

**PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD 15 JULY 2009**

**The Mayor – Councillor Irene Walsh**

**Present:**

Councillors, Ash, Benton, C Burton, M Burton, Cereste, Collins, M Dalton, S Dalton, C Day, D Day, S Day, Dobbs, Elsey, Fazal, Fitzgerald, Fletcher, Fower, JA Fox, JR Fox, Goldspink, Goodwin, Harrington, Hiller, Holdich, Khan, Kreling, Lane, Lee, Lowndes, Miners, Morley, Nash, Nawaz, Newton, North, Over, Peach, Saltmarsh, Sanders, Sandford, Scott, Seaton, Swift, Thacker, Todd, Trueman, Wilkinson and Winslade.

**MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allen, Croft, Hussain, Lamb, Murphy, Rush and Sharp.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

The Mayor informed those present that whilst all Members had an interest in agenda item 7 (iv) (a), Review of the Members' Allowances Scheme, there was a dispensation under paragraph 10 of the Members' Code of Conduct such that Members did not have a prejudicial interest in this item of business. It was therefore noted that a personal interest would be recorded for all Members of the Council in respect of this item.

There were no further declarations of interest.

**3. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD 25 FEBRUARY 2009**

Subject to amendment to references to the Municipal Year 2008/9, the Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held 18 May 2009 were agreed as an accurate record.

**4. COMMUNICATIONS TIME**

**4 (i) Mayor's Announcements**

The report outlining the Mayor's engagements for the period 30 March 2009 to 5 July 2009 was noted.

The Mayor drew Members' attention to the forthcoming parade through the City by the 158 (Royal Anglian) Transport Regiment Logistic Corps. As Freeman of the City, members of the regiment would be exercising their right to parade on Saturday 25 July 2009 and all elected Members were urged to attend.

Members were asked to note that auditions for 'Peterborough has Talent' were being held on 19 July 2009. Organisers of the event were seeking sponsorship, people to act as judges and a compere for the Children's Final and Members were asked to contact the Mayor's Office if they felt able to assist. The competition finals would be held on 5 September, the proceeds of which would be shared between the Papworth Trust and the Mayor's Charities and all Members were encouraged to attend.

Finally, the Mayor presented Councillor Charles Swift with a civic gift to mark the occasion of his fifty-five years' service as a ward Councillor for the North Ward of the City.

#### **4 (ii) Leader's Announcements**

The Leader informed those present that the City was one of six areas to benefit from the latest roll-out of the government's 'Building Schools for the Future' scheme. The funding would enable the complete refurbishment of Stanground College and the Orton Longueville Secondary School, with other secondary schools in the area benefiting from new infrastructure and ICT facilities.

The following questions were raised by Group Leaders:

- (i) Councillor Sandford sought assurance that all building works would be carried out to the highest environmental standards;
- (ii) Councillor Khan requested that the rebuilding/refurbishment plans ensured adequate space and facilities.

In response the Leader assured Members that building works would be carried out to the highest environmental standards and sufficient provision would be made in respect of space and facilities.

#### **4 (iii) Chief Executive's Announcements**

There were no announcements from the Chief Executive.

### **5. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TIME**

#### **5 (i) Questions with Notice by Members of the Public**

There were no questions submitted.

#### **5 (ii) Questions with Notice by Members of the Council relating to Ward Matters and to Committee Chairmen**

A question was asked in respect of the following:

- The current status and timescale for completion of works to replace two bus shelters and widen the bus lay-bys in Lincoln Road (opposite Morrison's supermarket).

#### **5 (iii) Questions with Notice by Members of the Council to representatives of the Police and Fire Authorities**

There were no questions submitted.

A summary of all questions and answers raised within agenda item 5 (i), (ii) and (iii) is attached at **Appendix A**.

## **5 (d) Petitions submitted by Members or Residents**

The following petitions were received:

- Petition for the removal of a wall in the communal area near numbers 39-49 Brookfurlong, Ravensthorpe;
- Petition to prevent the sale of the Crematorium;
- Petition against the proposal to erect a fence around the playing field next to Norwood School;
- Petition to install a play area for children in the vicinity of Allextion Gardens.

