

FULL COUNCIL 29 JANUARY 2014

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questions were received under the following categories:

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TIME

7. Questions with notice by members of the public

1. Question from Danielle Hetherington

To Councillor Holdich, Cabinet Member for Education

It is a fact that children learn more in their first three years of development, than at any other time in their lives.

In Peterborough the number of children reaching an acceptable level of attainment after reception is considerably lower than the national average. In fact, our local authority is currently ranked in the bottom 10% of Ofsted's schools performance league table.

If reducing families' access to children's centres, new mums support groups, and access to early years coordinators are all part of Peterborough council's new strategy, how are you going to guarantee that the next generation of young Peterburgians will not also be failed by your education system and that we fall even further down the league tables?

Councillor Holdich responded:

The government's policy for the delivery of early year's education is focused on early access to learning through high quality childcare provision and the reception years in school, to ensure young children are prepared for statutory schooling. The funding the council receives for early years is ringfenced and can only be spent on providing free childcare places for two year olds for families with low income and the universal offer of 15 hours of free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds.

Standards in Peterborough at the end of Reception have improved by over 5% over the last 3 years and gaps to national average across all key stages are closing rapidly and nearer to National average than ever before. At Key Stage 4, we are the 6th most improved Local Authority in the country.

Danielle Hetherington asked the following supplementary question:

I note that good news is a matter of fact, and Mr Cereste mentioned the increase of attainment in senior schools, which was announced this week. Could this not be linked to the previous investment, including those of the children's centres? And with the growth of the city in the private sector, should we not ensure that all of children are equipped to provide the skills for these jobs, including those of the higher skilled jobs. Will these closures not affect the improvements that have been done?

Councillor Holdich responded:

No, I do not believe they will affect that. The government believe, and I feel that they are right, that young people should be in an educational environment as soon as it is practical. I believe that with our investment is what is increasing our attainment levels.

8.	<p><u>Questions with notice by Members relating to ward matters To the Cabinet Members and to Committee Chairmen</u></p>
1.	<p>Question from Councillor Saltmarsh</p> <p>To Councillor Cereste, Leader and Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement</p> <p>About a year ago a question was asked at Full Council concerning the flooding problems outside the Tesco Express Garage Shop, on the junction of Birchtree Avenue and Welland Road. We were told the problem would be resolved. Later PCC officers admitted the location had a defective system, and would resolve the issue with support from Anglian Water. Could I ask what is the current position with the planned corrective works and when will the problem be finally resolved?</p> <p>Councillor Cereste responded:</p> <p>In order to resolve this issue a new highway gully connection to the sewer is required as soon as possible. This has been consented and is programmed to be delivered in March. The timing is because the relevant contracts and permissions need to be in place before the works can be undertaken. Please note it is anticipated that this will involve traffic management works.</p> <p>Councillor Saltmarsh asked the follow supplementary question:</p> <p>Why has it taken so long to get to this stage, since this matter was raised over a year ago?</p> <p>Councillor Cereste responded:</p> <p>Like everything else, under difficult economic times, we have to make choices.</p>
2.	<p>Question from Councillor Fower</p> <p>To Councillor Cereste, Leader and Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement</p> <p>Over the past decade, residents along Ennerdale Rise have witnessed many companies undertake various work which has seen their footpath dug up and filled in on countless occasions. This has resulted in an erratic and uneven, footpath surface and even the dropped kerbs offer a threat to those who are not so sure on their feet. Given that the majority of local residents in this cul-de-sac are retired, could the relevant Cabinet Member please advise me as to when these local taxpayers can look forward to a new and smoother footpath surface?</p> <p>Councillor Cereste responded:</p> <p>Ullswater Avenue, Grasmere Gardens and Ennerdale Rise are all included on the 2014/15 footway surface treatment programme that as well as sealing the surface to extend the life of the footway will also address the surface irregularities providing a more uniform and level surface for pedestrians.</p> <p>Councillor Fower asked the following supplementary question:</p> <p>Given that private companies will continue to undertake work along such streets, does the local authority recoup the cost of the footpath improvements from them and if not, why not?</p>

