

Address by Jamie Clarke:

My name's Jamie, I live down the road. I'm a resident who shouldn't be here. I know a number of you, and I care about issues like transport and climate change. This is not something I normally get involved in, but my family (I've got three kids and my wife) we use the leisure services week in and week out. We support Fusion through the difficult times and, in the past through the good times, because we believe in public services. Because we believe in bringing leisure centres to be an affordable place in which people feel comfortable and able to enjoy their leisure time. My kids and I don't want to have the next ten years being dominated by Serco's incompetence and failures, as you've heard from Cat.

Last week I was so upset about it I thought someone's got to do something about it and I set up a petition. Within four days we've had over 800 signatures from local people, who look to you for their representation.

Serco has a terrible reputation. You don't want to be binging them into our leisure services. We're deeply worried about the ethics: you all know about them, I know you do. You've heard about some of them tonight. The fraud that they've been found guilty of. The misdemeanours. The constant problems. Do you really want to take that on board and be dealing with that for the next ten years? And it'll be on your watch. You might feel that you have no choice, but we're showing you that there is a choice and other councils have made the same. I notice that you're all Labour Party representatives: Rachel Reeves, just a couple of years ago when talking about the outsourcing of track and trace said "This is grim beyond belief. While Serco is raking in the profits, people are paying the price for its failure. It is time to sack Serco." Don't end up in that situation where you feel conflicted. It's got to be now or it won't ever happen.

After the revelations of the post office scandal where these contract processes were used to justify going through with something that fifteen years later we're all now knowing happened I would like to ask you to stand by the courage of your convictions: stand up now for my kids and their future, as well as the council and all the other residents who are going to be impacted by this. You can put a pause on this: I know it's not going to be easy but we will support you to make it happen. This is democracy: don't be blackmailed by a big multi-national.

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