

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL held at the Guildhall
Portsmouth on Tuesday, 14 March 2023 at 2.00 pm

Council Members Present

The Right Worshipful The Lord Mayor
Councillor Hugh Mason (in the Chair)

Councillors

Yinka Adeniran	Brian Madgwick
Matthew Atkins	George Madgwick
Kimberly Barrett	Lee Mason
Simon Bosher	Kirsty Mellor
Ryan Brent	Robert New
Stuart Brown	Scott Payter-Harris
Tom Coles	Steve Pitt
Cal Corkery	Darren Sanders
Jason Fazackarley	Asghar Shah
George Fielding	Russell Simpson
Charlotte Gerada	John Smith
Lewis Gosling	Judith Smyth
Graham Heaney	Lynne Stagg
Ian Holder	Benedict Swann
Suzy Horton	Linda Symes
Mark Jeffery	Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE
Abdul Kadir	Daniel Wemyss
Leo Madden	Matthew Winnington

12. Declaration of Members' Interests

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
Cllr Mark Jeffery	33	Personal, non prejudicial interest as an employee of Portsmouth Water. Cllr Jeffery left the room for the debate and voting on this item.
Cllr Tom Coles	35	Personal, as his eldest daughter had attended a few young carers days out.

13. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of 28 February 2023

It was

Proposed by Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson
Seconded by Councillor Simon Boshier

That the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 28 February 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

These were agreed by assent.

14. To receive such communications as the Lord Mayor may desire to lay before the Council, including apologies for absence

The Lord Mayor advised that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Dave Ashmore, Councillor Chris Attwell, Councillor Lee Hunt and Councillor Gemma New.

Apologies for lateness had been received from Councillor Ryan Brent and Councillor Terry Norton.

The Lord Mayor took the opportunity to remind Council that he and the Lady Mayoress would be supporting St Mary's Church, Fratton, annual project and encouraged members to donate Easter Eggs to this worthy cause.

At the invitation of the Lord Mayor, the Leader of the Council provided an update from Cabinet on the results of the Household Waste Recycling Centre booking system - Port Solent resident survey. Whilst this report had been for Cabinet to note, it had arisen from a motion to Full Council in December 2022. As a matter of courtesy, Cabinet believed it appropriate for Council to be updated on the matter.

15. Deputations from the Public under Standing Order No 24.

The City Solicitor advised that two oral deputation requests had been received for this meeting.

The first was from Mr Cummings and was in support of Notice of Motion 18c titled 'Extending Safe Places for People in Portsmouth'.

The second was from Ms Snaith on behalf of 'Stop the Sewage Southsea' and was in support of Notice of Motion 18d titled 'Southern Water'.

At the invitation of the City Solicitor, Mr Cummings and Ms Snaith made their deputations to Council.

16. Questions from the Public under Standing Order 25.

The Lord Mayor advised that no questions from the public had been received under the provisions of this Standing Order.

17. Appointments

The Lord Mayor advised that there were no appointments to be made at this meeting.

18. Urgent Business - To receive and consider any urgent and important business from Members of the Cabinet in accordance with Standing Order No 26.

The Lord Mayor advised that there was one item of urgent business to be considered at this meeting, which had been put forward by Councillor Steve Pitt.

The item was the Civic Offices Regeneration report which had been considered by Cabinet on 7 March 2023. As the report had arisen from a Notice of Motion agreed by Council on 19 July 2022, Cabinet had requested that the update report also be noted by Council.

As the report was for information only, under Standing Order 26 the Cabinet Member spoke for six minutes.

19. Contract Procedure Rules

Council Agenda Item 8 (Governance & Audit & Standards Committee minute 4)

The recommendations within this report were approved unopposed.

It was therefore RESOLVED that:

Full Council approved those revised CPRs, as amended at the request of the Governance & Audit & Standards Committee to include amended and/or additional wording in paragraphs 10, 12 and 34 to provide a greater emphasis on outcomes, as an amendment to Part 3A of the Council's Constitution, to be fully implemented and take effect from 1 July 2023.

