

PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD 8 DECEMBER 2010

The Mayor – Councillor Keith Sharp

Present:

Councillors: Allen, Arculus, Burton, Cereste, Collins, S Dalton, D Day, S Day, Elsey, Fitzgerald, Fower, Goodwin, Harrington, Hiller, Holdich, Hussain, Jamil, Khan, Kreling, Lamb, Lane, Lee, Lowndes, Morley, Nash, Nawaz, Newton, North, Over, Peach, Rush, Saltmarsh, Sanders, Sandford, Scott, Seaton, Serluca, Shaheed, Simons, Stokes, Swift, Thacker, Walsh, Wilkinson and Winslade.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ash, Benton, M Dalton, Fletcher, JA Fox, JR Fox, Goldspink, Miners, Murphy and Todd.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were received:

Councillor Cereste declared a pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 7 (i)(a): Peterborough Site Allocations Development Plan Document, as he owned land affected by the proposals.

Councillor Holdich declared a pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 7 (i)(a): Peterborough Site Allocations Development Plan Document, as he owned land affected by the proposals.

Councillor S Dalton declared a pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 7 (i)(a): Peterborough Site Allocations Development Plan Document, as her family owned land affected by the proposals.

Councillor Sanders declared an interest in respect of agenda item 7 (i)(a): Peterborough Site Allocations Development Plan Document, as he was pre-determined in this matter.

3. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD 13 OCTOBER 2010

The minutes of the Council meeting held 13 October 2010 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. COMMUNICATIONS TIME

4 (i) Mayor's Announcements

Members noted the report outlining Mayoral engagements for the period 27 September to 28 November 2010.

4 (ii) Leader's Announcements

The Leader thanked all the communities and everyone involved in the arrangements and management so far for the protest march in the city that would take place on 11 December.

Officers were determined to keep the city centre and shops open throughout the day, culminating in a candlelight vigil at 4.30pm in the Cathedral.

Councillor Swift agreed with the sentiments of the Leader and passed on his own thanks for the work done so far.

Councillor Khan responded that what the English Defence League (EDL) stood for should be condemned and supported the Leader's comments by stating that there was one Peterborough, with united communities.

Councillor Fower made no response so that the EDL would receive no further publicity.

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

Details of the above questions and associated responses are set out at **Appendix A**.

5 (ii) Questions with Notice by Members relating to Ward Matters and to Committee Chairmen.

Details of the above questions and associated responses are set out at **Appendix A**.

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

Details of the above questions and associated responses are set out at **Appendix A**.

5 (iv) Petitions

Councillor Sanders presented a petition on behalf of residents Eye opposing any more growth outside the village envelope from the Site Allocations document.

Councillor Lane presented a petition, in the absence of Councillor John Fox, on behalf of residents of Wycliffe Grove concerning obstruction caused by parking in the street.

Councillor Serluca presented a petition from residents supporting the name change from Fletton Ward to Fletton and Woodston Ward.

Councillor Scott presented a petition from residents of Hampsted concerning speeding traffic through the development.

Councillor Nash presented a petition from residents opposed to the use of the Church on the Rock by the St Theresa's day centre.

Councillor Lee presented a petition from residents supporting the name change from Fletton Ward to Fletton and Woodston Ward.

6. EXECUTIVE BUSINESS TIME

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

A question was asked in respect of proposed new charges for use of allotments.

A summary of the question and answer 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:

- Decisions from the Cabinet Meeting held 8 November 2010;
- Use of the Council's special urgency provision and waive of call-in provisions – not used since the last meeting;
- Cabinet Member Decisions taken during the period 4 October 2010 to 15 November 2010.

Questions were asked about the following:

Future of Westcombe Engineering

Councillor Fower asked why the previous decision had been overturned and how many staff were affected. Councillor Cereste responded that this was an opportunity to keep a business open that benefited a needy part of the community. The number of employees was not always fixed so it would difficult to provide exact numbers. A report could be presented to Council next year to review and update Members on the situation at Westcombe.