## **6. EXECUTIVE BUSINESS TIME**

### **6 (i) Questions with Notice to the Leader and Members of the Executive**

Questions were asked of the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members in respect of the following:

- The number of social workers employed by the Council and numbers currently on sick leave / suspended leave and mechanisms in place to avoid a tragedy such as the 'Baby P' case in the city;
- Revenue lost as a result of having a Traffic Management Officer on duty to operate an automatic barrier scheme;
- The number of offices allocated for the use of Cabinet Members, the additional square footage used (as opposed to previous arrangements) and the additional cost of such accommodation;
- The comparative costs of the new and old Cabinet and Committee structure, including the proposed Neighbourhood Councils, in terms of allowances paid to Members, support posts, time and other related costs / overheads;
- The plans in place to increase the number of secondary school and college places for students in light of the requirements for every 17 year old to be in education or training by 2013 and the extension of this requirement to 18 year olds by 2015;
- The conversion of gardens at the Great Northern Hotel to a car park;
- Consideration of measures to reduce the cost of producing the 'Your Peterborough' magazine;
- The road layout at the junction of the Fletton and Nene Parkways (Junction 3 A1139) and the potential for confusion associated with road markings and signage.

A summary of all questions and answers raised within agenda item 6 (i) is attached at **Appendix B**.

### **6 (ii) Questions without Notice on the Record of Executive Decisions**

Members received and noted a report summarising:

- The Council's call-in mechanism which had not been invoked since the last meeting;
- Special Urgency and waive of call-in provisions in relation to the decision relating to the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Plan 2009/10 for the National Treatment Agency;
- Cabinet Member Decisions taken during the period 30 March to 30 June 2009.

**Questions were asked about the following decisions:**

## **Members' Waste and Recycling Working Party**

Councillor Fower queried the legality of the decision relating to the Waste Strategy in light of the decision to disband the Members' Waste and Recycling Working Party.

The Leader undertook to provide a written response to Councillor Fower in order to fully clarify the position.

## **The sale of land and building known as Newark Court**

Councillor Fower queried why details of the amount the Council was seeking to raise from the sale was not made available.

Councillor Scott confirmed that she would provide a written response to Councillor Fower, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources.

## **7. COUNCIL BUSINESS TIME**

### **7 (i) Executive Recommendations**

There were no recommendations from the Executive.

### **7 (ii) Committee Recommendations**

There were no recommendations from Committees.

### **7 (iii) Notices of Motion**

The Mayor advised those present that Councillor Lee had suggested an amendment to the motion submitted by Councillor Fower (set out at paragraph 1, page 17 of the agenda book) and this had been agreed by Councillor Fower. Members' consented to submission of the amended motion as set out in the Order Papers.

#### **(a) Councillor Lee moved the following Motion:**

That this Council:

- (i) Agrees to publicise the salaries and expense claims of its Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Directors at the same time as the allowances and expense claims of elected Members are published;
- (ii) Continues to publicise details of Members' allowances and expense claims in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities Members' Allowances (England) Regulations 2003;
- (iii) Publicises the expenses and / or remuneration paid to any elected Member appointed on behalf of the Council to the Police and Fire Authorities. Publication to take place at the same time as each individual body publishes this detail;
- (iv) Publicises all information referred to above in 'Your Peterborough' magazine, the homepage of the Council's website, and as directed by the relevant regulations.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Fower.

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the following amendment to paragraph (iii) of the motion (in italics):

Publicises the expenses and / or remuneration paid to any elected Member appointed on behalf of the Council to the Police and Fire Authorities **and the expenses and/or remuneration paid to any elected Member by all other organisations / bodies that make payments now or might make payments in the future where a member is appointed by the Council to serve on such a body. Further, and in order to boost public confidence in elected Members, they will agree to publicise together and in one place all other expenses or remuneration details that are already available in the public domain where an elected Member may receive a fee or expenses when appointed to a nation or local government body or a regional / national quango, excluding any appointments that are made or where income or expenses are received that would be in connection to a Members' primary job or usual employment.** Publication to take place at the same time as each individual body publishes this detail.

This was seconded by Councillor Morley.

A concern was raised that Members had not had sight of Councillor Fitzgerald's proposed amendment in writing. It was suggested that the meeting should be adjourned in order to enable written copies of the amendment to be circulated. A vote was taken on an adjournment which was CARRIED: 19 in favour, 16 against, 13 abstentions.

