

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL LIAISON MEETING
HELD AT 6.30PM, ON
TUESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2018
COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor Irene Walsh (Chair)	Peterborough City Council
Councillor Angus Ellis	Peterborough City Council
Parish Councillor Keith Lievesley	Ufford Parish Council
Parish Councillor John Bartlett	Thorney Parish Council
Parish Councillor Claudine Lewis	Thorney Parish Council
Parish Councillor Joseph Dobson	Helpston Parish Council
Syd Smith (Clerk)	Helston Parish Council
Parish Councillor Neil Boyce	Castor Parish Council
Ian Dewar	CAPALC
Vince Moon	Werrington Neighbourhood Council
Geoff Smith	Werrington Neighbourhood Council
Parish Councillor Richard Clarke	Wansford Parish Council
Parish Councillor Susie Lucas	Bainton and Ashton Local Council
Parish Councillor Ian Allin	Orton Longueville Parish Council
Parish Councillor James Hayes	Bretton Parish Council
Parish Councillor Dawn Magnus	Eye Parish Council
Parish Councillor Pamela Blades	Eye Parish Council

Officers Present:

Peter Carpenter	Acting Corporate Director of Resources
Sylvia Radouani	Community Capacity Officer and Parish Coordinator
David Beauchamp	Democratic Services Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillor June Bull (Orton Longueville Parish Council), John Haste - Glinton Parish Council and Jawaid Khan - Head of Community Resilience and Integration.

2. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2019/20 TRANCHE TWO BUDGET CONSULTATION

The Acting Corporate Director of Resources delivered a presentation on Peterborough City Council's 2019/20 Tranche Two Budget. Slides may be found in Appendix 1. Introductory remarks included;

- This was the second of three occasions this year when parish councils would be consulted on the budget.

- The budget had three tranches in this financial year. This meant that growth and savings initiatives could be delivered earlier than the traditional single budget.
- 2019/20 was the fourth year of a four year local government settlement from central government. This was a watershed year as all local government funding was changing in 2020/21. Instead of receiving central government funding, local authorities would receive 75% of business rates to fund the majority of local government spending alongside council tax.
- There would be very few central government grants received at this point. They two main ones would be:
 - Direct Schools Grant
 - Housing Benefit Grant
- The new local government finance arrangements were a major change due to take place in year two of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- There was currently limited information available on how these new funding arrangements would work. There was a suggestion in the legislation that areas of high growth would receive funding to coincide with extra growth from 2021 onwards. Presently increases in funding lag behind growth. This lag could vary between 1-4 years and could cause problems in high growth areas such as Peterborough.
- For every area such as Peterborough, Swindon, Milton Keynes and Bournemouth (the top four unitary authorities for growth), there are places such as Hartlepool where the population was shrinking considerably. Decreasing funding could cause major problems in these areas. The government would therefore temper the plans to link funding with growth.

Slides of the PowerPoint presentation may be found in Appendix 1. The main sections of the presentation included:

- Budget gap 2019-20
- Why have we got a budget gap?
- Revenue Support Grant
- A breakdown of Council funding in 2018/19
- Key factors explaining the gap
- Budget Pressures
- Tranche Two Savings and Additional Income
- What's our approach to closing the gap?
- Staffing Implications
- Timelines
- Consultation

Attendees asked questions during and after the presentation. In summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Councils would receive 75% of business rates, rather than 100%, because there were other bodies needing funding that counted as local government bodies, e.g. combined authorities.
- Local government funding arrangements would change in 2020/21.
- Britain's withdrawal from the European Union (Brexit) was consuming national government resources so consultations etc. were taking longer than they normally would. Brexit might affect national tax income which could change local government finance considerably.
- It was agreed that the Acting Corporate Director of Resources would provide attendees with a breakdown of total income vs. total expenditure although it

was noted that this information could be found on page 41-42 (Appendix A) of the 15 October 2018 Cabinet report.

