

Councillor Chris Read – Leader of the Council

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25th January 2022

E.

Via email

Dear E,

Council Meeting – Wednesday 12th January 2022

Thank you for submitting a question to the Council Meeting on Wednesday 12th January. I have detailed the question below along with my subsequent response for your information.

“After seeing Lord Ahmed been found guilty, how are you as Leader of the Council going to make sure those in power never abuse children again?”

Firstly, I would like to say how pleased I am that this perpetrator of child sexual abuse has been brought to justice for his crimes and to pay tribute to his victims for their bravery in seeing this process through. They had clearly lived with the consequences of his abuse for a very long time.

I should note for the record that, as far as I understand it, these crimes took place long before Lord Ahmed held any kind of positions of power and influence. I hope that we can all take some comfort from the fact that even after so long a successful prosecution was possible; that perhaps reflects the progress that has been made in society over the last five decades, even if there is still an awfully long way to go.

I wish I had the ability to stop any adult in power or otherwise from ever abusing a child ever again, but I don't. What I can and will do is to continue to try to strengthen the safeguarding systems, to prioritise the council's resources to support families and protect children, and to raise awareness of child abuse in all its forms so that more people can play their part in keeping children safe.

I will continue to press the police, and through them where appropriate the Crown Prosecution Service, to bring the strong possible action against those who are suspected of abusing children, and to do so without fear or favour.

I will continue to speak up against cuts to the criminal justice system, to the police, and to local authorities, which is my view have all left more children at risk of abuse.

And where I can, I will continue to speak up against the cultural norms which enable men to feel entitled to control and abuse women and girls, or to act without consequence.

Across all these level: shifting cultures, strengthening protective systems, supporting better funding and challenging for effective public services, and prosecuting perpetrators whatever their background, all help to turn the tide against abusers. And in my role, I will do all that I can to play my part in doing so.

I hope this answers your question and you find my response helpful.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Chris Read
Leader of the Council