	<p>Councillor Cereste responded:</p> <p>I don't have that information available right now, but I will make sure an officer responds in writing so that we can get that information for the councillor.</p>
3.	<p>Question from Councillor John Fox</p> <p>To Councillor Cereste, Leader and Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement</p> <p>Since the Post Office moved from the Werrington Centre to The Hodgson Centre, we have seen more elderly residents crossing the road at this location. This is in addition to the high number of schoolchildren using this location as a direct route to the nearby senior school.</p> <p>Previous surveys on this stretch have revealed a high level of vehicles exceeding the speed restrictions in place.</p> <p>Would the Cabinet Member please give the Werrington North Councillors and the residents of Werrington reassurance that everything will be done to look into much needed pedestrian improvements in the area of Foxcovert Road at its junction with Hodgson Avenue?</p> <p>Councillor Cereste responded:</p> <p>An assessment was completed by members of the Transport and Infrastructure Planning Team in December 2013 using the standard methodology to prioritise funding for pedestrian crossing requests from Councillors and members of the public.</p> <p>The assessment looked at the following criteria and the survey found the results outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accident data: Results-No collisions have been reported at this area • Number of potential users of the crossing: Results AM peak 70 PM peak 88 • Number of vehicles AM peak 185 PM peak 173 • Speed of the vehicles: Results average speed AM peak 30 PM peak 31 • Existing facilities: Result adequate considering the survey results. <p>The assessment concluded that the results did not warrant additional provision at Foxcovert Road at its junction with Hodgson Avenue at that time and other areas within the authority were in greater need of investment</p> <p>As such the request was not progressed and Councillor Fox was notified. The team will monitor the situation and should the circumstances change they will carry out a further assessment.</p> <p>Councillor Fox did not have a supplementary question.</p>
4.	<p>Question from Councillor Miners</p> <p>To Councillor Cereste, Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement</p> <p>Noting the general success of the special Parking Enforcement Programme (PEP) throughout Old Dogsthorpe, it is apparent that some major loopholes still exist in the current operating legislation. Which is still leading to a number of high visibility damaged verge areas. Could local councillors be updated in what corrective legislation measures are being investigated to resolve these omissions, to make sure enforceable PEP becomes more of a success story locally?</p>

Councillor Cereste responded:

Having checked with both Parking Enforcement and Highway services there are no legislative changes in the Dogsthorpe area in respect of the On Street Parking Order.

Neither Parking Enforcement nor Highways is aware of 'loopholes' in the order.

In respect of enforcement we now use the CCTV enforcement vehicle to enforce any vehicles parking on the verges, however this is only effective as and when the vehicle is in the area. Beforehand foot patrol officers would visit, walk to the contravening vehicle and in 95% of the cases the driver would move the vehicle.

Councillor Miners asked the following supplementary question:

Whoever drafted that answer for you has misread the question that I asked. As Leader of the Council, could I please invite you to visit Dogsthorpe grass verges with me as soon as you are able to.

Councillor Cereste responded:

Yes I would be happy to, just fix it up with my assistant.

5. **Question from Councillor Judy Fox**

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

Having attended meetings with Tesco's regarding revitalisation of the run down and neglected Werrington Centre, I am pleased to report that there now seems to be light at the end of the tunnel. It is now looking more positive and we look forward to the possibility of the reopening of the retail shops and regeneration of the whole area.

The Werrington North Councillors, who have been actively campaigning to get things moving have been very frustrated over the past years, however we would like to extend our personal thanks to the officers of the Planning Department who we know have been fighting our corner so passionately.

Would the Cabinet Member please pass on our thanks to the officers and ask for reassurance that they will continue to consult with us so we can pass on our knowledge of the area and its residents. Thereby making sure that we get the best we can out of this redevelopment, for the direct benefit of our residents and the future store holders.

Councillor Hiller responded:

As I have been involved in the planning aspects of the Werrington Centre in the past few years, working closely and supportively with our planning officer and both you and Councillor John Fox. Councillor Cereste has told me that he will pass on your thanks to officers leading to these protracted and involved discussions with Tesco. Their plans for the future of the Werrington Centre will provide enhancement for such an already valuable resource for the local Werrington community. Tesco's like many businesses and households in the City has had to adjust financially to the new economic situation that the country faces which has meant that the original plans for the centre have had to change. Coupled with the need to involve and co-operate with other landowners in the delivery of the new plans, progress by Tesco has not been as quick as we had hoped for. Officers are pressing Tesco, with what limited leverage they have, to commit to a scheme for the earliest improvement of the centre and a timetable for delivery of that expansion. Through the Leader I ask that the Local Ward Members are kept informed of progress.