Provision of Grant to TJK UK, a subsidiary of TK Maxx Limited in respect of 64 Bridge Street

Councillor Fower asked where the £175,000 had come from within the budget. Councillor Cereste responded that resources were put aside for instances such as this.

Councillor Khan asked when the new shop would be open. Councillor Elsey responded that the shop was scheduled to begin trading in the Springtime, maybe as early as March 2011.

7. COUNCIL BUSINESS TIME

7 (i) Executive Recommendations

Councillors Cereste, Holdich, S Dalton and Sanders left the meeting.

(a) Peterborough Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) – proposed submission version

Cabinet, at its meeting of 8 November 2010, received the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (proposed submission version) for consideration and was requested to refer it to Full Council to approve for the purposes of public consultation before submission to the Secretary of State.

Councillor Lee introduced and moved the recommendation and this was seconded by Councillor Hiller.

During debate, concerns were raised about the proposed developments outside the village envelope in Eye, the location of the proposed new Cemetery being away from the city centre, the absence of allocated Gypsy and Travellers sites and the range of densities of some planned developments in the urban area.

Councillor Lee responded that development in Eye had been significantly reduced already but housing was needed for local people; public transport would be provided to the new Cemetery site; a Gypsy and Traveller Transit Site was considered in the document; and density of developments would vary depending on the local area that the development was in and other policies relating to density levels.

Following a vote (34 in favour, 3 against and 5 abstentions) it was RESOLVED to:

Approve the Site Allocations DPD (Proposed Submission Version) for the purposes of public consultation and submission to the Secretary of State.

Councillors Cereste, Holdich and S Dalton returned to the meeting.

7(ii) Committee Recommendations

(a) Report from Licensing Act 2003 Committee – 3 yearly Review of Policy

Council received a report requesting it adopted the Statement of Licensing Policy for 2011–2014. Councillor Hiller moved the recommendation. This was seconded by Councillor Elsey.

It was RESOLVED to:

Adopt the Statement of Licensing Policy for 2011 – 2014.

(b) Report form the Licensing Committee – Licensing of Sexual Entertainment Venues

Council received a report concerning changes to the law relating to sexual entertainment venues and asking Council to accept the recommendations of the Licensing Committee for the adoption of the provisions in Peterborough.

Councillor Hiller moved the recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor Allen.

It was RESOLVED to:

1. Adopt the amendments to the provisions of Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 by Section 27 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009;
2. Request officers prepare a draft policy for consultation regarding the regulation of such establishments and report back to the Licensing Committee prior to adoption of the licensing provisions;
3. Approve the delegation of functions under Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 to the Licensing Committee or the Executive Director of Operations as outlined in Appendix A of the report; and
4. Agree that the date for the new provisions to take effect should be at least 2 months from the date of the formal resolution of the adoption – proposed date 8 February 2011.

(c) Report from the Strong and Supportive Scrutiny Committee – Designated Public Places Orders

Council received a report requesting it adopt the Designated Public Place Order as set out in the report. Councillor Walsh introduced and moved the recommendation subject to references to Church Drive, Orton Longueville in the report being amended to Church Drive, Orton Waterville. This was seconded by Councillor Hiller.

Following a brief debate, it was RESOLVED to:

Adopt the Designated Public Place Orders as set out in this report subject to references to Church Drive, Orton Longueville in the report being amended to Church Drive, Orton Waterville.

7(iii) Notices of Motion

1. Councillor Lee moved the following motion:

That this Council:

Recognises that whilst it is important that all City Councillors', Parish Councillors' and co-opted members' Register of Interests submissions are made available on the Council's public website, individual Members should, in the interests of security, have the option to exclude details of their home address and place of work when the information is entered onto the website, by request to the Solicitor of the Council.

This was seconded by Councillor Thacker.

Following a brief debate this motion was CARRIED unanimously.

