

FULL COUNCIL 24 JANUARY 2024 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Questions were received under the following categories:

<u>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</u>	
<u>Questions from members of the public</u>	
1.	<p>Question from Ed Murphy (1)</p> <p>Councillor John Howard - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Finance</p> <p>In 2017 Council agreed a loan to finance the building of Fletton Quay. How much in total has it cost Council to facilitate and borrow to finance the £14.7 million lent and were the requirements of Peterborough City Council's fair tax declaration mark complied with at all stages?</p>
2.	<p>Question from Ed Murphy (2)</p> <p>Councillor John Howard - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Finance</p> <p>Did council members or officers seek an opinion from or discuss with the external review panel the £50 million loan it agreed to take out earlier this financial year and since then how much have the administration saved following the change of leadership from the reduction in expenditure on cabinet members and advisors allowances and how much would this be over the medium term financial plan?</p>

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 Steve Allen (2)

Councillor Elsey, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change

Regretfully it increasingly feels that our country is not unfairly described as Dirty Britain.

However driving along our Parkways and A roads, and sadly also the lanes and farm gateways in the rural areas of this Authority there are many miles of litter together with alarming amounts of fly tipping; Plastic bags, metal cans, fast food trash, DIY rubble, discarded tyres, miscellaneous debris and garden waste; baby strollers, old hairdryers, and a comprehensive panoply of white goods.

Certain urban areas of our City are far from immune, and I am sure Councillors in this Chamber will readily agree that the challenge of keeping any degree of Civic pride at many locations is seemingly out of the control of the Authority and out of the capacity the City Council to resolve the issue.

We must be forever grateful for the unswerving commitment and selfless dedication of the group of volunteers known to us all as The Peterborough Litter Wombles. This group turn out in all weathers to give their time to the thankless task of keeping our streets cleaner, and somewhat tidier: and have now even ventured out to clearing at the side of the A Roads and Parkways.

It is at these locations that we should not underestimate the risks of working alongside fast moving traffic, without road management plans and road closures in place.

This is clearly a very dangerous further development of what is expected from volunteers. (Indeed it's interesting to note that the group have now acknowledged on their Website that their public liability insurance is not valid when working on roads where the speed limit is above 30mph).

Can I ask the Cabinet Member:

Are we as a responsible authority not able to better fulfil the task of keeping our roadway verges clear of litter and debris, and are we not able to ensure that contractors take with them redundant signs and frames when the work they have undertaken is completed; by fines and prosecutions if necessary?

	<p>If these arrangements are adopted it would allow the Volunteers and Wombles to concentrate on the City Streets and Green spaces without endangering themselves, uninsured, by the side of fast moving highways.</p>
2.	<p>Question from Councillor Day</p> <p>Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Housing, Growth and Regeneration.</p> <p>The Regional Pool (which is now closed) clearly needed some maintenance work 10 years ago. Why did this not happen and why hasn't funding been ringfenced for a new pool?</p>
3.	<p>Question from Councillor Wiggin (1)</p> <p>Councillor John Howard, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Finance</p> <p>The former Woolworths building was purchased for over £4m by the previous Conservative administration while recklessly chasing Towns Fund money being offered by central government. Now the Vines project is no longer destined to be homed in that building and it is now a white elephant in our high street, can the relevant cabinet member please outline the plan for its disposal and are we looking at making a profit or a loss from its sale?</p>
4.	<p>Question from Councillor Dennis Jones (2)</p> <p>Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Housing, Growth and Regeneration.</p> <p>Regional swimming pool was shut by the last Conservative administration many months ago. can the relevant cabinet member update us on the progress of the city's future swimming provisions?</p>
5.	<p>Question from Councillor Christian Hogg (1)</p> <p>Councillor John Howard, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Finance</p> <p>I believe the Hilton Gardens Hotel development has recently been valued at around £6.5m can the Cabinet Member for Resources please confirm if this is the case and outline how Peterborough City Council is going to recover not just the money loaned but also the interest paid on that money by the council which I believe is around £17m.</p>
6.	<p>Question from Councillor Wiggin (2)</p> <p>Councillor John Howard, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Finance</p> <p>Can the relevant cabinet member please inform council what plans if any it has for the gravel car park at the front of the London Road site, retained by the council for sale to developers for use as affordable city centre carbon zero housing (as announced at the time of sale) given that it has recently leased this car park to the football club?</p>