Following a brief adjournment, the meeting reconvened at 8.50 p.m. Members debated the amended motion submitted by Councillor Fitzgerald, following which a vote was taken on the amendment. This was DEFEATED: 35 against, 8 in favour and 3 abstentions.

There being no further debate on the motion, a vote was taken which was CARRIED unanimously.

**(b) Motion from Councillor Fitzgerald**

Councillor Fitzgerald confirmed that he wished to withdraw this motion.

**(c) Motion from Councillor John Fox**

Councillor Fox advised Members that he wished to withdraw this motion in light of the government's announcement that there would be delays to the proposed regionalisation of fire control rooms in order to allow further consideration of cost.

**(d) Motion from Councillor Goldspink**

Members were informed that Councillor Goldspink had withdrawn this motion.

**(e) Motion from Councillor Sandford**

The Mayor advised that Councillor Lee had submitted an amendment to this motion, which had been agreed by Councillor Sandford. Members consented to submission of the altered motion, as set out in the Order Papers.

Councillor Sandford moved the following:

That this Council:

- (i) Supports the concerns expressed by the Peterborough Youth Council regarding the high level of bus fares which young people in the city have to pay and that this limits their ability to travel for educational, social and leisure purposes;

- (ii) Acknowledges that the high level of fares discourages young people from developing a habit of using public transport and makes them increasingly reliant on parents for lifts in their cars which is contrary to the Council's stated sustainable transport policies and Peterborough's aspirations to become the Environment Capital of the country;
- (iii) Requests that the Cabinet consult with Peterborough Youth Council and others about these concerns and initiates discussions with local bus companies, with a view to exploring reduced fares for young people, and report back to Cabinet in Autumn 2009.

This was seconded by Councillor Lee.

A vote was taken and the motion was CARRIED unanimously.

**(f) Councillor Trueman moved the following motion:**

That this Council:

Requests the Cabinet reinstate the European Flag within this Council Chamber.

This was seconded by Councillor Sandford.

Following debate, a vote was taken and the Motion was DEFEATED: 28 against, 11 in favour and 7 abstentions.

**7 (iv) Reports and Recommendations**

**(a) Report of the Independent Members' Allowances Panel**

It was reported that the Independent Members' Allowances Panel had met to review Members' Allowances on 18 and 25 June respectively. All members of the Council had been invited to make a written representation to the panel and had been given the opportunity to address the panel in person. It was noted that whilst the Council must have regard to the recommendations of the Panel, it was for Members to determine what actions to take.

Councillor Cereste thanked the Members' Allowances Panel for its work and moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Lee:

That this Council:

1. Receives and notes the report of the Independent Members' Allowances Panel;
2. Agrees that the Scheme of Members' Allowances remains unaltered, with the exception of the following specific changes to Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA):
  - (a) the Cabinet Advisors shall each receive 50% of the SRA paid to a Cabinet Member and the appropriateness of the allowance be reviewed after a period of six months;
  - (b) the Chairmen of all Scrutiny Committees and Commissions shall each receive 100% of the basic allowance and the appropriateness of the allowance be reviewed after a period of six months;
  - (c) the Chairmen of the 3 Neighbourhood Councils shall each receive 100% of the basic allowance and the appropriateness of the allowance shall be reviewed after a period of six months;

- (d) the Group Secretaries SRA shall cease in accordance with the recommendation of the Panel;
  - (e) the Chairman of the Audit Committee shall receive 100% of the basic allowance (rather than 25% of the allowance as at present);
  - (f) the Parish Council representatives on the Standards Committee shall each receive an allowance which is equivalent to that received by the Independent Members of the Standards Committee; and
  - (g) the Chairman of Council's SRA shall cease in accordance with the recommendation of the Panel, but that the component part of the Mayor's Allowance that is paid directly to the Mayor be increased to 50% of the overall allowance and a review be undertaken of the Mayor's Allowance and expenses in view of their role as First Citizen of the City and a further report be submitted to Council.
3. Agrees that all new SRA payments be introduced with effect from the start of the new 2009/10 Council year and all SRA payments that cease as a result of this decision shall do so with effect from the date of this meeting.
  4. Agrees that the Basic Allowance and Members' car parking be considered by the Independent Members' Allowances Panel once the joint review of staff and Members' car parking arrangements had been undertaken by the Council.