2. Councillor Sandford moved the following motion:

That this Council:

- (i) Welcomes the decision of the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee to set up a review into the operation of Neighbourhood Councils in Peterborough;
- (ii) Notes that a key principle in the Localism Bill about to be published by the Government is to be a radical decentralisation of power not just to councils, but further to neighbourhoods and communities;
- (iii) Regrets that the initial promises of significant decision making powers for Peterborough's Neighbourhood Councils have not been fulfilled and that in the next financial year it is proposed to give them no delegated budgets other than access to some section 106 funding;
- (iv) Believes that in times of financial restraint, it is even more vital than ever that local decisions and choices regarding spending priorities in the various areas and neighbourhoods within Peterborough are made by the councillors who represent those areas and that this necessitates a significant increase in the proportion of the total Council budget which is delegated to Neighbourhood Councils;
- (v) Requests the Cabinet to amend its draft budget proposals to give significantly increased delegation of budgets and decision making to Neighbourhood Councils.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Fower.

A debate took place in which Councillors emphasised that a Scrutiny review group was ongoing relating to the future of Neighbourhood Councils and that this review should be concluded before voting on motions and changes.

Following debate, Councillor Sandford agreed to withdraw the motion but requested Council support the outcomes and recommendations of the Scrutiny review group.

7 (iv) Reports and Recommendations

(a) Report from Solicitor of the Council – Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Council received a report advising that the Principal Democratic Services Officer had now left the employment of the Council and the post deleted as part of the budget savings, so another officer must be appointed as the Statutory Scrutiny Officer.

Councillor Cereste moved the recommendation in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Lee.

A brief debate was held in which concern was raised that the officer advising Cabinet should not also advise on its scrutiny. The Solicitor to the Council clarified that the Head of Legal did not provide advice to Cabinet as this was done by the Solicitor to the Council.

Following a vote (39 in favour, 5 against, 0 abstentions), it was RESOLVED to:

Appoint the Head of Legal as the Council's Statutory Scrutiny Officer and authorise the Solicitor to the Council to update the Constitution accordingly.

Meeting closed 8.55 p.m.

MAYOR

COUNCIL MEETING – 8 DECEMBER 2010

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

AGENDA ITEM 5 - COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TIME**5 (i) Questions with notice by members of the public****1. Mr S Stallebrass asked the Leader:**

What justification does Peterborough City Council have for making prayer such an integral part of Council meetings? Especially given its membership to the National Association of Local Councils, which has asserted that continuing prayers as part of the council meetings is a breach of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Prayers at council meetings are no more relevant than prayers would be at a board meeting of any corporation. Furthermore, they are no longer representative of the Peterborough community as a whole. Indeed, Peterborough City Council should confine itself to providing public services and not forcing religious services on its councillors. It should be a fully secular organisation, and as such seek to promote the separation of politics from religion. Council prayers represent a fusion of politics and religion, which is wholly unnecessary and wrong.

Would the Council therefore review its practice of having prayers at the beginning of its council meetings?

The Leader responded:

In Peterborough it is custom and practice for the Mayor to appoint a Chaplain but it is for each Mayor to decide whether or not they wish to appoint one. The Chaplain can be from any faith and over the last few years they have included members of the Church of England and Roman Catholic Church and the current Chaplain is from the Salvation Army. The appointment is honorary, is at the Mayor's discretion and has no official status. The Chaplain acts as spiritual adviser to the Mayor, says prayers before each Council meeting and attends major civic functions and dinners where he or she will be expected to say grace. The Chaplain also makes arrangements for the Mayor's Civic Service which is held each year in the Mayor's own ward.

I have not received any complaints from Members who feel that prayers before the Council meeting are being imposed on them and if anyone feels uncomfortable with the prayers they are free not to be present in the Chamber.

For clarification we are not members of NALC as that is the association for parish and town councils and therefore we are not aware of what their stance is in relation to prayers. We are, however, aware of the current judicial review proceedings in respect of the saying of prayers at Council, brought by the National Secular Society against Bideford Town Council. If national advice to Councils changes as a result of that legal challenge, the Council will be asked to consider this matter again.