20. Capital Strategy 2023/24 - 2032/33

Council Agenda Item 9 (Cabinet minute 23)

The recommendations within this report were approved unopposed.

It was therefore RESOLVED

(i) That Part I of the Capital Strategy (Capital Expenditure and Aspirations) be approved including:

a) The Short / Medium / Long-term Aspirations set out in Appendix 1.

- (ii) **That Part II of the Capital Strategy (Borrowing and Investing) be approved including:**
 - a) **The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) for Debt Repayment Policy (Part II, (paragraph 2.5)**
 - b) **The investment indicators in Part II - Appendix 2 (Part II, paragraph 3.5)**
 - c) **That the Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer) will bring a report to the next Cabinet and City Council if (Part II, paragraph 3.5):**
 - (i) **The Council's gross General Fund (GF) debt exceeds 500% of GF net service expenditure or;**
 - (ii) **Overall investment income and long term treasury management investments exceeds 15.4% of GF net service expenditure.**

21. Treasury Management Policy 2023/24

Council Agenda Item 10 (Cabinet minute 24)

The recommendations within this report were approved unopposed.

It was therefore RESOLVED:

- 1. That the upper limit for principal sums invested for longer than 365 days contained in paragraph 4.6 of the attached Treasury Management Policy Statement be approved;**
- 2. That the upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of borrowing contained in appendix 5.1 of the attached Treasury Management Policy Statement be approved;**
- 3. That the attached Treasury Management Policy Statement including the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy for 2023/24 be approved;**
- 4. That the following changes compared to the previous Treasury Management Policy be noted:**
 - (i) **the inclusion of a new treasury management indicator for 2023/24 known as the liability benchmark. This graphically compares the Council's net loans requirement against its existing loan debt, showing the amount of borrowing required in future years.**
 - (ii) **medium and longer dated borrowing rates are high, but are expected to fall from their current levels once prevailing inflation concerns are addressed by tighter near-term monetary policy. With this in mind, the Council is currently**

maintaining an under-borrowed position. This means that the capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement) has not been fully drawn with loan debt as cash from the Authority's reserves, balances and cash flows has been used as a temporary measure. This is a change of emphasis from the 2022/23 Treasury Management Strategy which was approved at a time of low interest rates which were expected to increase. The 2022/23 Treasury Management Strategy placed more emphasis on having a predictable revenue cost of borrowing in the long-term. Against this background and the risks within the economic forecast, caution will be adopted with the 2023/24 treasury operations. The Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer) will monitor interest rates in financial markets and adopt a pragmatic approach to changing circumstances, always seeking to balance risk, certainty and cost.

- (iii) where state institutions own 50% or more of an entity and can exert significant influence over the counterparty through their shareholdings, the Council will in future avoid investments in such institutions where the state institution has a poor human rights record.**
- 5. As set out in paragraph 1.5 of the Treasury Management Policy Statement, the Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer) and officers nominated by him have delegated authority to:**
- (i) invest surplus funds in accordance with the approved Annual Investment Strategy;**
 - (ii) borrow to finance short term cash deficits and capital payments from any reputable source within the authorised limit for external debt of £1,100m approved by the City Council on 28 February 2023;**
 - (iii) reschedule debt to even the maturity profile or to achieve revenue savings;**
 - (iv) to buy and sell foreign currency, and to purchase hedging instruments including forward purchases, forward options, and foreign exchange rate swaps to mitigate the foreign exchange risks associated with some contracts that are either priced in foreign currencies or where the price is indexed against foreign currency exchange rates**
- 6. That the Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer) has the power to delegate treasury management operations to relevant staff;**

7. **That the Chief Executive, the Leader of the City Council and the Chair of the Governance and Audit and Standards Committee be informed of any variances from the Treasury Management Policy when they become apparent, and that the Leader of the City Council be consulted on remedial action (paragraph 1.2 of the Treasury Management Policy Statement).**

22. Council Tax Premiums on Second Homes and Empty Properties

Council Agenda Item 11 (Cabinet minute 26)

The recommendations within this report were approved unopposed.

