

**MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD  
4 DECEMBER 2013**

**The Mayor – Councillor June Stokes**

**Present:**

Councillors Arculus, Ash, Casey, Cereste, Eley, Fitzgerald, Fletcher, Forbes, JA Fox, JR Fox, Goodwin, Harper, Harrington, Hiller, Holdich, Jamil, Johnson, Khan, Knowles, Kreling, Lane, Lee, Maqbool, Martin, McKean, Miners, Murphy, Nadeem, Nawaz, North, Over, Peach, Rush, Saltmarsh, Sanders, Sandford, Scott, Seaton, Serluca, Shabbir, Shaheed, Sharp, Shearman, Simons, Stokes, Swift, Sylvester, Todd, Thulbourn and Walsh.

A minute's silence was held for Mr Norman Saltmarsh, husband of Councillor Bella Saltmarsh.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allen, Day, Davidson, Fower, Lamb and Thacker.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Miners declared a pecuniary interest in the 'Early Years Services Including Children's Centres' decision made by Cabinet at its meeting held on 18 November 2013 in that his partner worked for one of the service providers and would be affected by the new proposed delivery of the service.

The Legal Officer provided clarification to Members as to whether it was necessary to leave the Chamber if they believed they were biased to any decision. It was advised that they did not need to leave, however they should not take part in debate or vote on the issue.

**3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 9 October 2013**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2013 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

**4. Mayor's Announcement Report**

The Mayor advised that the Deputy Mayor had been unable to attend the 'Thanksgiving Service and Pie' social event that was listed.

With the amendment, Members noted the report outlining the Mayor's engagements for the period commencing 30 September 2013 to 1 December 2013.

The Mayor thanked Members for their support over the last six months and wished all a happy Christmas and New Year.

**5. Leader's Announcements**

There were no announcements from the Leader.

## **6. Chief Executive's Announcements**

There were no announcements from the Chief Executive.

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TIME**

### **7. Questions with Notice by Members of the Public**

There had been two questions received from members of the public, these were in relation to:

1. The cost of running the Children's Centres; and
2. The impact that the public would have on the proposals to close the Children's Centres.

### **8. Questions with Notice by Members of the Council Relating to Ward Matters and to Committee Chairmen**

Questions relating to ward matters were raised and taken as read in respect of the following:

1. The proposed partial closure of Caverstede Early Years Centre;
2. The solar panels installed on the Freemans building;
3. The future of schools on and around the Peterborough District Hospital site; and
4. Timescales for new streetlights along Fulbridge Road.

Due to the time limit for the item being reached, a question relating to the following topic was responded to in writing outside the meeting:

5. Why residents had no say or input into the Tesco store opening along Oundle Road.

A summary of all questions and answers raised within agenda item 8 are attached at **APPENDIX A** to these minutes.

### **9. Questions with Notice by Members of the Council to representatives of the Fire Authority and Police and Crime Panel**

There were no questions received.

### **10. Petitions Submitted by Members or Residents**

Councillor Shearman submitted a petition signed by approximately 180 residents, requesting that the Council negotiate with Stagecoach with a view to re-routing, along Garton End Road and Elmfield Road, a number of journeys each day on Route 2, to protect the needs of elderly and vulnerable people who had lost out due to the removal of subsidies to the local link service.

Councillor Thulbourn submitted a petition signed by approximately 265 residents, requesting that the Council stop the Tesco development in Oundle Road and also to ensure that resident's opinions were taken into consideration on these type of projects going forward.

Mrs Angela Brennan submitted a petition signed by approximately 665 residents requesting that the requesting that the proposals to close down six children's centres and to restructure others, be rescinded.

Ms Faustina Yang submitted a petition signed by approximately 165 residents requesting that the proposals to close down Hampton Children's Centre and to

restructure the others be rescinded.

A further petition was received by a member of the public signed by approximately 45 residents requesting that the proposals to close down six children's centres and to restructure others, be rescinded.

Clarification was sought by Councillor Khan as to the number of signatures a petition required in order for a debate to be triggered at Full Council, as was stated on the Council's website. The Legal Officer advised that there was currently no provision for this within the Standing Orders and the wording on the website would be investigated for accuracy.

## **EXECUTIVE BUSINESS TIME**

### **11. Questions with Notice to the Leader and Members of the Executive**

Questions to the Leader and Members of the Executive were raised, with all of the questions being taken as read, in respect of the following:

1. The issues faced by residents due to the lack of brown bin collections during the winter months;
2. The loss of urban green space to development;
3. The policy for outreach services following the closure of the Veranda and details of the consultation process;
4. The measures in place to assist families with the bedroom tax;
5. Whether call-in had been factored into the timeline for the Children's Centres decision;
6. Whether the MPs actions were having a detrimental impact upon the investment in Peterborough; and
7. Progress made into researching webcasting.

A summary of all questions and answers raised within agenda item 11 is attached at **APPENDIX B** to these minutes.

### **12. Questions without Notice on the Record of Executive Decisions**

Members received and noted a report summarising:

1. Decisions taken at the Cabinet Meetings held on 4 November 2013 and 18 November 2013;
2. Use of the Council's call-in mechanism, which had not been invoked since the previous meeting;
3. Special Urgency and Waiver of Call-in provision, which had been invoked once since the previous meeting in relation to the decision 'Termination of Development Agreement and Compulsory Purchase Order Agreement in Respect of North Westgate' – OCT13/CMDN/084; and
4. Cabinet Member Decisions taken during the period 1 October 2013 to 12 November 2013.