Mr Stallebrass asked the following supplementary question:

Should the judicial review against Bideford rule that Article 9 of the EU Human Rights legislation has been breached will the Council review reverse its own position?

	<p>The Leader responded:</p> <p>Unless it is deemed to be in breach of the law and illegal and told that it must be stopped, this Council will continue with the practice of saying prayers.</p>
2.	<p>Mr E Murphy asked the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University:</p> <p>It is now confirmed that the Coalition will scrap the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) introduced by Labour in 2004 to help the poorest students. In January David Cameron said that the Conservatives “don’t have any plans to get rid of EMA payments”, and in March Michael Gove responded to Labour claims that EMA would be scrapped by saying “I have never said this. We won’t.”</p> <p>Of the many students per year who receive EMA, 2,720 live in Peterborough. Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that the scrapping of EMA is bad for students here in Peterborough where we need to continue to encourage learning and skills as we perform below the national and regional levels, have very few people with higher qualifications and need to do better. Does he know the total amount of EMA that is paid to residents in Peterborough each year that will be lost to the Peterborough economy; is there any transitional protection for students currently receiving support and from what date will EMA payments be axed in Peterborough?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University responded:</p> <p>It was early in 1997 when I heard red Ken Livingstone say he hoped that Labour would not get a big majority as they would do as they usually do and mess up the economy. Was it not Labour who walked out on this Council leaving it partially bankrupt a few years ago? We now have red Ed in Westminster not having a clue what to do about the state his party has left our country in and red Ed in Peterborough still asking negative questions.</p> <p>E.M.A. is a weekly payment of between £10 and £30 depending on household income. It is paid directly to young people who stay in learning after reaching the statutory school leaving age. Young people may get E.M.A. support for up to three years, ending in the academic year in which they turn 19.</p> <p>E.M.A. will cease at the end of this academic year and there are no transitional arrangements for continuing students, but the Government says there will be a hardship fund. No details as yet.</p> <p>44% of 16 year olds i.e. 1110 young people, then it drops off to 39% i.e. 970 young people at 17 years old, then only 17% i.e. 420 young people at 18 availed themselves of the scheme and I am sorry I do not have the amount of money paid out, because the young person has to claim centrally and it is not easy to guess, as they only get paid if they turn up and some do not.</p> <p>What I can tell you is that this Council is totally committed to the education of its citizens, for it has provided in its budget millions for school improvements and more school places, as well as money for a Skills Centre at John Mansfield and the Stem Centre at the football ground, a total of £150m over five years, plus Government grants, a commitment never before seen in the city and we are well on the way to creating a multi-university for the city.</p> <p>Mr Murphy asked the following supplementary question:</p> <p>Can you not manage to do the arithmetic to find out the amount of EMA awarded in the city? Are you aware that applications for EMA will cease this month in Peterborough?</p>

