his right to speak.

- Reference was made to the cross-party Task and Finish Group report on fly tipping. The Member was referred to its recommendations and agreed to revisit the report to gain a better understanding of what was required.
- It was suggested that a letter be written to MPs. Clarification was also sought on the authority's enforcement powers, the effectiveness of these powers and the funding surrounding the increased use of CCTVS cameras given their extortionate cost.
- A Member called for the reintroduction of the free bulky waste schemes, and it was recommended that government grants fund the increased use of CCTV.
- It was noted that the CCTV (mobile cameras) with installation for covert hotspots would cost £70,000.
- Members were advised that the authority's website would list the names of those individuals who were successfully prosecuted for fly tipping/awarded hefty fines.
- It was recommended that the authority writes to members of the public to strengthen their case as well as the government to bring about a change in the law which would enable the authority to save money and pave the way for prosecutions.
- Reference was made to the Environment Minister's announcement on 7 July 2023 regarding the clamp down on these crimes. Reference was also made to the announcement on 10 July 2023 regarding the FPN fines.
- It was noted that the motion was a great opportunity to gain cross-party support.

- Members were keen to progress the discussions and it was recommended letters be written to the local MP. It was agreed that multiple letters would be required to gain the desired result.
- The difficulties surrounding successful prosecutions were detailed and the importance of placing pressure on government to change the law was re-emphasised.

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

“Council resolves to:

1. Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to the MPs calling for legislation/policy change to make flytipping a more serious offence and to give Council more powers to take actions against flytippers.

Council requests that the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change:

2. Considers options to increase the number of successful prosecutions for flytippers.
3. Commits to more transparency around efforts to tackle flytipping, including:
 - a. Detail on the results of prosecutions and sharing information with the public about enforcement and clear up activities within the relevant Cabinet Member portfolio report to scrutiny.
 - b. Publication of the names of those successfully prosecuted.
4. Completes data analysis related to flytipping incidents, including locations and types of waste. This could help to identify hot spots for flytipping and target increased enforcement action against flytipping, including more frequent patrols, increased use of CCTV cameras, and a crackdown on repeat offenders.”

40(3). Motion from Councillor Hussain

Councillor Hussain moved his motion and advised that some councils had introduced the idea of 15-minute cities alongside ideas of low emission zones. These ideas would penalise motorists and would not be fair on the people of Peterborough. The restrictions on vehicle movements would risk people's health. The Council were committed to green targets and the promotion of cycling and walking; however, the green initiatives would still be met without penalising drivers.

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

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

- Members noted that 15-minute cities were an old idea that would essentially establish the townships that would not force people into cars and gave them the opportunity to walk to services.
- Comments were made that no one had said cars would be banned and that there would not be a congestion charge in Peterborough.
- Members supported the work that Officers were doing in the transformation of transport in Peterborough.
- Members queried the substantive evidence that had been used to justify the claims that 15-minute cities would have an impact on mental health.

- Members noted that the Local Plan referred to the reduction of the need to travel by car and that it stipulated the need for access to healthy areas within a short distance of residents.
- Comments were made that we had to be careful with the connectivity that exists and have to ensure that residents have access to the right infrastructure.
- Comments were made in relation to the people who would determine what was included within the 15-minute cities.
- It was noted that the motion was against restricting vehicle movement and would protect residents.
- Members supported the focus on the quality of choice and this motion would have restricted the ability to consider various options.
- Comments were made that certain wards like Hampton would struggle to be a 15-minute city and emphasised the importance planning for the continued growth of the city.
- Members emphasised the importance of a holistic approach.
- Concerns were raised around climate change and the importance of opportunities for development and protection for the environment.
- Members noted the importance of encouragement to reduce private vehicle use but that the public service alternative needed to be fit for purpose.

Councillor Fitzgerald as seconder referred to the public feeling about 15-minute cities and advised that the motion focused on the Council would not be willing to restrict motorists but would support the improvement of public services. It was acknowledged that the motion could have been worded better but the public were against the introduction of these policies and would protect the freedom of choice for motorists.

As the mover of the motion, Councillor Hussain summed up and advised that this motion would protect the freedom of choice. It was noted that there had not been votes against the low emission zones and congestion charges in the city. It was suggested that Members were open to the idea of a congestion charge.