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

##### Early Years Services Including Children's Centres

Prior to questions, Councillor John Fox declared an interest in the item, in that he sat on the Advisory Board for the Welbourne School Children's Centre.

Councillor Judy Fox declared that she too sat on the Advisory Board for the Welbourne School Children's Centre.

Councillor Seaton, Councillor Shabbir, Councillor Khan and Councillor Swift declared that they too sat on advisory boards and Councillor Casey declared that he was a Governor at Brewster Avenue School and also sat on an advisory Board.

The Legal Officer advised that Members were appointed to Advisory Boards in a non-fee earning capacity, therefore these appointments were not disclosable pecuniary interests, however there may be an issue in relation to predetermination on the matter, in which case Members would be able to speak but not vote on any decisions, of which there were none in the agenda item under consideration.

Councillor Murphy queried why there had not been a proposal to cut Members' Allowances, as a non-ringfenced fund, yet there were proposals for a 40% cut in the 0-2 provision at the Children's Centres, which was also non-ringfenced? The Legal Officer advised Councillor Murphy that this question was not relevant to the decision made at Cabinet, this being for the proposals to go out for consultation and not for any approval in budget cuts.

Councillor Murphy stated that the 'Executive Report – Record of Executive Decisions' report did not detail that there had been a call-in invoked since the previous meeting, this being for Children's Centres decision. The Legal Officer advised that the call-in would be reported to the next Council meeting as it had happened following the publication of the meeting papers.

#### Appointment of Authority Governor – Matley Primary School

Councillor Shearman sought clarification as to what happened to those Local Authority (LA) Governors appointed to primary schools that subsequently changed to academies. Were there LA representatives on academies? Councillor Holdich stated that all academy schools had one LA representative on their board and the lady appointed as a Governor to Matley Primary School would also become an academy governor.

#### Termination of Development Agreement and Compulsory Purchase Order Agreement in Respect of North Westgate – Special Urgency Provisions Invoked

Councillor Thulbourn queried whether the Peterborough MP had any involvement in the decision? Councillor Cereste responded that the MP had no involvement, rather it was a technical issue relating to the transfer of ownership of Queensgate to the new owners.

#### A1139 Fletton Parkway Junction 17 A1(M) – Junction 2 Widening Scheme – Appointment of Site Supervision and Contract Administrator

Councillor Thulbourn queried whether the decision would go some way to assisting with air quality on the Fletton Avenue, Fletton High Street, Whittlesey Road, Stanground corner, as this area had some of the worst air quality in the city and was one of the worst in the region. Councillor Cereste advised that he was not in a position to answer the question.

Councillor Sandford sought assurance that the timings of the signals would be fixed to allow for people, particularly the elderly, to have plenty of time to get across the crossing. Councillor Cereste gave his assurance that this would be the case.

#### Technical Financial Advisory Services for the Energy Services Company (ESCO) "Blue Sky Peterborough" and Related Projects

Councillor Harrington sought further information regarding the contract awarded to Deloitte and requested whether other related projects be further elaborated upon? Councillor Seaton advised that it was a draw down contract and all projects would be

brought forward in due course and would be subject to separate business cases. There were a range of areas on which the contract could impact including Energy From Waste and Roof Mounted Solar Panels.

Councillor Murphy queried whether there was a limit to the budget for the contract. Councillor Seaton advised that all of the projects would be separate, with separate budgets that would be called off as and when required. The Council's budget was discussed every year in March and was in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Councillor Fletcher requested that a proper answer be given to Councillor Murphy's question. Councillor Seaton stated that he had provided a response, however for clarification the draw down could include projects such as Energy From Waste. This project had its own specific budget and the Council agreed its budget every year.

Councillor Thulbourn requested clarification as to how much was being paid to Deloitte by Blue Sky for both the forthcoming year and the following year, was there any limit to the amount? Councillor Seaton advised that it was entirely dependent upon the work that they were required to do. For each area of draw down there would be a specific business case that would set out the costs for that piece of work. The budget envelopes for specific projects, set by the Council, could not be exceeded.

#### Bourges Boulevard Improvement Scheme – Bright Street to Crescent Bridget

Councillor Jamil sought assurance that the works being undertaken on a number of roads in the city would be approached in a joined up manner, minimising the need for roads to be continuously dug up, therefore saving money and reducing congestion. Councillor Cereste stated that he worked closely alongside the highways department and officers to ensure that when works were planned, they caused as little disruption as possible. Councillor Cereste further stated that he could not categorically state that there would be no disruption, however there was an excellent ring road around the city which could be utilised better.

Councillor Ash sought assurance that the improvement scheme would in no way restrict the traffic flows. Councillor Cereste advised that Bourges Boulevard would remain two lanes in both directions, with a slipway going into the railway station from the Crescent Bridge roundabout. With the addition of traffic lights, officers had estimated that between Bright Street Car Park and Crescent Bridge, drivers could expect to add an average of one minute onto their journey time.

Councillor Lane sought clarification as to the source of the funding for the works. Councillor Cereste advised that between government funding and the developer, this would equate to £2.7m, the remaining approximately £2m would be paid for over the lifetime of the scheme by the increase in rates from the use of the nearby site and any new developments that the site would facilitate.

Councillor John Fox stated that it was impossible for people with disabilities, particularly those in wheelchairs, to access the railway station easily and any improvements were therefore welcomed.

#### Commissioning a Dementia Resource Centre

Councillor Shearman stated that there had been issues on the site with regards to drinking and drug taking, therefore could the security of the site be addressed going forward. Councillor Fitzgerald advised that substantial capital was being put into the building, including the external areas, in order to redevelop it and Councillor Shearman's comments would be noted and passed to the Executive Director of Health and Wellbeing.