Councillor Sandford moved the following amendment:

That this Council:

1. Continue to make SRA payments to all opposition Group Leaders on the current basis, but that no payment be made to Cabinet Advisors or Chairmen of Neighbourhood Councils as recommended by the Panel;
2. That after six months, a review be carried out of SRA payments, at which payment of an allowance to Chairmen of Neighbourhood Councils should be reconsidered, but there should be no overall increase in the total amount spent on SRA payments and any increased payment to Neighbourhood Council Chairmen be compensated for by the reduction in the number of Cabinet Members;
3. That the recommendation of the Panel on car parking passes and a review of the basic allowance be implemented as recommended by the Panel.

This motion was seconded by Councillor Fower.

Following debate a vote was taken on the amendment, which was DEFEATED: 32 against, 5 in favour and 6 abstentions.

A debate was then held on the motion. Following a vote the motion was CARRIED: 28 in favour, 6 against and 9 abstentions.

It was RESOLVED:

To approve the recommendations of the Members' Allowances Panel, subject to the amendments set out in the motion.

**(b) Neighbourhood Councils**

Members considered a report outlining the preliminary work undertaken by the Chairmen elect of the Neighbourhood Councils. Councillor Cereste moved the recommendations set out in the report, subject to the following amendments:

- Appendix 4 - Procedure Rules

Paragraph 2.2.3 to be amended to read:

N&W1 – Northborough, Barnack, Glington and Wittering, Newborough, Eye and Thorney;  
N&W2 – Werrington North, Werrington South, Paston and Walton;  
N&W3 – Bretton North, Bretton South, West and Ravensthorpe.

Paragraph 3.1 to be amended to read:

‘Any decision may be called in my the most relevant Scrutiny Committee or Commission with call-in powers; and considered by the relevant committee or a sub committee set up for that specific purpose’.

Paragraph 6.2 to be amended to read:

‘Meetings will generally be held in the week and if there is any disagreement about timing between the Chairman and other Members of the Council, the meeting will start at 7 p.m.’

Paragraph 13.2 to be amended to read:

‘Any Member can submit an item of business to be included on the agenda of any Neighbourhood Council. The item will be included as long as the Member gives written notice to the Chief Executive by mid-day seven working days before the meeting (not including the day of the meeting)’.

- Appendix 5 – Dates of Meetings

Meeting dates (during September) in areas N&W2 and N&W3 to be changed: N&W2 to meet on 29 September 2009 and N&W3 to meet on 21 September 2009.

- To authorise the Monitoring Officer to make minor textual changes to the proposals to ensure consistency of terminology.

Following a vote, 44 in favour, 0 against, 2 abstentions, it was RESOLVED to approve the report subject to the amendments outlined above.

Meeting closed at 10.45 p.m.

Mayor .....

Date .....



## SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS RAISED UNDER AGENDA ITEM 5 – COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TIME

### 1. Questions with Notice by Members of the Public

There were no questions from members of the public.

### 2. Questions with Notice by Members of the Council relating to Ward Matters and to Committee Chairmen

**Councillor Sandford asked the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Community Development:**

Works to replace two bus shelters and to widen bus lay-bys in Lincoln Road (opposite Morrisons supermarket) is causing massive disruption and inconvenience to bus travellers, car drivers and local companies with large sections of the carriageway being cordoned off for weeks on end, often with no work apparently taking place. I have been advised that the work will continue until September. Can the Cabinet Member do anything in order to speed up with work and reduce disruption?

**The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Community Development responded:**

Utility diversions are currently being undertaken at the Paul Pry and Paston Lane bus stops on Lincoln Road. This is to enable the lay-bys to be widened as part of an improvement to the existing bus stop infrastructure on this key bus route. The existing bus lay bys are narrow and buses can encroach into the inside lane when stopped and cause a safety issue and disrupt traffic.

At the present time Morrison Utilities are working on behalf of EDF Energy Networks to replace both high and low voltage cables at the Paston Lane stop. The carriageway is currently narrowed to one lane to permit safe passage of pedestrians around the works. It is anticipated that this work will be completed to such an extent that traffic management should have been removed from the main carriageway by Friday 10 July 2009.