- The Chairman asked for more information on the extent to which the Council could influence different sources of income. The Acting Corporate Director of Resources responded that Direct Schools Grant must be spent on schools. Some of this could be spent on school improvement and this was a prescribed amount. Housing Benefit funding was received and immediately sent to claimants. The Council also owned 7 car parks and care must be taken before increasing prices as people would just park elsewhere, such as in the Queensgate development.
- Members asked what would happen if the government responded to pressure to reduce business rates. The Acting Corporate Director of Resources responded that business rates had been reset on 1 April 2017. The effect on Peterborough was neutral. Although business rate take went down slightly, the Council received a Section 31 grant which made up the difference. This only applied for one year and would be different in 2021 when the regulations changed.
- Low levels of Council Tax in Peterborough made the city more attractive and this helped to explain how the city's growth had been maintained.
- Parish Councils could employ their own Prevention and Enforcement Officers (PES) from the precept.
- It was agreed that the Acting Corporate Director of Resources would provide attendees with information on the cost of employing a PES officer.
- Hampton Parish Council would be contacted to be asked for further numerical information about the enforcement officer they employed, such as the number of hours worked.
- The Chairman stated that levels of capacity and need for services such as parking enforcement would vary between areas. It was hoped that this would generate income to allow the PES service to expand beyond the city centre, possibly meaning that parishes would not have to pay 100% of the cost of employing a PES officer. This was planned to take place but it was too early to model financially. Where there was a need for regulation and enforcement, this would start to happen.
- PES officers would not be replacing the police as criminal activities were enforceable by the police. PES officers had some delegated enforcement powers and no powers of arrest although there were several areas of enforcement work they could undertake.
- An attendee stated that police were not readily accessible in Thorney and asked whether a PES officer would be in Thorney constantly if the parish paid for them. The Chairman responded that the needs of different areas needed to be assessed with the Prevention and Enforcement Service. The Service was undergoing change. Once a model was in place this could be shared with all parish councils. It was noted that there was a presentation given on this subject at the Parish Conference. Further information would be shared with all parish councils in the following months when it became available.
- It was asked if PES officers would be trained to cover the work done by the antisocial behaviour teams in light of the fact that their budget was to be reduced by £36,000. The Acting Corporate Director of Resources responded that the Council were integrating and streamlining enforcement activities as one offering.
- It was noted that Hampton Parish Council paid an enforcement officer £25,000 per year. The Chairman stated that Hampton was one of the wealthier parishes and other parishes should not worry that if this was not affordable for them and she was hopeful that there would be more financial capacity in this area.

- The best way of reducing school transfer costs was always to assign pupils to schools nearer to where they live. This is not always possible but was always tried as there were some things the Council could not do in the area of school admissions.
- Traffic calming schemes were paid for from capital funding on an individual scheme basis and were not part of general maintenance work.
- Attendees clarified that they were seeking information on the maintenance of traffic calming, not their installation.
- It was agreed that the Acting Corporate Director of Resources would provide information on the funding and scheduling of the maintenance of traffic calming features.
- Attendees expressed concern that about the proposed reduced in the frequency of gully cleaning, saying that it was already done infrequently in rural areas. It was suggested the lacking of street cleansing could encourage fly-tipping due to the area already being dirty. The Acting Corporate Director of Resources acknowledged the legitimacy of these concerns are stated that gully cleaning would still take place as often as was required for the road to be safe as determined by highways engineers and the reduced frequency of cleaning was still considered to be safe and should not have detrimental effects.
- An attendee expressed concerns about the reduction in bus subsidies, stating that bus services were a lifeline for many people. Concerns were also raised about the extent to which these services were advertised and the quality of the service provided by Stagecoach. It was suggested that this reduction should be reconsidered. The Acting Corporate Director of Resources responded that there would be a cross-party working group to examine where reductions would take place.
- Car sharing options as a replacement for unviable buses were being explored. A possible option was an equivalent of the 'Uber' service for Peterborough. A taxi shared between 3-4 people could be cheaper than the bus.
- Care would be taken to decide which services would be reduced. The nature of the service reductions would be published in the future.
- Peterborough City Council had plans for which routes would be cut but these needed to be confirmed with Stagecoach.
- One area of concern was single elderly people being left in large village houses after their partners died and the difficulties in helping these people downsize within the same village to maintain their personal support networks. The Acting Corporate Director for Resources stated that this was an area of concern and had been recently discussed at informal Cabinet. One option was to find locations within these areas where houses could be built to help tackle this issue.
- An attendee who previously worked with adults with learning disabilities mentioned that he had seen examples of people inheriting inappropriately large properties for their needs later in life which they struggled to maintain. . It was suggested that a service to give independent advice to these people was needed. The Acting Corporate Director of Resources stated that this would be looked into.
- An attendee suggested that this should be discussed with officers from the planning department because of the possibility of achieving this through an adaptation to the Rural Exception Sites to include housing for elderly groups not currently considered planning policy. The Acting Corporate Director for Resources agreed to discuss this with the planning team.
- The Chairman suggested that the Community Capacity Officer and Parish Coordinator looked at placing the topic of developments in planning policy in