	<p>The Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University responded:</p> <p>If you want to find out how much is spent in Peterborough, you can submit a Freedom of Information request to find this out. It is allocated by central government upon receipt of applications from young people; not by this council. Throwing money at education doesn't always work.</p>
3.	<p>Mr E Murphy asked the Leader:</p> <p>The disqualified right wing BNP candidate at the general election was able to use the Royal Mail free of charge to distribute racist propaganda in Peterborough. What checks were in place and what steps were taken by the authorities and the City Council's Returning Officer to stop this happening when I notified Peterborough City Council that freepost leaflets were going out for a disqualified BNP candidate? At the Full Council the Leader was asked by Councillor Khan about the proposed EDL march in Peterborough and the effects this would have on our community. Since then the Council have been requested by a number of people and organisations not to give council facilities for the use of the EDL and to stop this right wing rally taking place in our town centre. It is estimated the cost to the Police Service and local business will amount to millions of pounds. The Leicester Police bill was £2.1 million and the Council spent £700,000. The cost to retail may also be considerable due to a massive drop in sales on a Christmas shopping Saturday.</p> <p>Why are the conservative authorities in Peterborough giving facilities to right wing groups such as allowing the BNP to make inappropriate and unauthorised use of the Royal Mail freeposts and assisting the EDL with the closure of the Town Bridge and provision of council facilities? Are Conservative authorities, the Conservative Party dominated Council and Police Authority and the Conservative MP in danger of being seen as partisan and would it be better that they acted without fear or favour?</p> <p>The Leader responded:</p> <p>Firstly I would like to separate out these two totally unrelated issues.</p> <p>With regard to the BNP candidate the elections office has no record of any formal complaint being made about this. In any event, as the BNP candidate was not validly nominated he would not be entitled to free postage. This could amount to electoral malpractice, which as a candidate in the last election, you will be aware is a matter for the Police and not the Acting Returning Officer. Therefore if you are able to substantiate such a claim, the matter should be referred to the Police and no doubt you will do so as a result of my answer to your question.</p> <p>Secondly the EDL march has required strong civic leadership that has led this city to make some very difficult, but very appropriate, decisions over the past few weeks which we believe have been in the best interests of the city for all our residents both now and in the future.</p> <p>Only the Home Secretary has the power to ban protest marches, not the Police, nor the council. It is only in very limited circumstances that the police may ask a local council to seek a ban but neither the Police nor the council believe this would give anyone the outcome they wanted. It certainly wouldn't stop the EDL from coming to hold a static protest in the city.</p> <p>Leicester successfully secured a ban – but the EDL turned up there to protest and neither the police, nor the council had any power to stop them. We have learned from the experiences of Leicester and other cities across the country. The Police have been speaking to the EDL which has allowed the Police to understand the EDL's plans and that has enabled the police to properly manage the march to minimise the impact on our</p>

city. The Council has had no direct contact with EDL as all negotiations for this have been handled exclusively by the Police.

I strongly believe the best way to show the unity and community spirit in this city is not to react although every instinct dictates that one should, but instead to come out and support the celebration and unity events we are holding in the city in the run-up to and after Saturday 11 December 2010.

I was proud to be a part of an event on Sunday which saw faith leaders in the city join together like has never been seen before. I joined them in signing an interfaith statement to celebrate the diversity of the city and the contribution different communities make to the wellbeing and quality of life. Next Sunday, children and residents of all ages are being invited to come together in a candlelit vigil to celebrate the city's diversity and the successful integration of different communities into Peterborough.

If we really want to show the EDL that it doesn't have support in this city then we need to make sure any protests are peaceful and pass without incident. I can think of no greater way to show the strength of community other than to show them that we will work together as a community and we will have the spirit not to be pushed into behaving badly ourselves.

Mr Murphy asked the following supplementary question:

Does the Leader agree with me that it would be better if mischievous right-wingers like the EDL and Stewart Jackson had no presence in Peterborough whatever?

The Leader responded:

All I would like to say to you is that Lord Haw Haw told everybody by radio during the War that everything was wonderful and the Nazis were great. The outcome for Lord Haw Haw was that he got hanged.

4. Mr D McKean asked the Deputy Leader:

Is it correct that in April this year, 1,274 Eye and Eye Green residents (40% of Eye village electors) commented on the Site Allocations and that in September this year, 323 Eye and Eye Green residents (that's 95% of the comments received about the Peterborough Core Strategy after the abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy) were all objecting to any further growth outside Eye's current village envelopes, and that only 3 were in favour?

The Deputy Leader responded:

The statement is almost correct, and certainly the gist of the statement is correct, but I would like to be absolutely clear on this matter.

We received 1,296 representations from Eye and Eye Green residents in April this year which commented upon Policy SA6 of the Site Allocations Document, with Policy SA6 being the one which allocated new development sites to Eye. Of those 1,296 representations, 1,274 objected to the policy with the remaining 22 either in favour (3), sought changes (7) or expressed more general comments (12).

It is correct that 323 further representations were received in September this year from Eye and Eye Green residents. These representations generally supported the Council's proposed changes to its Gypsy and Traveller policy, plus such representors also took the opportunity to object in more general terms to growth of Eye and Eye Green.