Whilst works will be ongoing until the end of September, I am pleased to say that it is envisaged that the majority of the remaining works will only involve lane closures during off peak periods. Traffic management will be removed from the main carriageway overnight and during the morning peak when the council's engineering work commences.

Through its statutory traffic management functions the council makes every effort to co-ordinate transport infrastructure works in an area and reduce disruption along this other vital route in and around the city. However local authorities have only limited influence over the time taken by utility companies to complete planned works.

### 3. Questions from Members to Representatives of the Police / Fire Authorities

There were no questions for Representatives of the Police / Fire Authorities.

**SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS RAISED UNDER AGENDA ITEM  
6 (a) – EXECUTIVE BUSINESS TIME**

**1. Questions with Notice from Members to the Leader and Members of the Executive**

**(a) Councillor Fower asked the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services:**

I understand there is presently a drive to recruit 5000 revised social workers to reduce the change of children dying from neglect and / or abuse. The campaign has already noted that one in ten posts across the country remain unfilled.

Can the relevant Cabinet Member inform me of the present state of play in Peterborough, for example, what is the situation in respect of the number of social workers employed by the Council, how many (if any) are on some form of suspended leave and what action is being taken to prevent a tragedy like the case of ‘Baby P’ in this city?

**The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services responded:**

The information relates to the frontline Children’s Social Care division that responds to allegations of abuse and referrals of concern. It is acknowledged there are qualified social workers working elsewhere across Children’s Services. Members will recall that following the Joint Area Review [JAR] in 2006 a workforce development project was established to respond to inspectors’ concerns that there was insufficient capacity and too many SW vacancies. In 2008 Children’s Social Care was restructured and relocated following an exercise of capacity and activity analysis in conjunction with Price Waterhouse Coopers. A successful recruitment strategy under the promotion of ‘grow with Peterborough’ has enabled many vacancies to be filled. The current vacancy level for Qualified Social Workers is 10% which means 7.5 posts out of 76.5 are currently unfilled. Prior to the Baby P publicity we had achieved a vacancy rate below 6%. The publicity of the tragedy has made it harder to recruit and Peterborough currently has a campaign targeted at experienced workers.

Peterborough also has a long term recruitment strategy which consists of:

1. a ‘grow your own scheme’ where we offer three secondments/traineeships per year. This enables us to plan to fill vacancies with workers returning when qualified. Two will be returning this year as qualified workers;
2. The department offers three final year bursaries to students who then come to Peterborough to work upon achieving their qualification. There is one returning this year on this scheme and;
3. The department offers a competitive career progression scheme which has received national recognition from the Children’s Workforce Development Council [CWDC]. New recruits confirm this was a key reason for making their application to Peterborough. We remain confident we will still attract applicants to the currently vacant posts.

In response to what action is being taken to prevent a baby P tragedy in the city:

Peterborough and its partner agencies have undertaken a self evaluation exercise against the findings in Haringay and the Recommendations of Lord Lamings progress report ‘the protection of children in England’ - these evaluations are currently being analysed by the Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board and an action plan

detailing areas for improvement will be produced for agencies to work together to resolve.

Children's Social Care is developing and implementing a comprehensive Quality Assurance programme which is producing qualitative information about practice and is being responded to with improvements being made to the service delivery. Like all other Local Authorities nationally, Peterborough has experienced an increase in referrals and increased workload of approximately a third. This has obviously put additional pressure on the service as a whole.

It is important to reflect that child deaths do happen – in 2007/08 there were 55 deaths in England of children killed by someone known to them. In many instances those families were not previously known to any of the agencies.

The important issue emerging from the baby P tragedy, and from Victoria Climbié before him, is that agencies working together have to ensure that where a child is known and concerns for their protection and welfare have been voiced that everything has been done that should and could be done to support and protect the child. That didn't happen for baby P, but committed staff and agencies in Peterborough are working to ensure that a child is not left vulnerable as a consequence of a deficit in service provision or practice.

**Councillor Fower asked the following supplementary question:**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an assurance that 'hot-desking' amongst social workers does not become common practice?

**The Cabinet Member for Children's Services responded:**

Your concerns will be investigated and a full written response will be provided in due course.

**(b) Councillor John Fox asked the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Community Development:**

How much revenue has been lost by PCC having a Traffic Management Officer on duty operating an automatic barrier scheme, manually, when that person should have been employed issuing fixed penalty tickets?.