both rural and urban area and an explanation of different levies on a future agenda of the Parish Council Liaison meeting.

- Members asked how Cabinet could consider the results of the budget consultation when they were due to meet before it closed. The acting Corporate Director of Resources responded that it had always been done like this in Peterborough and the Council offers greater levels of consultation than what is required. This was 56 days rather than 40 days. Presentations were delivered to the youth council, churches, mosques and parish council liaison as examples.
- When the consultation was launched on 5 October, BBC Look East and the Peterborough Telegraph were present.
- Most responses were received in the earlier stages of the consultation with 30-40 being received electronically within the first week about launch. Most of the other responses come through forums such as Parish Council Liaison as part of efforts to reach out to the community
- An attendee mentioned that that the parish precept was not frozen and could be increased by any amount and asked when the legislation would be introduced to limit precept increases. The Acting Corporate Director of Resources responded that he fully understood the question as he had previously worked at Westminster City Council which had the lowest precept in the country. The Acting Corporate Director stated that he was not sure of the answer. There were approximately 300 district councils nationwide and they were mostly rural and contained a number of parishes. The only way they could boost their income would be to alter the precept. A cap of 30-40% might be imposed. Some precepts were £100 and some were £2, a large disparity. It was therefore difficult for the government to legislate in this area because of the danger of discriminating against certain parishes.
- The representative of CAPALC stated that the average parish precept was £60 and the government had agreed not to cut it for three years. This was the first of the three years.

This concluded this presentation. Further questions included:

- Attendees raised the issue of special needs provision in schools and pre-schools and stated that was difficult to get an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place for a child with many cases going to a tribunal. Attendees suggested asked if the council could save money by not contesting these cases considering that 90% of tribunals were lost by councils nationally and asked how much the council spent by contesting cases at Tribunals. It was agreed that the Acting Corporate Director of Resources would find this information and make it available to attendees.
- The Acting Corporate Director of Resources acknowledged that all councils faced pressures in this area. Special needs provision was funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and schools voted on how much was spent on special needs at a forum. This process would need to take place again. The national spend on special needs was believed to be £100m.
- The attendee responded that he had understood that preschool special needs provision was funded by the City Council and that research had suggested that preschool spending was the main way to address special needs requirements. The reaction nationally was an article in *The Times* indicating that the national spend was over £100m. The Acting Corporate Director acknowledged that there were two sources of funding, one that came from the DSG and one that didn't and he would provide a written answer covering both elements of special needs funding.