Councillor Harper raised a point of explanation and clarified that Members had said that they would be against a congestion charge.

Councillor Hussain continued and advised that support for the motion would support not introducing restrictions.

Councillor Harper raised a point of explanation and clarified that the motion stated it would ban 15-minute cities not the restrictions on motorists.

Councillor Sainsbury requested a recorded vote be taken which was seconded by Councillor Fitzgerald. As 22 out of the 53 Members in attendance indicated their support, a recorded vote on this motion was taken.

A recorded vote was taken on the motion (24 voting in favour, 28 voting against, 1 abstaining from voting). The motion was **DEFEATED**.

Councillors For: Ahmed, J Allen, S Allen, Asif, Casey, Cereste, Coles, Fenner, Fitzgerald, Hussain, Khan, Lane, Moyo, G Nawaz, Over, Perkins, Rangzeb, Ray, Rush, Sainsbury, Sharp, Simons, Tyler, Warren

Councillors Against: Barkham, Bi, A Bond, S Bond, Day, Dowson, Elsey, M Farooq, S Farooq, JA Fox, JR Fox, Harper, Hemraj, Hiller, Hogg, Howard, Iqbal, Jamil, Mahmood,

Qayyum, Sabir, Sandford, Seager, Shaheed, Stevenson, Strangward, Thulbourn, Wiggin

Councillors Abstaining: Skibsted

40(4). Motion from Councillor Hussain

Councillor Hussain moved his motion and advised that gender guidance for schools would be published by the National Government. There would be a review of teaching into relationships, sex and health education so that parents would understand what would be taught in the classroom. There had been concerns raised from parents across the city where the schools had followed guidance without parental consultation. The Council was asked to review the guidance and promote it within schools with the safeguarding of children as the priority.

Councillor Jamil raised a point of order and queried the validity of the motion as the guidance had not been published. Members were advised that the motion was valid and that it referred to the promotion of the guidance 'once published.'

Councillor Khan seconded the motion and advised that there had been concerns raised by parents around what their children had been taught and that parents should have the right to know what goes on in the classroom.

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

- Comments were made on whether it was appropriate to discuss the motion before the guidance had been published.
- Members suggested the motion return to Council after the guidance was published.
- Members raised concerns around Officer time and whether it was best spent on guidance that was not available.
- It was noted that the gov.uk website advised that schools must have a written policy in place, approved by the relevant governing body.
- Members acknowledged the difficulties children face and noted that the Council should give them the appropriate support.
- It was noted that the safety of young people should be the priority when following the guidance.
- Members acknowledged that the motion highlighted steps that Members and Officers would take as part of their roles.
- It was noted that the guidance had been delayed.
- The intention of the motion was to prevent conflict at schools and to support parents and teachers to understand the guidance.
- The motion asked for the guidance to be reviewed and promoted so that work could start as soon as possible.
- The concerns raised by residents had been acknowledged and the motion would provide reassurance to those residents that their concerns were taken seriously.

As the mover of the motion, Councillor Hussain summed up and advised that there had been some steer of what would be included in the guidance. The focus had been to keep parents and carers informed and involved, and to protect children.

Councillor Jamil raised a point of order and expressed concerns after the mention of the Labour MP candidate and their role with Stonewall.

Councillor Hussain continued and noted that the foundations of this work had been laid by a Labour government.

Councillor Wiggin made a point of accuracy and clarified that Stonewall did work with parents which was contrary to what had been said.

A vote was taken on the motion moved by Councillor Hussain (21 voting in favour, 12 voting against, 20 abstaining from voting). The motion was **CARRIED** as follows:

“Council notes that: The Prime Minister is setting out clear guidance for schools on how to best support and manage transgender pupils, which includes requiring parental consent to allow students to change their name, pronouns or uniform. It also outlines that schools must inform parents if their child wishes to transition and take a precautionary approach to doing so. The guidance also says that schools can refuse to socially transition children if they believe that doing so may harm the well-being of other children in the school. It states that students who go by different pronouns to that of their biological sex should be banned from competitive school sports in their assigned gender to promote fairness and safety. There is also a review into the teaching of relationships, sex and health education and how this needs to be age appropriate with parents understanding what is being taught in the classroom.