It was therefore RESOLVED that:

Full Council declares its intention to implement and approve the following additional council tax premiums, to be applied from 01 April 2024, or as soon as possible thereafter, subject to the legislation being in place:

i) A 100% premium for second homes;

ii) A 100% premium for properties that have been empty and unfurnished for a period between 1 and 5 years - this will change the current policy of charging a 100% premium where a property is empty and unfurnished for a period between 2 and 5 years.

23. Anaerobic Digestion Plant Project

Council Agenda Item 12 (Cabinet Minute 20)

RESOLVED that Council NOTED the update report.

24. Forward Plan Omission Notice - Enabling Redevelopment of Former Debenhams, Palmerston Road - Compulsory Purchase Order

The Lord Mayor advised that the agenda item 'Enabling Redevelopment of Former Debenhams Palmerston Road - Compulsory Purchase Order' at minute 26, to which this item related, had been withdrawn from the agenda.

Consequently, this item and the following related item 'Exclusion of Press and Public' did not need to be considered.

25. Exclusion of Press and Public

As per minute 24, this item was not considered.

26. Enabling Redevelopment of Former Debenhams Palmerston Road - CPO

As per minute 24, this item was not considered.

27. Appointment of Independent Person

Council Agenda Item 16 (Governance & Audit & Standards Committee minute 19)

The recommendations within this report were approved unopposed.

It was therefore RESOLVED that

- (i) **the Council re-appoint Mr John Young as Independent Person for a further three years from 1 May 2023 through to 30 April 2026; and**
- (ii) **following the Local Elections May 2023, that a new Independent Person is sought to fill the vacant position.**

28. Pay Policy Statement 2023/24

Council Agenda Item 17 (Employment Committee Minute 8)

The recommendation within this report was approved unopposed.

RESOLVED that Full Council APPROVED the Pay Policy Statement attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

29. Notices of Motion

30. Tesco Supermarkets - Removal of Recycling Facilities

It was

Proposed by Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson
Seconded by Councillor George Madgwick

That notice of motion (a) as set out on the agenda be adopted.

Following debate and upon being put to a vote the motion standing in the name of Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson was declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore RESOLVED that:

The city council regrets the decision by Tesco supermarkets to remove recycling facilities from their large Fratton and Port Solent Stores.

Supermarkets sell huge amounts of products in packaging that can be recycled. Supermarkets should be doing more to cut down on packaging and waste, instead they have removed facilities to allow local residents to recycle at their stores.

The city council regrets the actions of Tesco who seem to be putting company profits before care for the environment and asks Tesco to bring back recycling centres in their Portsmouth stores.

31. Neighbourhood Policing Matters

In accordance Standing Order 33, the Lord Mayor announced that in this notice of motion would not be considered. This was due to the proposer, Councillor Lee Hunt, not being present at the meeting.

32. Extending Safe Spaces for People in Portsmouth

It was

Proposed by Councillor Charlotte Gerada
Seconded by Councillor Suzy Horton

That notice of motion (c) as set out on the agenda be adopted.

Following debate and upon being put to a vote, the motion standing in the name of Councillor Charlotte Gerada was declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore RESOLVED that:

Evidence suggests that Portsmouth is generally a safe city for young people. However, we know that recorded crime, actual crime, and fear of crime are different. The fear of crime can make areas that should feel safe and accessible, inaccessible.

Some parents and young people have told us they worry about issues like drugs, County Lines and antisocial behaviour and their fear of these crimes makes them feel unsafe in some public places. There are also additional concerns and vulnerabilities based on protected characteristics.

Portsmouth City Council has responsibility to improve safety and life chances among young people. These include:

The 'Is This Love' campaign to raise awareness about healthy and unhealthy relationships;

Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) which is a peer-led leadership and bystander programme that trains young people as mentors and equips them with the confidence, knowledge, and skills to identify and speak out against bullying, abusive behaviour and violence;

Two additional posts in the Edge of Care team to support young women and girls at risk of exploitation and those absent from school;

Portsmouth City Council having strong partnership arrangements including with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to reduce the risks of violent crime in the city and Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Southampton Safeguarding partnerships to reduce risks of exploitation to young people;

Developing restorative approaches in schools;

Developing a youth strategy and adolescent board to improve the council's response to adolescents who may feel at risk;

Working closely as a council with youth organisations and charities.