- It was agreed that the Acting Corporate Director of Resources would find out if financial support was available for parishes developing neighbourhood plans. It was believed that there was provision in legislation for this.
- Attendees asked what percentage of the budget was being spent on mental health, and mentioned that the lack of provision can have a large economic impact on an area. The Acting Corporate Director responded that the majority of mental health funding came from the Section 75 agreement with health providers and they had been given significant funding in this area. It was not clear how much of this money would go to Peterborough City Council.
- It was agreed that the Acting Corporate Director of Resources would distribute information to attendees on the current levels of spending on mental health.
- An attendee stated that Kingdom made a significant amount of money and suggested that the council could take the Prevention and Enforcement service back in-house in order for the council could make a profit from the service. The attendee asked if the Acting Corporate Director was confident that the City Council were examining all outsourced services to see if they could be delivered for in-house for a profit. The Acting Corporate Director responded that this was reassessed every time a contract came up for renewal and an options analysis was completed to identify the best route forward. For example, blue collar services were being taken back in-house.
- The Chairman added that the Amey contracts were soon to be serviced by the Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo). The PES team was being looked at to see if it could be delivered under this model.
- An attendee mentioned that he been involved in working on setting up a new parish council in the Hampton Area and had heard that there would be an extra tax from O&H or for grounds maintenance, possibly to hold on to land in order to increase costs later on for residents. It was agreed that the Acting Corporate Director of Resources would check this and report back to attendees. The Chairman stated that information on this was to be published in a presentation at a future meeting of parish council liaison on planning policy with any anomalies to be raised then. This could also include issues relating to housing associations.
- The Chairman invited the Acting Corporate Director of Resources to discuss prevention projects at the neighbourhood or parish council level and the possible impact on budgets. The Acting Corporate Director of Resources responded that prevention work was key as preventing things meant they did not have to be done in the future. This includes P.E.S. and the possibility road patching through the parish councils which was discussed at the pre-meeting. Some parish councils were already undertaking road patching and the Acting Corporate Director of Resources would find out about these how these arrangements work. Attendees were encouraged to pass on any prevention ideas from parishes to officers and they would be happy to listen to find a way of implementing them.
- The Chairman added that Cllr Neil Boyce had given a presentation at the Parish Conference on projects underway in Castor and Ailsworth to tackle isolation, encouraging activities and general cohesion work. It was emphasised the cohesion work was not just about people from other countries. Even those in small villages might benefit from cohesion work as people could be isolated by a health condition or family situation for example.

- Prevention was a combination of wellbeing, happiness, mental state, physical activity and getting involved in communities. Parish councils played an important part as they knew their communities better than anyone else. The Chairman encouraged any parish representatives to come forward with innovative ideas in this area.
- The Chairman reminded attendees that they was now funding through the Integrated Communities Strategy to start some of these projects. Any suggestions should be raised with the Communities Directorate via the Community Capacity Officer and Parish Coordinator. .
- Attendees asked if any more money would be made available to start initiatives to look after people in their communities and prevent isolation. The Chairman responded that a small grant pot would be allocated to address the issues raised as part of the Integrated Communities Strategy.
- It was agreed that the Community Capacity Officer would aim to place the Integrated Communities Strategy on the agenda of Parish Council Liaison at a future meeting following the suggestion of the Chairman
- The Acting Corporate Director of Resources would ensure the comments made by parish councillors were passed to Full Council as part of the consultation document.
- An attendee asked if parish councils were eligible to apply for national lottery grants. The representative from CAPALC responded that the National Lottery had pulled away from giving grants to parish councils and the funding available to parish councils directly through the national lottery had diminished. Funding was however available through other parts of the lottery, such as conservation and historical projects.
- An attendee mentioned that there were much easier sources of funding than the lottery available to parish councils, such as Landfill tax. There were three Landfill Taxes that operate in Peterborough.
- An attendee recommended that parishes should contact the city council if they had suggestions for initiatives. The attendee praised Kate Harding and Karen Berkeley in particular for providing guidance, working with parishes and looking for sources of funding in the city council and nationally from other bodies. Parishes were encouraged to contact them via the Community Capacity Officer and Parish Coordinator.