Many parents have made representation to me and to fellow councillors from other wards about the lobbying group Stonewall who many feel, does not represent, or understand the concerns of parents. Schools should closely follow the guidance set out by the Prime Minister and reject previous advice given to them by Stonewall that fails to mention parents at all. A primary School in Park ward had over 100 parents demonstrating after the school didn't follow its own guidelines and inform parents about the subject matter in a RSE lesson it had conducted the day before. A similar situation almost occurred at an academy run primary school in my ward. Where the demonstration was averted after representation was made by parents to me and our MP. And it's one of the reasons I bring this motion before the council today.

We cannot have our schools and nurseries follow guidance, such as trans pupils being allowed to choose which bathroom and changing rooms they use. This may put children at risk, especially those in older age groups. Child safeguarding and parental input matters, it is up to parents to decide how they raise their children and schools must do their best to support them by accepting and upholding this new guidance. Once the review comes out on RSHE curriculum we must work with schools to ensure that lessons are age appropriate, and parents are kept informed on what their children are learning about in the classroom.

**Council resolves to request that the cabinet member:
Review the national guidance, once published, with officers of the Council, and promote it with schools so that all schools, including academies, are aware of their responsibilities. Schools are encouraged to implement the guidance, with the safeguarding of all children at the forefront of all their work and ensure that parents and carers are involved and kept informed.”**

40(5). Motion from Councillor Day

Councillor Day moved her motion and advised that the motion was an important part of the climate reduction work being undertaken by the council and actions had been worked through with the Head of Climate Change and Environment and the Principal Climate Change Officer.

The Council could play an important part in the reduction of carbon emissions, however any changes introduced should be in a just a fair manner to ensure that all groups and individuals felt included. The motion asked for opportunities for climate debate talks and workshops to include people in the city from all backgrounds, which would include discussions and dialogue with Trade Unions and the Employers Federation.

The Council should ensure that the transition to net zero, provided the opportunity for employers and employees to be retrained, and that new green based work options were created for the work force.

In Spain, the just transition strategy promoted the creation of working together with social cohesion along with the environmental change impacts. The strategy provided an urgent action plan for coal regions and power plants to address the social impact of the policies. The just transition agreements aimed to provide better opportunities for people to flourish in their communities and to feel safe in a changing world.

Councillor Wiggin seconded the motion and advised that reserved his right to speak.

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

- To use encouragement and support in the transition to work co-operatively was the right approach, as seen in many other companies. The motion seemed sensible and would be fully supported.
- Councillor Day was commended for her work on the motion.

As mover of the motion, Councillor Day summed up, and advised she that would ensure that the work was taken through climate change committee.

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

“Peterborough City Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and committed to becoming a net zero carbon organisation by 2030. The council also committed to supporting Peterborough to become a net zero carbon city. To achieve this, all our residents, businesses, organisations, and community groups would need to make changes to reduce emissions. The council could play an important role in educating its communities on the importance of tackling climate change and options to reduce emissions.

The Council resolves to:

- Ensure that a ‘Just Transition’ was a key theme within the development of Climate Change action plans and impact assessments.
- Share the ‘Just Transition’ approach with local partners including the Peterborough Climate Change Partnership and encourage them to develop climate change policies with a ‘Just Transition’ in mind.
- Consider the inclusion of a ‘Just Transition’ policy pledge within the developing citywide Climate Change action plan, to ensure that as the council and city transition towards ‘green jobs’ that every effort would be made to ensure that no-one was left behind and that there were opportunities for employees to be reskilled, trained and that new job opportunities were created within the local economy.
- Ask officers to invite discussion and dialogue at all levels, mainly with trade unions and employers’ federations, to understand how their employees were affected and ensure their experiences were reflected in council actions and programmes.

- Coordinate focused 'Climate Debate' talks, representing people from all communities, ensuring every effort was made to engage people from all backgrounds, ensuring their experiences were reflected in council actions and programmes.
- Liaise with the Peterborough Trade Union Councils and ask the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee to consider inviting a Peterborough Trade Union Council representative to sit on the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee, as an independent co-opted member.
- To explore ways of localising our energy systems to create a 'people's energy transition' that explores practices that ensures that energy was a right and not a commodity."