**The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Community Development responded:**

It was always envisaged that the bollard was to be attended by a Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) for a 2-3 week period once the bollards were operational, to monitor access, deter unauthorised movements and enforce any contraventions. This period was therefore commenced on 29 April and should have terminated with effect from 18 May, with the CCTV camera having been commissioned towards the end of the previous week, however there have been ongoing delays with the installation of the BT line necessary to enable automatic operation.

The bollard is manually operated for 38 hours per week, which approximates to a working week for a CEO. Given that there are two bands of charges (depending on the parking contravention offence) and a mandatory discount period that the Council must honour it is only possible to provide an approximate figure for the loss of income. For 2008/09 the income generated by a CEO per week is approximately £500-£600.

In the absence of the BT line the only other alternative would have been to have left the bollards non-operational in the ground.

**Councillor Fox asked the following supplementary question:**

I understand a decision has been taken to hire a company to supervise the bollards. What is the cost?

**The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Community Developed responded:**

I will investigate and provide a full written response in due course.

**(c) Councillor Goldspink asked the Leader:**

How many offices are being allocated for the use of Cabinet Members in performance of their duties (including the Leader, Deputy Leader, designated meetings rooms and office space for Cabinet Members); how much additional square footage this represents over the previous arrangements and the percentage increase thereof; what additional cost this accommodation will be using the Council's standard office space rates and the reasons why this need has suddenly arisen?

**The Leader responded:**

As of the 1 July 09 the following rooms have been allocated for use by the Cabinet:

- Executive Director of Strategic Resources to a cabinet / fostering review meeting room;
- Old Communications Office to Members Room;
- Director of Adult Social Services and Performance to an office for the Deputy Leader

Overall this represents an increase in the area allocated to this use by 121m<sup>2</sup> (420%). Based on the standard 'charge out' costs for space within the Town Hall this amounts to an increase of £28,689 per annum. I would also add that the office space was empty and could not otherwise have been utilised.

**Councillor Goldspink asked the following supplementary question:**

Can the Leader confirm that the furniture and equipment supplied is of the same specification as that applied to staff?

**The Leader responded:**

I can confirm that nothing was requested that would have been outside of the normal specification. However, a check will be made and I will confirm this to you in writing.

**(d) This question, submitted by Councillor Goldspink, was withdrawn.**

**(e) Councillor Fower asked the Cabinet Member for Environment Capital and Culture:**

There was a Climate Change conference held in March, hosted by Middlesborough Council, which like Peterborough is one of only four Environment Cities in the UK. The conference looked at steps that local authorities could take to tackle global warming. As a city that is aspiring to become the UK's Environment Capital, can the Cabinet Member confirm whether or not our authority was represented at this event?

**The Cabinet Member for Environment Capital and Culture responded:**

No representative from Peterborough City Council attended this event. The programme was considered in detail, however the topics were rather broad and the time allowed for each item was thought to be insufficient. On balance, it was felt that the value to be gained from attendance at this particular event would be lesser than attendance at various other events which are coming up in the future where our attendance is planned.

**Councillor Fower asked the following supplementation question:**

Will the Council be seeking to arrange such an event in the future?

**The Cabinet Member for Environment Capital and Culture responded:**

The Council is not, at the present time, considering organising such an event, however this may be considered at some time in the future, should it be deemed necessary or beneficial.

**(f) Councillor Saltmarsh asked the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University:**

In view of the shortage of secondary school places, especially at schools in the eastern area of the city, can the Cabinet Member advise of any plans that have been made to increase the number of secondary school and college places available to students when, by 2013 every 17 year old will have to be in education or training and this will extend to 18 year olds in 2015?

**The Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University responded:**

School organisation planning is a high priority issue within Children's Services and we are currently reviewing a number of options to ensure sufficient provision of places across the city in both primary and secondary schools. Proposals are being developed and I will be submitting a report to Cabinet in due course.

**Councillor Saltmarsh asked the following supplementary question:**

Can the Cabinet Member confirm the figures in respect of the numbers of children starting secondary school in September living more than three miles from home?

**The Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University responded:**

I will provide this information in writing in due course.