ACTIONS AGREED

- It was agreed that the Acting Corporate Director of Resources would provide attendees with a breakdown of total income vs. total expenditure
- It was agreed that the Acting Corporate Director of resources would provide attendees with information on the cost of employing a PES officer.
- Hampton Parish Council would be contacted to be asked for further numerical information about their employment of an enforcement officer, such as the number of hours worked.
- Further information on the financial arrangements of the Prevention and Enforcement Service to be shared with parish councils in the next few months when it becomes available.
- It was agreed that the Acting Corporate Director of Resources would provide information on the funding and scheduling of the maintenance of traffic calming features.
- It was agreed that the Acting Corporate Director of Resources would investigate further the issue around vulnerable people inheriting

inappropriately sized property, in collaboration with the colleagues from the planning team.

- The Community Capacity Officer and Parish Coordinator to consider placing the topic of developments in planning policy in both rural and urban area and an explanation of different levies on a future agenda of the Parish Council Liaison meeting.
- It was agreed that the Acting Corporate Director of Resources would find out the cost of taking EHCP cases to tribunal, given the point raised by the attendee that 90% of tribunals were lost by councils nationally.
- It was agreed that the Acting Corporate Director of Resources would provide information on special needs funding from both Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and other sources.
- It was agreed that the Acting Corporate Director of Resources would distribute information to attendees on the current levels of spending on mental health.
- It was agreed that the Community Capacity Officer would aim to place the Integrated Communities Strategy on the agenda of Parish Council Liaison at a future meeting following the suggestion of the Chairman

3. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

19 December 2018

Chairman
6.30pm – 7.36pm

Briefing - MTFS Tranche Two
2019/20-2021/22
Parish Councils

20 November 2018

Budget gap - 2019-20

We knew we needed to find £10.2m of savings, but due to pressures such as an increase in high cost children's placements required this has now raised this figure to £14.5m.

Why have we got a budget gap?

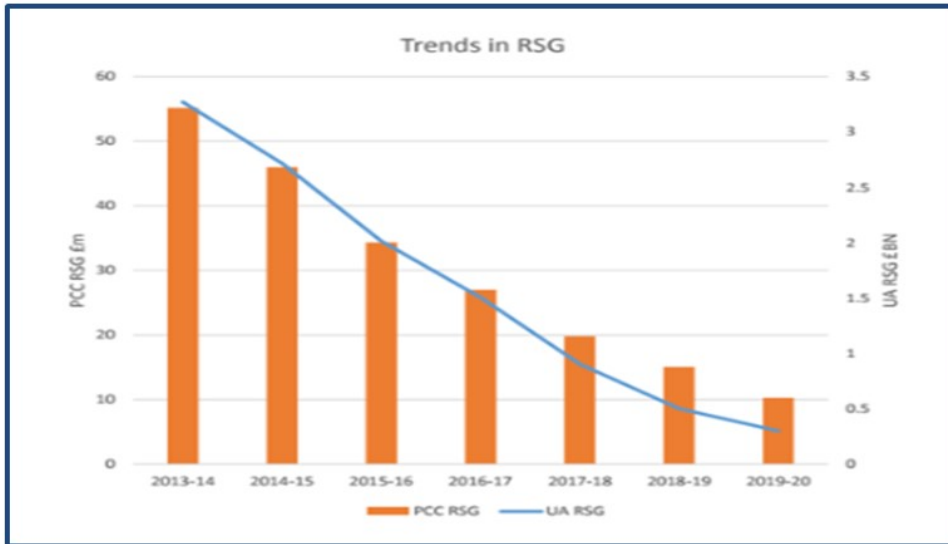
- Peterborough is a fast growing city and demand is unprecedented on certain services
- Current government funding takes no account of population growth or demand levels
- Funding has been reduced year on year - which means the council is no longer adequately funded to provide the services we want to deliver
- We believe residents are being short-changed by current government funding