The Council is very grateful to all those who took the time to write to us, and all of the

representations received have been considered carefully. Accordingly, officers have now recommended to Council this evening that the quantity of new housing allocations in Eye be reduced from 305 dwellings to 85 dwellings, plus the Gypsy and Traveller allocation in Eye has now been completely removed from the document.

Finally, to avoid confusion, may I also point out that, following a legal ruling, the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) has not now been abolished, though the government still indicates that it intends to abolish it. Until it is abolished, the RSS remains part of the development plan for Peterborough and, following a second legal ruling, the Council can not place any weight on the government's 'intention' to abolish the RSS.

Mr McKean asked the following supplementary question:

Planning officers have been given direction from government to take into account the cancellation of the RSS in development strategies. Why consult with the residents and the committee about the new, revised Site Allocations before you tonight, and the numbers, when your officers are telling you you're unable to change the numbers in Eye village as stated earlier in the presentation outside this meeting, because of the way you've written the Core Strategy. This does bring into question the soundness of your Core Strategy if when you've consulted with residents, they say they want the numbers taken out of the Site Allocations and your officers say you can't take them out due to the Core Strategy wording. I would then say it draws into question the soundness of the Site Allocations if the Core Strategy is unsound. The residents just want 20 more houses, no more. Why consult with residents if when the response comes the document cannot be changed?

The Deputy Leader responded:

We have changed it, as detailed in my first answer.

5. Mr D McKean asked the Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Planning:

Can the Cabinet Member assure the residents of Eye and Eye Green that he will look into the feasibility of using the sale of the Croft 39 roomed residential site in Eye (and those capital receipts), to rectify the 24% shortage of open space (*ref. PCC report 2005: E065 Core Strategy Evidence*), plus the further open space shortage created by the recent 380 new dwellings, two-thirds of which do not have open space?

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Planning responded:

The current policy is that receipts generated from the sale of assets go to fund the objectives of the Council and are not ring fenced.

Should the sale of the Croft or any other asset in Eye result in a subsequent planning application for redevelopment, then as part of considering that application the Council would assess what level of open space the development should provide on-site or contribute to off-site provision. This will be calculated based on Local Plan policy and would, in part, take into account whether there is a shortage of open space within Eye at the time of the application.

However any further requirement for additional open space within Eye and Eye Green would need to be considered alongside all other demands for resources and as part of the process of establishing the budget for the Council. This would not be linked to the disposal of The Croft or any asset within the area.

What I can say is that should this proposal come forward then it will be considered alongside all of the other competing priorities and evaluated on its own merits.

	<p>Mr D McKean asked the following supplementary question:</p> <p>Why does Eye have to have more growth to get S106 contributions to fix the current published 24% shortage of open space in its village? The Croft site alone wouldn't fill it, that 24% shortage.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Planning responded:</p> <p>Should the sale of the Croft or any other asset in Eye result in a subsequent planning application for redevelopment, then as part of considering that application, the council would certainly assess what level of open space the development should provide on site or indeed contribute to off-site provision.</p>
5 (ii)	<p><u>Questions with notice by Members relating to ward matters to Cabinet Members and to Committee Chairmen</u></p>
1.	<p>Councillor Sanders asked that his question below be taken as read for the Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Planning:</p> <p>Has the inspector examining the Core Strategy provided her report, and if so, is there anything that affects the approach to Eye Village and Eye Green?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Planning responded:</p> <p>Following her examination of the Peterborough Core Strategy, the Inspector has NOT yet provided her report. We anticipate it being received before Christmas and reporting it to Council on 23 February 2011. Once it is received, officers have been instructed to publish it on the website in full as soon as is practical to do so.</p>
5 (iii)	<p><u>Questions with notice by Members to Council representatives of the Police and Fire Authorities</u></p>
1.	<p>Councillor Saltmarsh, on behalf of Councillor Miners, asked the Council's representative on the Police Authority:</p> <p>Noting the vast reduction in finance to Police Authorities and the fact that certain Chief Constables are proposing to cut Police numbers, what impact will this have on local community policing in Peterborough and the position/numbers of Police Community Support Officers on the ground locally?</p> <p>Councillor Fitzgerald responded:</p> <p>Cambridgeshire Police Authority is working hard to ensure the plans the force has in place, will continue to deliver an effective and efficient policing service to the communities of Cambridgeshire including Peterborough within the budget available in 2011/12 and beyond.</p> <p>To achieve that will require a different way of thinking about the service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working closely with other forces in the region to achieve economies of scale and efficiencies across a range of services; • developing new ways to further strengthen the links with local partners; and • working even more closely with communities to ensure local needs are met. <p>There are no plans to reduce the PCSO numbers. PCSOs are mainly funded via a specific Home Office grant and the expectation is that this funding will continue.</p>