Portsmouth City Council has a network of safe spaces for young people across the city, including schools, police stations, the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, youth centres, play centres and via outreach projects.

Full Council believes:

Everyone has a right to feel safe in Portsmouth, no matter their background, age, ability or location in the city.

Portsmouth City Council must do all it can to work with partners to improve public safety, tackle crime and give every person the best possible chance of not just surviving, but thriving in Portsmouth.

All citizens and sectors in Portsmouth can and should play a role in keeping young people safe, using appropriate collective spaces and willpower to improve public safety.

Full Council resolves:

- (i) To encourage all councillors to promote the existing Portsmouth City Council services, including youth centres, which aim to keep Portsmouth's young people safe and to ensure Portsmouth City Council is proactively promoting such services. This includes Portsmouth City Council updating its website on all live projects;**

- (ii) **To request that Portsmouth City Council supports schools to speak to young people in age appropriate ways about keeping safe when out in the community;**
- (iii) **To invite Portsmouth City Council to review its existing schemes to increase public safety for young people and explore if further improvements can be made;**
- (iv) **To request that relevant external partnership bodies ensure they are meeting their obligations and responsibilities in improving young people's safety in Portsmouth, such as through the Police and Crime Panel; and**
- (v) **For Portsmouth City Council to endeavour to engage local young people in the development of any new programmes about young people's safety, including with Portsmouth's Youth Cabinet, the Council of Portsmouth Students and the Primary Council of Portsmouth Students.**

33. Southern Water

It was

Proposed by Councillor Kimberly Barrett
Seconded by Councillor Abdul Kadir

That notice of motion (d) as set out on the agenda be adopted.

As an amendment it was

Proposed by Councillor Graham Heaney
Seconded by Councillor Charlotte Gerada

That after paragraph (iv) add a new paragraph (v) and renumber the subsequent paragraph.

- (v) That Southern Water disclose what they propose to do to neutralise or remove chemicals and pharmaceuticals from sewage before wastewater is recycled or discharged.

Following debate, the proposer of the original motion, Councillor Kimberly Barrett agreed to subsume the amendment put by Councillor Graham Heaney into the motion.

Upon being put to a vote, the substantive notice of motion incorporating the amendment in the name of Councillor Graham Heaney was declared
CARRIED

It was therefore RESOLVED that:

'Sewage dumping into our waterways damages an already delicate ecosystem that we rely on as a coastal city. The consequence these

discharges have affect our resident's health and wellbeing, can damage environmental habitats, and harm species all whilst being detrimental to our tourism industry.

Full Council has debated motions in 2019 and 2021 regarding the harmful discharges Southern Water have pumped out into Langstone Harbour. There have been many actions taken forward by the leader of the Council, group leaders, members and the 2 MPs for Portsmouth however, many residents feel that not much notice has been taken by the company and therefore, not much change has happened. Discharges are still occurring, and a recent report jointly undertaken by both Portsmouth University and Brunel University show that drugs such as antidepressants, antibiotics and cocaine are now being detected in animals in the harbour environment. A citizen led project by the clean harbour's partnership called 'Project Spotlight' has been set up to take water samples from the harbour and look at the creatures in this environment to see how those discharges and chemical cocktails are influencing them.

Several organisations have been working to highlight these issues and this council wishes to thank those who have done so including the Stop the Sewage - Southsea group and the Hayling Sewage Watch group. Due to groups such as these, real time signs have been installed at points along Portsmouth Seafront and water testing is also occurring. This is also due to the Council working in partnership with neighbouring councils and the Langstone Harbour Board.

Back in 2021, 750 hours of raw sewage was pumped out of the outflow pipe into Langstone Harbour. So far this year, 305 hours of confirmed sewage discharges have already been sent out into the harbour from Budds Farm. Southern Water was fined £90m due to this in 2021 and in 2022, they were fined a further £28.3m and forced to reduce customer bills.