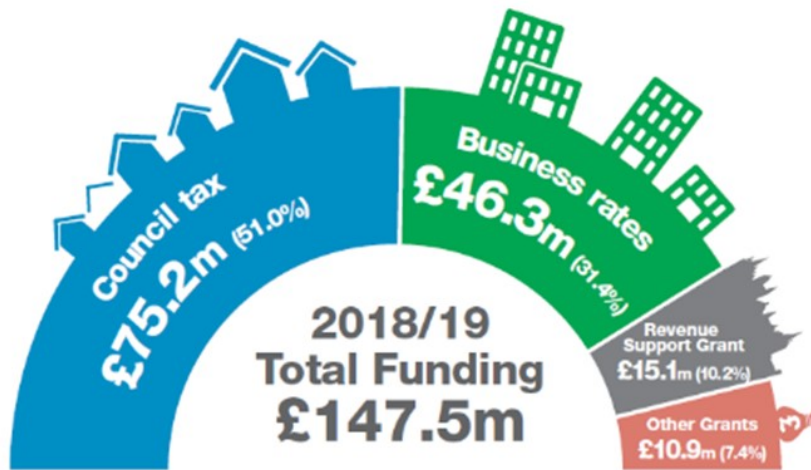
Revenue Support Grant

- Alarming reduction of 80% over seven years
- Funding has reduced from £55m in 2013/14 to £10m in 2019/20





Council Funding- 2018/19



Key Factors

- **Population growth**
 - We are one of the fastest growing council areas in the country
- **Unprecedented rise in demand on services**
 - Complex care needs of both adults and children
- **Deprivation**
 - Peterborough has some of the most deprived areas in the UK
- **Low council tax rate**
 - One of the lowest average council tax rates per dwelling



Tranche Two Budget Pressures

- Costs Children's social care - due to demand and high costs per child
- ICT change in strategic direction



Tranche Two Savings and Additional Income

- Use of capital receipts, generated from the sale of Assets (£6.5m)
- Reduction in the Homelessness pressure, from preventative action
- Street lighting maintenance as a result of the LED programme
- Increased Council tax collection rates
- A number of proposals around improving the effectiveness and efficiency of Adult Social Care (ASC) services
- Review of ASC contracts and rates
- Introduction of a new Prevention Enforcement Service (PES) and community safety operating model
- Reducing the hours operated by iCash sexual health services and encouraging women to get repeat contraceptive prescriptions from a GP
- Reviewing home-to-school transport costs to make savings



Savings and Additional Income continued

- Repairing Rhubarb Bridge, rather than demolishing
- Use highways spending more effectively by only repairing whole roads and footpaths and stop expensive short-term patching
- Reducing subsidies for the least-used bus routes
- Reducing spend on premium nursing/residential homes and by block purchasing beds
- Helping older people to stay in their own homes as long as possible to reduce the cost in more expensive support



What's our approach to closing the gap?

- Reviewing the level of all services the council is delivering
- Additional commercialisation
- Continuing to improve commissioning and procurement processes and reviewing our external contracts to get best value
- Continuing working on shared services with other local authorities and health partners
- Driving efficiencies within teams and services
- Building and leasing additional temporary accommodation for homeless families
- Transferring assets to partners and communities



Staffing Implications

- Eight proposals will incur staffing implications
- Main focus of proposals is to develop efficiencies of services
- Full detail of the staffing implications are yet to be determined
- Any resulting redundancies are anticipated to be low and minimised through the deletion of vacant posts



Timeline - Tranche Two

- Tranche Two proposals available - 5 October 2018
- Cabinet Meeting - 15 October 2018
- Feedback via the council website/post by 10 December 2018
- Budget Joint Scrutiny Meeting - 28 November 2018
- Cabinet Meeting - 3 December 2018 to consider the feedback received
- Full Council - 12 December 2018



Consultation

- Consultation launched 5 October at 5pm.
- Questionnaire on www.peterborough.gov.uk/budget
- Consultation closes at 5pm on Monday 10 December 2018