Councillor Saltmarsh requested clarification as to when works on the site were likely to start, and when the centre was likely to be open. Councillor Fitzgerald stated that he

had been advised springtime, but he would confirm this timeline and get back to Councillor Saltmarsh outside of the meeting.

## **COUNCIL BUSINESS TIME**

### **13. Executive Recommendations**

#### **(a) City Centre Development Plan Document**

Cabinet at its meeting of 4 November 2013 received a report, following approval of the Consultation Draft version of the City Centre DPD (from now on referred to as the City Centre Plan) on 10 December 2012, and following public consultation and further evidence gathered since that date.

Councillor Cereste introduced the report and moved the recommendation that Council approved the Peterborough City Centre DPD (Proposed Submission Version) for the purposes of public consultation and submission to the Secretary of State, subject to the amendments as detailed within the report. This was seconded by Councillor Hiller, who reserved his right to speak.

Members debated the recommendation and in summary raised points including:

- Were there plans within the document to prevent Tesco from taking over numerous properties across the city, as they had done in Woodston?
- Assurance was sought that the Queensgate development would match up with the Bourges Boulevard crossing, to ensure that people crossing the road had somewhere to go. An earlier scheme had mentioned easier access into Queensgate and into the bus station;
- The older buildings along the riverside such as the old mill, added interest and should be renovated in order to make them more attractive. Existing buildings should be improved and given a new life, making the city more interesting;
- The city centre was not particularly lively later on in the evenings;
- The Plans to regenerate North Westgate were welcomed and this regeneration would hopefully bring new business to the area;
- The New England and Millfield areas had not been identified in the Plan for regeneration, work did need to be undertaken in these areas;
- The Long Causeway works' timetable needed to be adhered to, in order to ensure the least amount of disruption;
- There were some wonderful houses along Broadway and Park Road, and initiatives were needed to entice the small businesses away from them to enable them to be brought back into residential use;
- The submission was extremely good and hopefully it could be carried forward and delivered;
- It should be ensured that the Plan did not become too developer led;
- Ensuring the sustainability of public transport and tackling climate change were important and should continue to be addressed;
- The overdevelopment of supermarkets in the city particularly along Bourges Boulevard should be avoided;
- The document was excellent for which the planning department should be congratulated; and
- The scheme was well thought out and would deliver business and good quality homes for the people of Peterborough.

Councillor Hiller exercised his right to speak and in response to points raised by Members advised that the majority of planning applications for a change of use required planning consent and Ward Councillors could refer these issues to the Planning Committee for consideration. Also, recent government initiatives did favour

office use reverting to residential use and as a local planning authority, Peterborough City Council would look at city centre properties favourably for reversion. Finally, Gemma Wildman, Principal Planner was to be congratulated for her work on the document and Councillor Hiller reiterated how far advanced the award winning planning department was.

Councillor Cereste summed up as mover of the recommendation and in so doing reaffirmed that access from across Bourges Boulevard into Queensgate would be addressed, as it was of the utmost importance to ensure a proper access for those that needed it. Councillor Cereste also agreed that there were a number of lovely old buildings in city and as many of these would be kept as possible. Regarding delivery, a number of schemes had been delivered already and on time and this would be the case with Long Causeway and Bourges Boulevard.

A vote was taken (unanimous) and it was **RESOLVED** that:

Council approves the Peterborough City Centre DPD (Proposed Submission Version) for the purposes of public consultation and submission to the Secretary of State, subject to the following amendments:

- i) Reference to 'disability forums' to be amended to 'disability forums and other disability organisations';
- ii) Page 72 of the Development Plan Document, implementation detail for Policy CC1 to include 'and accessibility issues for disabled'; and
- iii) Ensure the provision of drop off and pick up areas for coaches and buses by including the following wording at 6.1.20 of the DPD:  
"the council will encourage provision of coach parking facilities to attract visitors to the city centre. Within the Opportunities Areas where there is a mix of uses including leisure (D2) the developer will be required to provide coach or bus parking spaces as set out in Appendix A (PP13) of the Planning Policies DPD. Individual parking requirements will be assessed for each application based on the mix of uses proposed".

## **14. Reports and Recommendations**

### **a) Report of the Independent Members' Remuneration Panel**

Council received a report which requested it to note the recommendations of the Independent Members' Allowances Panel and to determine the action it wished to take in response to those recommendations. Councillor Cereste introduced the report and stated that whilst he supported the idea that Councillors should be remunerated appropriately for what they do, the particular recommendations contained within the Panel's report would add in excess of £100k to the budget, and this was considered to be unacceptable. The Panel was thanked for the hard work and effort that they had put into the report, however the Conservative Group could not support any increase and Councillor Cereste moved a motion that there be no change to the current allowances scheme for 2014/15. This was seconded by Councillor Walsh who reserved her right to speak.

Members debated the motion and raised points including:

- This was the third year that the Panel's recommendations had been rejected in their entirety;
- Continued rejection could create an impression that those in power were responsible for determining their own remuneration;
- The basic level of remuneration could compound problems in the future by deterring able individuals from becoming Councillors, a small increase in the basic allowance would have been more appropriate;

- With the current financial climate and with the cuts to valuable public services and jobs, any increase would be insensitive and out of touch; and
- The implementation of a set figure for all council's would mean that the issues experienced when determining members' remuneration would be avoided going forward.

Councillor Walsh exercised her right to speak and in doing so stated that although there were green shoots appearing in the economy, any increase in members' remuneration would be inappropriate when residents were being asked to accept the consequences of decisions that the Council was having to make.