40(6). Motion from Councillor Cole

Councillor Hemraj moved the motion in its amended form on behalf of Councillor Cole and advised that Peterborough care leavers were the most vulnerable in society and that the council had a duty to protect them so they could build a successful future for themselves.

There had been 46 councils across the country that had passed similar motions to introduce a protected characteristic for care leavers.

Councillor Bond seconded the motion and advised that she reserved her right to speak.

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

"Care experienced people face significant barriers that impact them throughout their life-whether it be societal stigma, self-doubt, trauma, depression, attachment disorders, trust issues or finding a sense of 'where they belong'. Many care leavers, and despite the resilience of many care experienced people have had no choice but to develop, society all too often does not take these added barriers in to account. Peterborough needs to be a city that shatters these barriers.

Housing, health, finance, education, positive relationships, employment and in the criminal justice system care experienced people may encounter inconsistent support in different geographical areas. In plain English, it can be a Post Code Lottery. As corporate parents, all Peterborough City Councillors have a collective responsibility for providing the best possible care, safeguarding and life chances for the children who were looked after by us as an authority. Being placed in care was not their fault and should not cause continued lifelong problems.

All Peterborough City Council Corporate Parents should commit to acting as mentors, hearing the voices of looked after children and young people and to consider their needs in all aspects of our council work. All our wards within Peterborough would benefit from this motion being proposed.

All Councillors should be champions of the children in our care and challenge the negative attitudes and prejudice that exists in all aspects of society. The Public Sector Equality Duty (2010) required public bodies, such as councils, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation of people with protected characteristics. I would like Peterborough City Council to give Care Leavers a Protected Characteristic status.

Council therefore notes that:

- Care experienced people are a group who are likely to face discrimination.
- Councils have a duty to put the needs of disadvantaged people at the heart of decision-making through co-production and collaboration.

Council agrees to:

- Annually publish all statistical information relating to people who share a protected characteristic in services and employment alongside other equality data.
- Formally call upon all other public bodies to treat care experience as a protected characteristic until such time as it may be introduced by legislation.

Council requests that Cabinet commit to:

- Future decisions, services and policies made and adopted by this Council being assessed through Equality Impact Assessments to determine the impact of changes on people with care experience, alongside those who formally share a protected characteristic.
- Including care experience in the publication and review of Equality Objectives, in the delivery of the Public Sector Equality Duty the Council.
- Treating care experience as a as a Protected Characteristic.
- To continue to proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people when developing new policies based on their views.”

40(7) Motion from Councillor Iqbal

Councillor Iqbal moved his motion and advised that when it came to public transport, the public had no say over the bus service. Over the last 13 years Peterborough had a broken bus service that was failing communities. Britain was one of the few places in the developed world that had operators power to slash bus services and raise fares with little say for the people who rely on them.

The stakeholders decision to axe the number 36 bus service was the latest example of the hold that private operators had over public transport. There would be no bus link between Thorney and Eye for those that needed to travel to their doctor’s appointments and the onward journey to the city centre from Eye.

Last Autumn, the bus company, Stagecoach had axed 18 routes which left the tax payer meeting the cost of bus services. The Combined Authority stepped in to fund the routes at a cost of £3.5m to March 2024. It was time to end the second-class status of buses and bus users. In addition, thousands of bus routes had been lost across England since 2010.

The Government had given enormous power to bus companies to raise fares and slash routes and in many cases, some places had been cut off altogether. It was Stagecoach that were holding the public to ransom by cutting bus services and expecting the taxpayer to pick up the tab to keep the services going. There needed to be a new deal for busses and a fairer deal on funding. Other parts of the country saw £32 to £36 per person in northern regions compared to £16 in the eastern region for subsidised bus services. Furthermore, the bus service needed to be brought back into public transport and provide local authorities with a franchise arrangement that residents needed.

Councillor Thulbourn seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak later in the debate.