**(g) Councillor Trueman asked the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Community Development:**

Will the Cabinet Member take steps to bring to a halt the gradual destruction of the Great Northern Hotel and in particular, the concreting over of the gardens to create a car park?

**The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Community Development responded:**

The Council sought to buy the Great Northern Hotel recently, but was outbid. Officers have maintained contact with representatives of the new owners, and understand that significant investment is planned for the hotel. The introduction of a residents' car park at the side of the hotel is an indication of the owner's intent to make a success of the business. I understand that some people preferred the gardens which were there previously, but the Council doesn't have the power to prevent the owners from introducing the additional parking as long as the work is conducted properly in accordance with planning policy. The development control team has been involved in discussions with representatives of the hotel's owners concerning the new car park and those discussions are ongoing. If enforcement action of some kind is appropriate it will be taken in accordance with the law; if it is not appropriate, it will not be.

**Councillor Trueman asked the following supplementary question:**

If this work has been undertaken without the proper planning approvals, will officers be instructed to take the appropriate action?

**The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Community Development responded:**

I would refer to my last comment which emphasised that appropriate enforcement action will be taken if appropriate. I will however seek to confirm the current position and confirm the detail in writing.

Questions and Answers in respect of the following questions were distributed after the meeting, as the time limit for this category had expired:

**(h) Councillor Ash would have asked the Cabinet Member for Resources:**

Given the continued need to review spending and the continued demands on essential services, has the Cabinet Member considered undertaking a review aimed at reducing the cost of the 'Your Peterborough' magazine? Have options such as using less expensive paper (perhaps recycled paper), reducing the number of pages or a reduction in the frequency of publication been considered?

**The Cabinet Member for Resources may have responded:**

The answer is 'yes', absolutely. This administration is constantly looking for ways to reduce cost and we are therefore delighted that our Business Transformation activity continues to be a success and deliver real value to local people.

In relation to 'Your Peterborough', we have, for example, in the past year made savings on design and photography. We are also looking to increase the amount of private advertising and have increased revenue by selling pages to NHS Peterborough, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, Cambridgeshire Police Authority and Cambridgeshire Constabulary. I am also grateful that Councillor Fower has made a suggestion on how it may be used in future and, in this regard, the feedback of all members in this Chamber is welcome.

We are also investigating the viability and suitability of a digital magazine and whether this could enable us to reduce the print-run.

We also constantly look to improve the content and quality of input using the feedback we receive from the form featured in every edition and Focus Groups that were run in

January 2009. Improvements have included, for example, more items in 'What's On' - we now include fewer photographs and about 40 events, activities specifically for families – we included separate family activity spreads in April and July to coincide with school holidays, and information on local producers.

Councillors will be interested to know that almost 100 per cent of feedback confirmed that readers like the look of the magazine and find it easy to read with around 78 per cent of people reading all or most of, the magazine. All this on an annual cost of just £173k last year – so a great communication device, that is read by the large majority of local people, on a monthly basis, at just £1 per citizen each year.

Whilst we have looked at reducing the number of pages and paper quality, this would give minimal savings. And it must be remembered that, with the LGA supporting this method of communication by Councils, 'Your Peterborough' was identified as being one of the best council publications in the country.

It was short-listed in national public relations industry awards last year in the best civic newspaper/magazine category and I believe we should all be proud of that and continue to support its success.

**(i) Councillor Ash would have asked the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Community Development:**

The road layout at the junction of the Fletton and Nene Parkways (Junction 3, A1139) seems to be causing confusion for motorists. Does the Cabinet Member share my concern that the layout at this junction (as well as the behaviour of motorists) compromises safety and does he agree that the road signs and markings are ambiguous and unclear? Is there any intention to review the road markings and signage at this junction in order to ensure road users are clear about the appropriate lane to use?

**The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Community Development may have responded:**

PCC officers are aware of these concerns and a Road Safety Audit (RSA) is underway. The road signs and signage at the junction of Fletton and Nene Parkways (Junction 3, A1139) are currently under review as part of this RSA and we are waiting for the results in order to identify whether the current arrangement needs changing.

The report will identify any problems with the layout of Junction 3 and if necessary make recommendations to rectify the situation. The RSA is due to be completed by the 17 of July 2009.

The Environment, Transport & Engineering Service has identified a budget to pay for any changes to the layout of junction 3 recommended by the RSA.