7.	<p>Question from Councillor Julie Stevenson (2)</p> <p>Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Housing, Growth and Regeneration</p> <p>The city council has secured funding for three Changing Places toilets that will be fully accessible to city's older and disabled people (in particular). One of these will be in Ferry Meadows and another is planned for the Cathedral Precincts. There is a strict deadline (end of April 2024) by which the money must be spent. Please would the cabinet member tell us where the third Changing Places toilet will be and provide reassurance that this funding will not be lost.</p>
8.	<p>Question from Councillor Jackie Allen</p> <p>Councillor Saqib Farooq, Cabinet Member for Adults and Health and/or Councillor Bisby, Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>MMR Vaccination (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella) is a two dose vaccination given at 1 year & 3 years, 4 months. Vaccination in Peterborough has been concerning for some time. Uptake for the MMR Vaccination against the latest published data July-September 2023 shows 1st Vaccination (MMR 1) by age 2 has an uptake of 83.8 % and 2nd Vaccination (MMR 2) by age 5 has an uptake of 78%.</p> <p>An effective vaccine requires two doses with a target uptake of 95% to eliminate/eradicate diseases preventable by immunisation so unsurprisingly Measles is on the rise and 1 in 5 children will be hospitalised, some with serious complications and even death.</p> <p>The West Midlands is experiencing a huge increase in confirmed cases of measles and Schools are being advised that any child who comes into contact with a case and has not had at least one dose of the MMR Vaccine should be excluded for 21 days to protect others.</p> <p>Real financial hardship will be the experience of families forced to isolate if Peterborough follows the path of the West Midlands not to mention the stress of watching loved ones suffer.</p> <p>Given that Peterborough is well below the national average on the MMR Vaccine, please can you give a clear and concise proposal on how this council and its partner agencies can work with Public Health & NHS to increase the uptake of the MMR vaccination with a sustained campaign that targets any inequality in vaccine uptake and measures the campaigns effectiveness.</p>
9.	<p>Question from Councillor Steve Allen (1)</p> <p>Councillor Howard, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Finance</p> <p>It has been widely reported in the media that many of our neighbouring local authorities have made a decision to ban meat and dairy products from council catering arrangements.</p>

	<p>Can I ask for an assurance from the current administration that this council will not take that route and we will continue to provide choice, avoid being overly prescriptive with how we cater for those attending meetings and events, and using our venues, and allow customers and consumers to make their own informed choices as adults.</p>
10.	<p>Question from Councillor Iqbal</p> <p>Councillor Howard, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Finance.</p> <p>Once Empower failed to pay council £23m loan (loaned by last conservative administration) the company was brought in house. How much income is it bringing into the council currently?</p>
11.	<p>Question from Councillor Christian Hogg (2)</p> <p>Councillor Gavin Elsey, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change</p> <p>It has been noticed that many streetlights are not functioning, can the relevant cabinet member please inform us how many streetlights are currently not working and how many of those have been out of service for more than a year?</p>
12.	<p>Question from Councillor Coles</p> <p>Councillor Mohammed Farooq, Leader of the Council</p> <p>I was intrigued to read recently in the Hampton Gazette under the headline " A better future for us all", you stated, and I quote, "We have found many examples of poor financial decision making by the former Conservative administration which has wasted millions of pounds". You go on to say this has led to our property team considering the disposal of council owned properties to balance the books. You also criticise past investments by the council such as in the Hilton Hotel development and in solar energy investment.</p> <p>I'm always keen to learn, so could I ask you to detail the poor financial decisions I was responsible for, or that our former council leader Councillor Fitzgerald was responsible for that led to your statement?"</p>
13.	<p>Question from Councillor Thulbourn</p> <p>Councillor Howard, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Finance.</p> <p>The Posh football ground was bought by the last Conservative administration for £8m and sold for £3m (incurring a loss of £5m to taxpayers) How much of the £3m has been paid to PCC?</p>
14.	<p>Question from Councillor Julie Stevenson (1)</p>

	<p>Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Housing, Growth and Regeneration</p> <p>There is disquiet and concern among Peterborough's disability groups, representatives, champions and disabled people that those responsible for producing plans for the new Station Quarter are not taking the needs of older and disabled people and people with long term conditions as seriously as they should. Initial drawings that have been released to the public seem to imagine a public realm where only the physically fit can participate. This is a recipe for social isolation for a very large section of our society. Please would the cabinet member confirm which consultancies with disability access expertise have been involved in the development of the plans for a fully accessible Station Quarter and what their design-for-all credentials are.</p>
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	<p><u>Questions on notice to:</u></p> <p>The Combined Authority Representatives:</p>
	<p>There were none.</p>