Consequently, Full Council acknowledges that we are disturbed that discharges continue to happen to this day and continue to happen for significant lengths of time.

The council also acknowledges that funding by the Environmental Agency has been cut almost in half in the last decade. The number of water samples taken has also fallen by 51% and there has been a 94% drop in prosecutions against water companies who continue to illegally discharge affluent into our waters.

Therefore, Full Council asks:

- (i) that Southern Water pay for electronic signs on the seafront to notify bathers if there have been any recent discharges so that individuals can take the decision on whether they wish to swim in the sea and also reimburse any money spent by this council on the signs already put up.**

- (ii) That Southern Water also pay for a live update E.coli buoy to be stationed at Southsea beach like the one recently installed at Hayling Island**
- (iii) To ask that Southern Water supports the efforts of the Langstone Harbour Board, Portsmouth City Council and Havant Borough Council to find solutions jointly and therefore, pay for regular water testing to see what effect their discharges are having on our marine environment and to meet with all 3 parties to discuss these issues.**
- (iv) That Southern Water meet with the Council to discuss their plans going forward for any improvements to Budds Farm and the sewage infrastructure across the city.**
- (v) That Southern Water disclose what they propose to do to neutralise or remove chemicals and pharmaceuticals from sewage before wastewater is recycled or discharged**
- (vi) To ask Southern Water to discuss with all members the plans for the proposed wastewater recycling for our drinking water and to ask them to have public events so that the public can have a chance to look at these plans and make an informed decision as part of their consultation. This means that the deadline of the 20th February should also be extended.**

Full Council also requests:

- (i) That group leaders sign a letter written by the Council leader to be sent to the Prime Minister, Therese Coffey MP (Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), Lord Benyon and Mark Spencer (Minister of State for DEFRA) to remind them of the environmental destruction and ongoing health concerns that these discharges cause. To request they to publicly condemn the water companies who are causing these discharges and to reiterate that a timescale has been requested to end these discharges occurring in our marine environment as quickly as possible and**
- (ii) For the Chief Executive to write a letter to the Environment Agency asking them to continue acting against those who illegally discharge sewage into our waterways. To ask them to lobby the government for further funding to allow for more water sampling to occur, for more investigations of suggested illegal dumping to occur and therefore, more prosecutions being able to happen.**

34. Stop The Knock: local authority debt collection practices

It was

Proposed by Councillor Cal Corkery
Seconded by Councillor Kirsty Mellor

That notice of motion (e) as set out on the agenda be adopted.

As an amendment it was

Proposed by Councillor Darren Sanders
Seconded by Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson

that

1. In recommendation (iii), replace the first word 'Adopt' with 'Consider';
and
2. In recommendation (vi), replace the first word 'Sign' with 'Consider signing'

Following debate, the proposer of the original motion, Councillor Cal Corkery agreed to subsume the amendment put by Councillor Darren Sanders into the motion.

Upon being put to a vote the substantive notice of motion incorporating the amendment in the name of Councillor Darren Sanders was declared
CARRIED

It was therefore RESOLVED that:

Too many Portsmouth households live in constant fear of bailiffs knocking their door. The poorest and most vulnerable suffer disproportionately from debt issues and the local authority should not be actively adding to their woes.

One in two adults with debts has a mental health problem. One in four people with a mental health problem is also in debt. Debt can cause - and be caused by - mental health problems.

Those on the lowest incomes in our city used to be eligible for Council Tax Support for up to 100% of their liability. However this level of support was cut in 2016 so now even the poorest have to pay at least 20% of their total Council Tax bill.

Despite their public service remit, local authorities have some of the most stringent debt collection practices of all creditors. Debts owed to councils often end up in court and Council Tax is the only debt where a debtor can be sentenced to a custodial sentence for non-payment.

In 2018/19, Portsmouth City Council instructed bailiffs to collect debts from individuals and businesses on 17,534 occasions - an increase of 77% since 2016/17. Of these bailiff referrals 6,011 related to Council Tax debts.