Councillor Cereste summed up as mover of the recommendation and stated that he did not have anything further to add.

A recorded vote was requested and agreed. Members voted as follows:

**Councillors For:** Arculus, Ash, Casey, Cereste, Eley, Fitzgerald, Fletcher, Forbes, JR Fox, JA Fox, Goodwin, Harper, Harrington, Hiller, Holdich, Jamil, Johnson, Khan, Kreling, Lane, Lee, Maqbool, Martin, McKean, Miners, Murphy, Nadeem, Nawaz, North, Over, Peach, Rush, Saltmarsh, Sanders, Scott, Seaton, Serluca, Shabbir, Sharp, Shearman, Stokes, Swift, Sylvester, Todd, Thulbourn and Walsh.

**Councillors Against:** None.

**Councillors Abstaining:** Knowles, Sandford and Shaheed.

Following the vote (46 For, 0 Against and 3 Abstentions) the motion was **CARRIED** as follows:

That the Council notes the recommendations of the Independent Members' Allowances Panel, as summarised at paragraph 3 of the report, and that there should be no increase in the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2014/15.

#### **b) Budget and Policy Framework – Revised Budget Timetable**

Council received a report that requested it approve a revised budget process and timetable, which included commencing budget consultation at the Cabinet meeting scheduled to take place on 3 February 2014. Councillor Seaton moved the recommendations in the report and this was seconded by Councillor Eley.

A vote was taken (unanimous) and it was **RESOLVED** to:

Approve a revised budget process and timetable that included commencing budget consultation at the Cabinet meeting on 3 February 2014.

#### **c) Governance Issues – Amendments to the Rules of Procedure**

Council received a report requesting that a number of Standing Orders be varied and adopted, and that the proposed variation be postponed without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of Council, in accordance with Standing Order 10 of the General Standing Orders. Furthermore that the Constitution Working Group consider those revisions made following six months of operation and report back to the Council as necessary. Councillor Seaton moved the recommendations in the report stating that the proposals were tabled and would be brought back to the next appropriate meeting for debate. Councillor Seaton further thanked the officers and the cross party working group for the work undertaken.



This was seconded by Councillor Sandford and he endorsed the comments made by Councillor Seaton.

A vote was taken (unanimous) and it was **RESOLVED** to:

Postpone the proposed variation without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of council, in accordance with Standing Order 10 of the General Standing Orders.

**e) Governance Issues – Date of Annual Council 2014**

Council received a report requesting it agreed to confirm the date of Annual Council in 2014. Councillor Seaton moved the recommendation and this was seconded by Councillor North.

A vote was taken (unanimous) and it was **RESOLVED**:

That Council, in respect of the Programme of Meetings June 2014 to May 2015, agreed to confirm the date of Annual Council as Monday 16 June 2014.

**f) Governance Issues - Appointment to Fire Authority**

Council received a report requesting it to agree to appoint Council David Over to the Cambridgeshire Fire Authority following the resignation of Council Sue Day. Councillor Cereste moved the recommendation and this was seconded by Councillor Holdich.

A vote was taken (unanimous) and it was **RESOLVED**:

That Council agree to appoint Councillor David Over to the Cambridgeshire Fire Authority following the resignation of Councillor Sue Day as a member of the Fire Authority.

The Mayor  
7.00pm – 9.06pm

## FULL COUNCIL 4 DECEMBER 2013

## QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS

Questions were received under the following categories:

<b><u>COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TIME</u></b>	
<b>7.</b>	<b><u>Questions with notice by members of the public</u></b>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Question from Emma Majewicz</b></p> <p>To Councillor Scott, Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member please give details on how much it costs each children's centre in Peterborough to run per annum and explain why these figures have not been included in the formal consultation paper: New Vision for Early Years Services Including Children's Centres in Peterborough?</p> <p><b>Councillor Scott responded:</b></p> <p>With three of the contracts that were awarded, they were not awarded for individual children's centres, they were introduced for more than one and it was up to Barnardos or Spurgeons how they chose to deliver the contract and to use the money providing they achieved the outcomes identified in the contract. But I can tell you what those sums of money are for the delivery of children's centres in:</p> <p>Central and East Locality, service delivered by Barnardos, total cost is £1,100,863.00 and for delivery in the south, the contract was awarded to Spurgeons and the contract was for £600,000.00 and for delivery in the north western rural locality the cost of the contract was £673,735.00. Additionally there are three other children's centres not included in that, the first is the Werrington Children's Centre and the contract is for £87,362.00, the Wittering Children's Centre £57,500.00 and the Caverstede Children's Centre £145,600.00.</p> <p><b>Mrs Brennan asked the following supplementary question:</b></p> <p>With regard to that, we need a more clear breakdown of costs, because you've been asking the public to propose alternatives, if you were to go in with proposals with just one blank figure like that, with no breakdown on the consultation papers that you have, the banks would just probably throw it out, so if you could regard to the alternatives as well, there is no way that the public in this timeframe could actually come up with any alternatives for that.</p> <p><b>Councillor Scott responded:</b></p> <p>These were whole contracts for the delivery of a service in more than one children's centre. I hear what you are saying, it's not that I don't, I don't know if I can supply you with that further information. I can supply you with the facts that I've got, I will consult with my officers again and write to you if we can give you any supplementary information.</p>