	<p>Councillor Fox asked the following supplementary question:</p> <p>I would like to thank Councillor Hiller for his reply and I would like to personally thank him for his foresight and forward-thinking whilst he was the relevant Cabinet Member by ringfencing £200,000 for the development of road safety measures at the well-known black spot at Staniland Way junction. I would like to ask Councillor Hiller if he would ensure that officers liaise directly with fellow ward councillors and myself before any designs are put forward for consideration in order to not further delay safety improvements in the long run, which are necessary and long overdue.</p> <p>Would he also agree that the Werrington North Councillors have over the past years done all they could to highlight the need for these improvements?</p> <p>Councillor Hiller responded:</p> <p>On behalf of our Leader, I thank you for your thanks. I am sure both the Leader and Councillor Seaton appreciate the importance of this junction improvement, despite having no political representation in North Werrington.</p>
9.	<p><u>Questions with notice by Members to Council representatives of the Fire Authority and Police and Crime Panel</u></p>
	<p>None received.</p>

EXECUTIVE BUSINESS TIME

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

1.	<p>Question from Councillor Sandford</p> <p>To Councillor Eley, Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation and Waste Management</p> <p>Following the recent season of shows at the Broadway Theatre, could the Cabinet Member tell me what discussions, if any, he has had with the owners of the theatre and other interested parties with a view to keeping this important entertainment facility open for use by the people of Peterborough?</p> <p>Councillor Eley responded:</p> <p>The Broadway Theatre is a private venue and as such the city council have no control over the rent agreed between the landlord and the private tenant. Both Vivacity and the council have worked closely with Mr Kenwright's company and have been very supportive of his connection with the theatre as we are extremely keen to see a thriving and vibrant night-time economy.</p> <p>Preliminary negotiations with Bill Kenwright Ltd, Vivacity, and the owner of the Broadway Theatre into the future of the venue have been taking place since Bill Kenwright Ltd started productions at the theatre, however it's too early to say anything further at this stage as Bill Kenwright Ltd are currently in the process of evaluating their season at the Broadway theatre.</p> <p>Councillor Sandford asked the following supplementary question:</p> <p>I had the opportunity of attending three of the performances in the autumn season, and one performance the theatre was full and it was a tremendous atmosphere. I appreciate that we don't have a bottomless pot and the council is facing severe financial challenges, but could I urge him to, in terms of offering help in kind officer time, give as much support to the Broadway Theatre as possible as it's important to keep the theatre open if possible.</p> <p>Councillor Eley responded:</p> <p>Vivacity and the Council are working with Bill Kenwright Ltd to look at ways of helping, however we are not the landlord and we are not party to the negotiations that he has with the owner of the Broadway theatre, because it's a private deal between two private companies.</p>
2.	<p>Question from Councillor Shearman</p> <p>To Councillor Holdich, Cabinet Member for Education</p> <p>As far as I am aware, since I became a Councillor in May 2011, not one of the three church co-opted members of the Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee has ever attended a meeting. Furthermore we no longer have a representative of school governors attending our meetings. Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that this is not a satisfactory situation?</p> <p>Councillor Holdich responded:</p> <p>This is a matter for the Chair of the Committee as it relates to the Constitution but I am</p>

happy to provide response. A strong Scrutiny Committee brings together expertise from different backgrounds so I welcome input from other relevant bodies. Officers have been in contact with the diocesan bodies and indeed their membership has been updated recently but they have chosen not to attend. We cannot insist on their attendance. Papers are always sent to them and since the two seats for schools governors become vacant, we have advertised the role to all governing bodies and despite enquiries we have had no firm interest. We will re-advertise these roles during the spring term.

Councillor Shearman asked the following supplementary question:

I agree that these representatives do offer a unique dimension to our discussions and it is deplorable that they don't send anyone along to the meetings. But in terms of absences and being present at a meeting, can I ask, can one be present but absent at the meeting? Meaning, the Scrutiny Committee isn't political, however it tends to be opposition members that scrutinise our Chair. In the last meeting one of the Members was on his iPhone the whole time and didn't say anything. Can I ask Councillor Holdich to go back to his colleagues and remember that the children of the city are important and officers should be scrutinised in way that you are expected to do so.