2.

Councillor Saltmarsh, on behalf of Councillor Miners, asked the Council's representative on the Fire Authority:

Noting some neighbouring local authorities are proposing to close fire stations, make redundancies and possibly share resources, what exactly is happening in the Peterborough Unitary area?

The two main core functions of the Fire Service are to:

- Save Lives; and
- Protect Property.

Are our two main Peterborough Fire Stations (Dogsthorpe & Stanground) safe from closure and redundancy of front line fire fighters? If proposals do exist to 'streamline front line fire services' how does this all fit in with the Regional Control Centres which are still being promoted by bureaucrats and centralising politicians?

Councillor Goodwin responded:

At this point in time the Service is still unclear about exactly how big the cuts to government grant will be, however, we are planning for a minimum of £3.6M (from a current budget of circa £30M). The Service has initiated a programme to identify where to make cuts in a way that will minimise the impact on front line services. Due to the size of the cuts there can be no guarantee that front line services will be unaffected, and therefore, all options for making significant savings will be considered over the coming months. In terms of timescales, the Service Senior Management Team is aiming to present a full list of potential areas for making cuts to the Fire Authority at its meeting in late January 2011. Following which the Service will launch a series of feasibility studies to examine the agreed areas in further detail.

At present the Service is still making preparations to move to a Regional Control Centre, however, should the Government decide not to pursue the RCC Project further then the Service is well placed to continue to provide appropriate Command and Control functions. The Service will look at its Command and Control function as part of the cuts identification process in order to determine whether there are ways to provide the service in a cheaper but equally effective way. Examples of such ways include the voluntary merger of the Service Command and Control function with other fire services.

AGENDA ITEM 6 - EXECUTIVE BUSINESS TIME

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

1. **Councillor Lane, on behalf of Councillor JR Fox, asked the Deputy Leader:**

Would the Deputy Leader agree that OAP's and disabled people should be encouraged to take on allotments, and will he consider ensuring that there is no increase in the fee for OAP and disabled allotment holders, now that their concession cards have been withdrawn. Further, can he reassure the public that the Council will remain in charge of allotment allocation and costing after the transfer of City Services?

The Deputy Leader responded:

The Council has held the fee for allotments at £52 per plot per year and set a single fee for partial allotments at £39 in order to provide clarity and consistency. In setting these rates we have noted the comments of the National Association of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners and their view that £52 is a reasonable amount. Indeed their view on their website two years ago was that the then £25 national average was derisory.

The charge that the Council levies includes the water supplied to allotment holders which equates to approximately £10 per plot per year and the maintenance of the infrastructure, pathways, fences and services. These all fall outside the framework of legislation which merely requires Local Authorities to provide open pieces of land. It is our allotment holders' wish, however, to have secure locations and therefore there has already been investment in fencing and maintenance of plots.

Following the transfer of City Services in the Lot 3 process the allotments will be maintained and managed by the new supplier. However, the Council will continue to set the policy and indeed the rents. Allocation of plots is already undertaken by the local representative on each site and is only dealt with by the management team as a matter of last resort.