2.	<p><b>Question from Emma Majewicz</b></p> <p>To Councillor Scott, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services</p> <p>Please will the Cabinet Member explain what impact the public will have on the proposals and would it be considered not to close down 6 children’s centres due to strong public opposition?</p> <p><b>Councillor Scott responded:</b></p> <p>We’ve already been influenced by the public consultation and we have had six public meetings and I know that more private meetings are going on in the children’s centres as well and with other groups of people involved in children’s work. There have at some times been some interesting and sometimes innovative things said to us and we are looking at all the suggestions that are being made to us and they may well have an influence on the decision that we make, indeed I don’t expect the proposal as it currently stands will be the proposal that goes to Cabinet in January. It doesn’t alter the broad outline of the fact that there are many different influences on us in the decision making process and we have to listen to all the people that are responding and not just one group.</p> <p><b>Mrs Angela Brennan asked the following supplementary question:</b></p> <p>We are very pleased that you are taking on these comments as well, are the Council aware of what the comments were and how strong the opposition is, because if a Council cannot take its peoples view and the public’s vote, because it’s the public and taxpayers money that’s going into these, how can you pass that proposal?</p> <p><b>Councillor Scott responded:</b></p> <p>There are a number of things that I would like to say to you in response to that. The first is, I think you have possibly heard me say this before, that the Council at the annual finance meeting has to present a balanced budget and I, along with all other members of the Council, have to take that into account. As well as my suggestion which I’ve made several times now that people should contact me directly as well as responding to the consultation I think the other thing that individuals can do is at least copy in their responses to their own ward councillors, that’s the one thing they should do, because if ward councillors are not hearing from people then they won’t take on board how strong either for or against the proposals the public’s views are.</p>
8.	<p><b><u>Questions with notice by Members relating to ward matters To the Cabinet Members and to Committee Chairmen</u></b></p>
1.	<p><b>Question from Councillor Sandford</b></p> <p>To Councillor Scott Cabinet Member for Children’s Services</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services explain why, when the Caverstede Early Learning Centre has consistently been rated as providing excellent education and support for children, it has been earmarked for partial closure in the current consultation on the future of children’s centres being carried out by her department?</p> <p><b>Councillor Scott responded:</b></p> <p>The Formal Consultation Paper: New Vision for Early Years Services including Children’s Centres in Peterborough, outlines the methodology and criteria for determining the proposed delivery of the children’s centre services, including the introduction of super centre hubs and outreach venues. The decision is based around</p>

the levels of deprivation in the city, and focuses provision in those areas that demonstrate the highest needs, based on these deprivation levels. Whilst Walton ward does experience some levels of deprivation, it is not in one of the most disadvantaged areas in Peterborough.

However, we recognise, as I'm sure that everybody who is involved with children's centres in the city, the importance of the quality and the work that Caverstede delivers. It delivers, as we know from every Ofsted report, an outstanding service, and therefore the proposal is to ensure that the skills of Caverstede are recognised and that they would continue to deliver services for children with complex needs. And if the plans around Caverstede were to be implemented, the service would be available to those children with a high level of need across the city.

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

Would the Cabinet Member recognise that although Caverstede is going to continue to provide a service to certain groups of children, the removal of it as a general children's centre is going to mean that parents are going to have to travel to considerable distances to access the services of a children's centre. My understanding is that the nearest super hub would be at Honeyhill Centre, so there seems to be an assumption that all parents have cars and can just drive there, but would she recognise that this administration as well as cutting children's services has also cut public transport, would she recognise that this could impose great hardship on people who would normally access this particular centre?

**Councillor Scott responded:**

Difficult decisions sometimes have to be made and these are very difficult decisions. We have heard on more than one occasion during the public consultation about the public transport links and we are going to be looking at that following the consultation.

**2. Question from Councillor Murphy**

To Councillor Seaton, Cabinet Member for Resources

To the Cabinet Member for Resources. Are the solar panels installed on the "Freemans building" generating electricity yet as no significant monies have been received by the council and can he let me know who the companies, contractors and sub-contractors are who were involved in the project installation and those that are involved in other aspects concerning this project?

**Councillor Seaton responded:**

The Council has made numerous public statements on this issue, but I am happy to repeat them for the benefit of Councillor Murphy. The solar panels on the former Freemans building are generating electricity. The Council continues to discuss with OFGEM the appropriate accreditation to receive the FIT income from this generation.

The Council contracted Enterprise to undertake the works, who in turn utilised Applied Sustainable Energy for the installation. The Council was supported in the project by Davis Langdon, Deloitte and Pinsent Masons, who continue to support the Council in its discussions with OFGEM.

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

Did the Cabinet Member anticipate the Council getting a penny from this investment this year at all?