There is divergence between local authorities regarding how affordability is assessed and appropriate repayment plans calculated. The Standard Financial Statement (SFS), produced by the Money and Pensions Service, provides a consistent, fair and industry-recognised method of working out affordable repayments, for residents in financial difficulty.

Full Council supports the Money Advice Trust's campaign 'Stop The Knock' and calls on Cabinet to:

- (i) Make a clear public commitment to reduce the council's use of bailiffs over time;**
- (ii) Review the council's signposting to free debt advice, including phone/online channels;**
- (iii) Consider the Standard Financial Statement (SFS) to objectively assess affordability;**
- (iv) Review the formal policy covering indebted residents in vulnerable circumstances;**
- (v) Consider following the example set by other local authorities by exempting Council Tax Support recipients from bailiff action; and**
- (vi) Consider signing the Citizens Advice/LGA 'Council Tax Protocol' and reviewing the authority's current practice against the Money and Pensions Service's 'Supportive Council Tax Recovery' Toolkit.**

35. Young Carers

It was

Proposed by Councillor Suzy Horton
Seconded by Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson

That notice of motion (f) as set out on the agenda be adopted.

Following debate and upon being put to a vote, the motion standing in the name of Councillor Suzy Horton was declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore RESOLVED that

Council notes:

- (i) Each year the Carers Trust organises Young Carers Action Day (YCAD) to raise public awareness of the challenges faced by young people because of their caring role, and to campaign for greater support for young people and young adult carers to meet their needs.
- (ii) Young Carers Action Day is 15 March 2023 and this year's theme is 'Make Time for Young Carers'
- (iii) Estimates suggest that as many as one in five schoolchildren could be young carers (University of Nottingham 2018), with this number increasing during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- (iv) Caring for someone can be very isolating, worrying, and stressful. For young and young adult carers, this can negatively impact on their experiences and outcomes in education, having a lasting effect on their life chances.
- (v) The work that Portsmouth City Council does to support our young carers, including:
 - The Education network meetings in all schools;
 - Learning and Development and Awareness raising;
 - Weekly support groups;
 - Holiday Activities;
 - 1-1 support; and
 - Participation in Young Carers Festival

Council resolves:

- (i) To commend the young and young adult carers in Portsmouth;
- (ii) To promote YCAD on an annual basis;
- (iii) To promote and work in partnership with local care organisations like the Carers Centre;
- (iv) To write to the Government calling on them to ensure that young carers are actively identified and provided with the support they need; and
- (v) To write to the local Members of Parliament and ask them to join the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers.

36. Questions from Members under Standing Order No 17.

Three questions from members had been received under Standing Order No 17.

The first question was from Councillor Asghar Shah.

"Several residents have raised concerns about not feeling adequately informed about the plans for the new football pitches and a pavilion at King George V Playing Fields. Can the cabinet member inform me what measures were to taken to inform residents and playing field users about the plans and what sort of consultation was carried out?"

This and supplementary questions were answered by the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure & Economic Development, Councillor Steve Pitt.

The second question was from Councillor Matthew Atkins.

"Despite promises to the contrary made by previous members of your administration, the city fireworks display in 2023 will not be held at KGV playing fields due to the new football centre development, will you guarantee that the firework display will return to KGV once the development is complete?"

This and supplementary questions were answered by the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure & Economic Development, Councillor Steve Pitt.

The third question was from Councillor Asghar Shah.

"Can the cabinet member please inform me why, despite the success of the Platinum Jubilee Big Lunch on King George V Playing Fields, no such event is planned for King Charles' coronation in the north of the city? If it isn't possible to hold more than one council coronation event, could the Victoria Park event be moved to King George V Playing Fields instead, as access, public transport and parking are ample there?"

In the absence of Councillor Chris Attwell, Cabinet Member for Communities & Central Services, the Lord Mayor advised that a written response would be circulated.

At the conclusion of the meeting the Lord Mayor thanked those Councillors who were standing down at the May 2023 elections for their excellent service to the Council.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Lord Mayor for his work during his term of office.

The meeting concluded at 5.27 pm.

Lord Mayor