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

- It was heartwarming that a city councillor had an interest in rural bus services. It was the Combined Authority who held responsibility of overseeing bus services and it was hoped that the Labour Mayor would ensure that the rural services was fully funded. The bus services for Thorney and Eye were essential because of access for patients to use the doctor's surgery in Eye. Furthermore, concerns were raised about the minibus service, which needed funding. The first bus of day should stop in Eye to allow it to route from Thorney via Eye into Peterborough. The motion would be fully supported.
- The bus franchising of bus services to make improvements would be supported. The comments made on the loss of service between Eye and Thorney were fully supported. The CA was discussed recently and Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee, where questions were asked of the representative about the local bus plan, which covered rural and Wittering services.
- The Combined Authority Mayor was due to meet with Councillors about the bus services in Wittering. There were 100s of army forces personnel family members that were being told to walk 10 miles on the A1 to travel to their doctor's appointments and therefore the motion was fully supported.
- In order to encourage people out of their cars there needed to be an alternative provided to help people get out and about. Older, disabled and young people should be able to afford transport and it was essential that a good bus service was fit for purpose and a sustainable way to travel.
- A review as taking place and the way forward was to explore the option of a franchise bus service.
- The provision of a good bus service came down to money. There needed to be deregulation to allow smaller companies to come into the market and offer solutions. The jury was out on whether an improved bus service would operate on an enhanced partnerships or franchising arrangement. When the grant funding runs out, it would make the service £8m short. There were bus services operating at £124 and £74 per passenger. There was no such thing as a fit for purpose on bus services unless taxpayers were prepared to pay for it. Peterborough gave a precept of £3m to the CA for the bus service and this had not been enough to meet the full costs involved, and it was anticipated that the situation would get worse. The number 36 bus lost £14k per month which was why it had to be decommissioned. There had only been seven passengers using the bus daily and therefore it was not cost effective as it would cost £100 per journey.
- There was a big transport issue for all rural communities, and it was recognised how vital they were. A precept was worked out on £12 for a band b property towards the CA and a proactive strategy was being worked on.
- The meeting held in the Mayor's parlour in 2022 in relation to the price increased to £8 per person was intended to ask residents exactly what their issues were with rural transport.

As seconder of the motion Councillor Thulbourn advised that it was appreciated that money was being lost over the delivery of bus services. However, buses were as part of the infrastructure as broadband and highways. Furthermore, 50% of the staff that used the number 36 bus, which was felt to far outweigh the lost revenue. The motion would place buses as part of the infrastructure and therefore should be supported.

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

The latest decision to cut the 36 bus route on 30 July that links Thorney, Eye and Peterborough on commercial grounds.

Scrapping the 36 would mean that there was no direct bus link between Thorney and Eye. This was particularly important for Thorney residents who need to travel for Doctor's appointments. The 36 also provides a link between Eye and Peterborough city centre.

This was just the latest cut to bus routes affecting residents in Peterborough and the villages. In October 2022, Stagecoach East stopped running buses on 18 bus routes and used fewer buses on five more.

The Combined Authority stepped in to subsidise these routes with an expected cost of £3.5 million in the financial year to March 2024.

The government only spend £16 per person on public transport in our area. They spent £32 per person in Yorkshire and £36 per person in East Midlands.

That current deregulated bus rules do not allow local control over bus routes or the ability the cross subsidise routes across a network to maintain services.

This council believes:

Buses were particularly important to our region even for people who do not use them. Buses help other people get to their jobs, which helps our area to grow. For every £1 we spend on buses, it helps the region grow by about £7. Buses were also especially important for the environment.

We need a level playing field for bus funding between Peterborough and Cambridgeshire, and other parts of the country. Whilst a solution was required to save a direct bus service between Thorney and Eye, it was not sustainable for the taxpayer to pick up the bill every time a commercial provider threatens to withdraw a service.

Residents and the city would be better served by a franchised bus network that allowed local input into services and a wider network across the area.

41. Reports to Council

41(a) Report of the Peterborough City Council Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel

Council received a report in relation to the Peterborough City Council Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

Councillor Allen seconded the recommendation and reserved his right to speak later in the debate.

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

- Questions were asked as to whether the Council was still at risk of statutory

- intervention and what risks remained, including how those were to be tackled.
- Assurances were sought that good quality decision making would not be affected and that the focus would be on delivering the key priorities for the city moving forward.
 - Members of the Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel were not in attendance, however it was understood that panel members were watching the meeting online.
 - There were questions raised with regards to the status of Opportunity Peterborough and whether the company was now dormant. There had been a recent ask the leader session whereby the leader stated that he was not a director of the company. There were also questions raised over the funding from Opportunity Peterborough with regards to sponsoring a table at a the recent LGC awards ceremony.