	<p><b>Councillor Seaton responded:</b></p> <p>I doubt that in 2013, this year, that we would get any money from that particular issue.</p>
3.	<p><b>Question from Councillor Arculus</b></p> <p>To Councillor Holdich, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University</p> <p>With the recent news that the PDH site has been sold it is to be hoped that the Hospital site in West Ward is now due for welcome regeneration. Can the Cabinet Member for education please provide us with his strategic view on the future for schools in the area (with particular focus on new schools to be located on the PDH site); and, the projected timescale for the implementation of these improvements?</p> <p><b>Councillor Holdich responded:</b></p> <p>I am sure that we are all pleased to learn that the PDH site has been sold and we can start work with the developer around our proposals to relocate and expand West Town Primary School on the site. We are hoping to open the school by September 2015 and we have a successful bid for government funding for the majority of the cost. It is an exciting scheme which will incorporate the Hospitals Memorial Wing and will provide an additional 330 places which are well needed in the area. We are currently reviewing the demographic needs of both primary and secondary in the area and across the city and expect to release our updated school organisation plan in the spring. I am also pleased to say that the government have appointed Kier Eastern to build the school who have a very good reputation of building schools in this city.</p> <p><b>Councillor Arculus did not have a supplementary question.</b></p>
4.	<p><b>Question from Councillor Davidson</b></p> <p>To Councillor Cereste, Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member please confirm why street lighting on Gunthorpe Road has a number of new white led lights but a number of the older amber lights are still in place and can he tell me when the lights on Fulbridge Road Werrington will be changed to the new lighting?</p> <p><b>Councillor Cereste responded:</b></p> <p>The Council is investing funding through the Medium Term Financial Strategy to upgrade the street lighting all across Peterborough. The street lighting replacement programme is underway in the city to replace the aging columns, and we are approaching the end of that programme. Many of the columns are reaching the end of their design life and it is important that we complete the work that we have started. We wish to install Light Emitting Diodes (LED) lanterns, they will save energy and will last much much longer. They are far superior to the old orange lighting and of course we will get a better life from them and make greater savings. The savings will make quite a difference to the Council's energy bills.</p> <p>The lighting on Gunthorpe Road was due to be completed by Volker Highways prior to the commencement of the new highways contract on the 1 October 2013.</p> <p>Unfortunately they came across difficulties and their works were not completed and the road was left incomplete. The difficulties included specialised electrical works thereby an order has had to be placed with UK Power Network (UKPN) to complete the necessary connections. The delays in completing this work has been due firstly by a</p>

	<p>delay in us receiving relevant installation certificates from our previous contractor and secondly, by us awaiting for UKPN to designate a time in their work program, for which we have no control over. UKPN has supplied us with an expected start date which is the week commencing the 2 December 2013. The work will include the remaining non illuminated white lights being connected to the electrical supply and the removal of the old columns which have the orange lighting.</p> <p>Fulbridge Road has not yet been identified for any upgrade programme as the columns and lanterns are in a good state of repair. Streets for the lantern upgrades are identified throughout the information we have regarding our assets and stored on our asset data base. If anyone would like this information we can provide it for them, it is updated through our structural and electrical testing regime. Based on this information we hold, we prioritise street lighting replacements where they are most needed.</p> <p><b>Councillor Davidson was not in attendance to ask a supplementary question.</b></p>
5.	<p><b>Question from Councillor Thulbourn</b></p> <p>To Councillor Cereste, Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement</p> <p>Could the leader tell my constituents why they have no say or any input into the ability of Tesco's to open a store with all its ramifications and impose themselves on the Oundle Road community?</p> <p><b>Councillor Cereste may have responded:</b></p> <p>Under national planning law, some developments including some changes of use of land and buildings can take place without the need for planning permission to be applied for. An example of this is the change of use from a public house to a shop. As planning permission is not needed for the change of use of the building there has been no planning application to consult the local community on. Whilst planning permission is needed for any changes to the shop front, advertising and for any external plant, these proposals must be considered in the context of their appearance and noise impact respectively and not with regard to the issue of the change of use of the building to a shop.</p>
9.	<p><b><u>Questions with notice by Members to Council representatives of the Fire Authority and Police and Crime Panel</u></b></p>
	<p><b>None received.</b></p>

## EXECUTIVE BUSINESS TIME

### 11. Questions with Notice to the Leader and Members of the Executive

#### 1. **Question from Councillor Shearman**

To Councillor Elsey, Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation and Waste Management

In recent years we have been informed that the collection of brown bin waste is suspended over the Christmas and New Year period to take account of the additional waste materials generated at this time. However this year many residents will be without brown bin collections for over three months. Will the Cabinet Member acknowledge the problems this is causing for many gardeners in the so called Environment Capital of the UK, and also acknowledge that this decision has nothing to do with the collection of additional black bin waste but is merely a cost-cutting exercise?

#### **Councillor Elsey responded:**

The decision to suspend the brown bin service for three months was taken due to the evidence from previous years that there is very little participation in this service over this period. The tonnage drops from around 1600 tonnes to 400 tonnes with very few households putting the brown bin out. Running a fortnightly service to 62,000 properties as at present means that any environmental benefits of the service are outweighed by having trucks running around the city emitting CO2 and yet collecting very little green waste. Residents who have garden waste to dispose of are able to use the free Household Recycling Centre at Dogsthorpe which is open throughout the winter every day from 8.00am to 4.00pm, being closed only for Christmas, Boxing and New Year's Day. In addition, the Council will be providing skips at several Garden Centres across the City for Christmas tree recycling.

In addition to that, the question relating to 'was this just a cost cutting exercise'? I believe most Councillors will now be in receipt of an email I sent earlier re-instating the brown bin service for two weeks to give allowance for the fact that we've had an extremely late fall of leaves this year and that there is a significant amount of brown bin waste to be collected, so the service will be reinstated as of next Monday for two weeks so every household will get one further collection this year prior to the service stopping until February.

#### **Councillor Shearman asked the following supplementary question:**

You referred to your email that we got earlier today, there was an implication in that email that residents had all been informed of the brown bin collection dates some while ago, that was the implication, yet in an email I've got here from Anne Nicole at Enterprise it makes it clear that that decision was made before the first email went out to Councillors, where we had the Hungry Harry PDF which stated that the service would be suspended in December and January, I then get an email from her when I queried that on the 26 November and she said it's only within the previous few days that the Council have instructed us to extend that into February. Perhaps I misread your email, but they are the facts. The other thing that I think Councillor Thacker has already alluded to or referred to, is that it's only those people whose collection dates are going to be changed, as I understand it, have had the bin hangers, so therefore those people will not know about the changes in the brown bin collection. I had reason to complain last year on behalf of Dogsthorpe residents and I got an apology from you and assurance that this would never happen again and here we are twelve months later and we've got a similar mess. But my

question Madam Mayor, and thank you for letting me make that point, my question is have you considered any alternatives to your decision and is one of those alternatives an imposition of a charge for members of the public per year to have their brown bins emptied? Would you give a categorical assurance that that is not going to happen in the year 2013/2014?

**Councillor Elsey responded:**

I'll provide a response but just want it noted that that was nothing to do with the original question.

The yearly bin calendars went out in April and every household in Peterborough received a calendar in April which had the bin collections on it.

Christmas bin hangers have been delivered to areas, as Councillor Shearman alluded to, where the service is going to be changed as a result of the Christmas holidays. In addition to that, Enterprise Peterborough have had on their website for three months advertising the changes to the service, they have also advertised it on the Peterborough Telegraph website and they've also published it on the Peterborough City Council website. They also prepared a story for the Peterborough Telegraph that spoke in some detail about the brown bin suspension and the residual waste changes over the Christmas period however the PT chose only to publish this story on residual waste.

With regard to the question which wasn't related and is therefore not supplementary, all I can say is, as my colleague Councillor Scott alluded to, we are in a position of unprecedented austerity as a result of Councillor Shearman's last government who left us in this predicament, however as a result of that there are no sacred cows and as an authority and as an administration we are having to make some very difficult choices, as a result of that there is nothing which we are not prepared to look at to make sure that the services that we provide to Peterborough with the restraints we've got on our budget are of the highest standard and the best that we can possibly achieve. So the answer to the question is that there is nothing that we are not considering as a result of the pressures that we are now working under.

2. **Question from Councillor Davidson**

To Councillor Cereste, Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement

Could the Cabinet Member tell me what is being done to prevent continual loss of our urban green space to development? Green space has a variety of benefits including allowing functions and events to be held, landscape, wildlife and cultural benefits etc. and once it has been lost it is very difficult to get it back.

**Councillor Cereste responded:**

I certainly agree that it is important to keep valuable areas of green space in our city and villages so that Peterborough remains an attractive place for everybody. We have some wonderful green spaces and a very high ratio of open space per person compared with most other cities.

The main tool we have available to prevent the loss of valuable spaces is through our decisions on planning applications. We have a very clear policy in our Peterborough Core Strategy which says that we will not grant planning permission for a development that would result in the loss of existing open space, other than in exceptional circumstances, and we can rely on that if it's necessary to refuse a planning application.

And when we do allow some green space to be lost, perhaps because it's poorly located



	<p>or too small to be of any value, we get the developer to fund or provide something better as compensation.</p> <p><b>Councillor Davidson was not in attendance to ask a supplementary question.</b></p>
3.	<p><b>Question from Councillor Murphy</b></p> <p>To Councillor Scott Cabinet Member for Children’s Services</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member give details of the policy for outreach services and actual outreach services provided to children and their parents and guardians following the recent closure of the large significantly staffed Sure Start centre - the Veranda - and can she kindly provide details of the consultation process that was undertaken in line with section 5D of the childcare Act 2006?</p> <p><b>Councillor Scott responded:</b></p> <p>The outreach provision will be through home visiting as well as through the delivery of programmes of support in other community facilities. This may include school sites and community centres.</p> <p>The consultation regarding the Veranda was undertaken as part of the “Gladstone Vision”, a vision for the capital investment providing regeneration, with improved integrated services for Children, Families and the Community. Public consultation was held, and I understand there was good involvement, with key stakeholders including the local schools, service providers and parents. A consultation event was held on 30 April 2013 and the event outlined plans for the whole area, including the relocation of children’s centre services. Members of the public, ward councillors and community organisations were invited to the event and I understand that the ward councillors were fully involved in the consultation process.</p> <p><b>Councillor Murphy asked the following supplementary question:</b></p> <p>Where have the health visitors gone and the clinics gone and how are they being done by outreach? And was the public consultation in line with Section 5D of the Children Care Act, the consultation you talked about was completely different and not to do with children centre provision specifically in the area.</p> <p><b>Councillor Scott responded:</b></p> <p>The first part of the question I will have to respond to him in writing about health visitors, as far as I understand the process that was undertaken for the consultation was the appropriate consultation, I will consult with officers after the meeting and if I need to I will write to Councillor Murphy after that.</p>
4.	<p><b>Question from Councillor Davidson</b></p> <p>To Councillor Cereste, Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement</p> <p>What measures are in place, to help families who are struggling following removal of the spare room subsidy (otherwise known as "bedroom tax")? A new survey shows how many East of England families are really being hit by this and Peterborough has been identified by being one of the hardest hit.</p> <p>To be precise, almost 34,000 East of England families were hit by this change in August according to new data released by the Government and analysed by the National Housing Federation [NHF] – the first survey to show actual numbers affected by the controversial</p>

policy.

East of England families affected lost more money per week than any other region in England outside London and the South East, with an average reduction in housing benefit of £829 per year.

28,071 families were under-occupying by one bedroom and 5,551 were under-occupying by two or more. Norwich was hardest hit, with 2,908 families affected, almost double the number seen in any other Eastern local authority. Basildon came in second, with 1,630 affected families, while Peterborough came third with 1,504.

What measures has the Council put in place to support these Peterborough families?

**Councillor Cereste responded:**

The Council is working hard to assist those households who are affected by the introduction of the 'spare room subsidy'.