Councillor Steve Allen confirmed that he had nothing further to adding in seconding the recommendations.

As mover of the recommendation, Councillor Fitzgerald summed up, stating that although he and other cabinet members were directors on Opportunity Peterborough it was his understanding that Opportunity Peterborough was now in effect dormant. Although even if still a director it was merely to keep the company going at the current time. It was not clear who the other directors of the company were, but that it was no longer trading. There was always a risk of further statutory intervention. Both the Independent Panel and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) had been assured that there was stability within the Council; and that there had been greater collaboration between parties. The Financial Sustainability Working Group had allowed parties to work together in achieving a balanced budget and enabling greater cross party working. The administration had set out its agenda and that had not changed. It was important that all members continued talking and working together.

At this point in the meeting the Mayor agreed to allow the Chief Executive to address Full Council on some of the key points. It was also mentioned that the report would be presented to the Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet for comments.

The Chief Executive commented that the risk of intervention was significantly less than when the Independent Panel first started. There were still several financial pressures including around children's services. The third report gave a number of useful pointers in the Council's continuing journey to sustainability, especially around governance and the Council's companies. There were several positives in terms of how the Council had worked in a more collaborative way, in addition there had been a change in culture across the Council. begun redesigning its services. It was stressed that there was still a lot of work to do in order for the Council to transform itself going forward.

In response to a point of accuracy from Councillor Hiller, the Leader explained that the financing of Opportunity Peterborough was now part of the Council's internal budget. It had no staff and was a Council operation and therefore he did not have to declare an interest for the recent awards ceremony as this was work being done on behalf of the Council. It was advised that Opportunity Peterborough was not trading and staff had moved across onto the Council's payroll.

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

1. Request the Cabinet to consider this report and respond with the action it wishes to take, including on the following issues:
 - Completing the audit and sign off of all outstanding annual accounts in this financial year,
 - Planning for the permanent recruitment to the S151 role,
 - Continuing to invest in the work of the Portfolio Boards,
 - Considering the approach to the disposal of assets,
 - Developing and approving a Commercial Strategy to strengthen the work of the Shareholder Committee and align with best practice, Completing an Asset Management Plan and a Corporate Landlord approach,
 - Considering replacement of the building compliance IT system,
 - Reconsidering the proposal to move to all out elections,
 - Facilitating handover between the outgoing and incoming Audit Committee chairs.
2. Request the Growth, Resources, and Communities Scrutiny Committee to review this report, the Cabinet's response to it and the progress being made with the delivery of the Improvement Plan.

41(b) Notification of Changes to the Leader's Scheme of Delegations

Council received a report in relation to Changes to the Leader's Scheme of Delegations

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation as set out in the report.

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

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.

41(c) Revised Political Proportionality and Committee Seat Allocation

Council received a report in relation to Revised Political Proportionality and Committee Seat Allocation

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation as set out in the report.

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

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

1. Agree the allocation of seats on committees subject to political balance arrangements.
2. Revise the following appointments to the Fire Authority for the 2023/2024 municipal year:
 - a. Appoint four members to the Fire Authority and four substitute members from the same political parties as those appointed.

41(d) Establishment of an Independent Panel

Council received a report in relation to Establishment of an Independent Panel

Councillor Coles moved the recommendation and advised that Full Council was being asked to approve the formation of the panel, its terms of reference and the updates to the Council's constitution. An updated version of the report was to be found in the additional information pack. This panel was required under the Local Government Act (Standing Orders) England Regulations 2001 and amended in 2015. It was necessary for the Council to establish a panel in order to consider and advise the Council on the dismissal of any of the Council's statutory officers, this being the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer. The final decision maker in terms of dismissing a statutory officer remained with Full Council.

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

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (52 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention) to:

1. Approve the establishment of an Independent Panel.
2. Approve the terms of reference as set out in Appendix 1, for inclusion in the constitution.
3. Approve the subsequent changes to the constitution as set out in paragraph 2.3.

The Mayor
6.00pm –9:53pm
26 July 2023