We have amended the housing allocations policy to give band 1 priority (the highest priority) to those who are assessed as being under occupying housing association properties, which gives them a greater chance of being successful in moving to more suitably sized, affordable accommodation. Since this change, 70 households have been successful in downsizing to a property where they are no longer affected by the spare room subsidy.

In partnership with our housing associations, we have organised a 'swap shop' event where housing association tenants who are overcrowded and under occupied were able to meet and be matched with other tenants who may have a suitable property that they can exchange with to solve both their housing issues. This well-attended event took place in October 2013 and 71 Households attended and expressed interest in exchanging their properties, with one potential swap being identified at the event. The housing associations are now working with the data collected at the event to identify other matches and facilitate other potential exchanges and we are planning another event for the New Year, which we are hopeful will attract even more interest.

We are making use of the increased allocation from the government of the Discretionary Housing Payments fund to assist some of the households who are affected by the reduction in housing benefit as a result of the 'spare room subsidy' by topping up their rent or assisting them with up-front fees to move to alternative suitable accommodation in the private sector. We also continue to offer our Rent Deposit Scheme to help people move into more appropriate accommodation.

Since April we have assisted 258 households who were threatened with homelessness to move to alternative private sector accommodation by assisting them with the up-front costs to secure a tenancy by making a discretionary housing payment or through the rent deposit scheme.

The Council is also continuing to lead the Peterborough Community Assistance Scheme which offers practical emergency help and support alongside longer term debt and other advice to help people in crisis.

**Councillor Davidson was not in attendance to ask a supplementary question.**

5. **Question from Councillor Murphy**

To Councillor Scott Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Concerning the future of Children's Centres, was the need to take account of the call in

process considered or overlooked when cabinet agreed the consultation time table and in the planning of meeting dates for consultations?

**Councillor Scott responded:**

The need to take into account the possibility of call in was considered; we did not print the consultation papers until after the call in date, however we did provisionally book venues for the public consultation, we did this because we wanted to give the public an opportunity to have their say as soon as possible after publication of the Cabinet papers.

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

Following the breathtakingly short period of less than two days if there had been a call-in to when the first consultation was taking place and the discussions on this matter, vis-a-vis the Constitution last night, could some further work be undertaken just to make sure we've got this right legally.

**Councillor Scott responded:**

The answer to the question is yes.

6. **Question from Councillor Thulbourn**

To Councillor Cereste, Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement

In light of recent events, does the leader feel the MP for Peterborough is having a detrimental effect on inward investment in to our city with respect to how he conducts his business?

**Councillor Cereste responded:**

The MP for Peterborough is entitled to his views and I am sure that he shares my commitment to furthering the economic prosperity of our city. The pace of inward investment is increasing and we can be proud of what we have achieved so far and what we will continue to achieve in the near future. We are well ahead of the national growth curve and this city is growing far faster than any other city outside of London. In the last few weeks we have heard a number of major announcements which clearly demonstrate that businesses want to invest in our city and want to come and live here. Exciting new plans for a major mixed use development in North Westgate which is actually deliverable, a bigger and better Waitrose in the Station Quarter, the sale of the former Peterborough District Hospital site for housing and a much needed new primary school, and the opening of more new restaurants and cafes in the city centre. Coupled with our own recently announced investment in public realm improvements to Bourges Boulevard and Long Causeway and many other proposals that we are negotiating I am confident that Peterborough is well and truly open for business.

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

There is obviously an issue going on here and the MPs, specifically the MP this side of the river, they do have a role to play within inward investment and there is soundings that there are issues around that. It just seems that this breakdown is starting to affect, and will affect this city so I'm looking for a solution to this. In the next 18 months we need a solution, we can't continue with this tea party extremist type politics in Peterborough and the last spat, I'm on his side about the solar farms, but I don't agree with how he went about it and we've got to do something about it. As a Council we are entitled to have support from our MPs don't you agree?

	<p><b>Councillor Cereste responded:</b></p> <p>I do agree.</p>
7.	<p><b>Question from Councillor Sandford</b></p> <p>To Councillor Cereste, Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement</p> <p>Some time ago a motion was passed at Full Council calling for an investigation to be carried out into the feasibility of broadcasting the proceedings of full council meetings over the internet. Could the leader of the council report back on what progress, if any, has been made with this investigation?</p> <p><b>Councillor Cereste responded:</b></p> <p>We have looked at a number of suppliers who could provide us with the necessary equipment to introduce webcasting to this council chamber and initial estimated costs are within the region of £30,000.</p> <p>I still believe we need to ensure we are making the most of the digital age and give our residents, businesses and other interested parties the opportunity to engage with us through various channels as well as attending council meetings in person.</p> <p>So we are considering webcasting as part of the council's overall digital strategy and will keep the Council informed on the progress we make.</p> <p><b>Councillor Sandford asked the following supplementary question:</b></p> <p>I partly welcome the reply that the Leader has given, but would he recognise that it's been some time since this motion was passed at Full Council, it's certainly more than one year and possibly even two years. Would he recognise that that for quite a small cost, because in the context of the Council £30,000 is quite a small cost, we could get great benefits in terms of increasing our openness and the accountability that we have and would he also recognise that even quite small local authorities, for example I understand that South Kesteven actually broadcast their meetings, would he give some indication of when these investigations that he's carrying out are going to reach some sort of conclusion.</p> <p><b>Councillor Cereste responded:</b></p> <p>I happened to agree with you Councillor Sandford and we are working on our digital strategy, it is something that we are literally working on as we speak. I think that we all need to move into the digital age and we will come forward with some ideas. I anticipate that it won't be very long.</p>