Councillor Kreling provided the following point of information:

The Member referred to was subbing for a sub, he only had a few hours' notice of that meeting, he had no papers delivered to him and only got papers as he arrived at the meeting, so I think that is very unfair.

Councillor Holdich responded:

I believe that the education spokesman is Councillor Jamil, but he doesn't seem make much contribution whatsoever, it all seems to be the responsibility of Councillor Shearman. I'm sure that the great decisions that I make on education are shared with my colleagues and they haven't got a lot to add to them.

Councillor Shearman provided the following point of information:

As a point of information Councillor Jamil is not a Member of that Committee.

3. Question from Councillor John Fox

To Councillor Fitzgerald Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

In a recent article in the Peterborough Telegraph it was reported that "The number of elderly patients admitted to Peterborough Hospital are higher than last year and it is difficult to see why it should be the case".

This is as a result of 650 patients of age 80yrs plus being admitted in four weeks, thereby putting the hospital on Black Alert and leaving a shortage of beds.

Could the Cabinet Member reassure the members that this has nothing to do with the added burden on hospital beds, brought on as a result of the closure of Welland House and Greenwood House Care Homes?

Councillor Fitzgerald responded:

There is no evidence to suggest that there is a correlation between the two issues. All residents were successfully accommodated in a new residential care settings within Peterborough, making good use of independent sector capacity.

Winter pressures have impacted upon hospital demand as has demographic growth and this can be seen in many areas of the country. Peterborough has also an excellent record in having no delayed hospital discharges which, can be confused with areas in

Huntingdonshire and South Lincolnshire, which may not benefit from such good fortune. This indicates the issue may be more attributable to the effectiveness of strategies relating to admission avoidance rather than the closure of care home beds, particularly through the winter period.

Councillor Fox asked the following supplementary question:

I read in the Daily Mail an article entitled 'surge in the over-90s being taken to A&E', an 80% increase blamed on failure of care at home. Caroline Abrahams, the Charity Director of Age UK was quoted as saying "in some cases, being admitted to hospital is a consequence of not getting good quality care at home. The core of the problem is that funding for social care has failed, and is still failing to keep up with the growing demand. The care of our most vulnerable must be a priority", I think we all agree with that. Would the Cabinet Member agree with me that not only is more funding needed, but also that we equally need to concentrate on how we can work with all organisations to provide adequate and substantial care to our city's ever growing elderly population, before it becomes a crisis that will affect many families. Will he also ensure me that he will continue to monitor the situation at the city hospital and come back to this council with statistics as to why there is such an increase in admissions and again reassure us that it has got nothing to do with the failure that old people can't get beds in care homes or at home?

Councillor Fitzgerald responded:

I agree with Councillor Fox, that we need to look after the elderly and put more money in. We have been doing that, however the problem is that demand is growing also which places a strain on finances further. This is not related to closing care homes because people are in adequate care in terms of council care homes. I rang the hospital and was informed that the particular week that was reported was the week ending the 13 January, this is the same week every year in which the hospital usually goes on alert. This means that 10%, which is about 50 patients, was the added increase in that week. 22% of those were of the over 80-90 category and it was mostly down to respiratory problems due to the weather and nothing to do with care homes, so those people could have been admitted from their homes or nursing homes, where they were situated had no bearing on it. There is always a peak at Christmas and New Year.

4. Question from Councillor John Fox

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

The Peterborough Beer Festival continues to be one of Peterborough's premier events, but the professionalism of the event organised by an unpaid team of volunteers does not come without a cost. Recent years have seen the festival struggle to balance their infrastructure costs against their revenue. I respectfully ask the Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation and Waste Management whether there is any possibility to assist the event by offering the site on a rent free basis for the duration of the set-up, event and takedown, or at least some financial encouragement, like a reduction in costs to help make sure that this prestigious event stays well and truly on the Peterborough calendar.

Councillor Elsey responded:

The Beer Festival is undoubtedly one of the major highlights in the Peterborough event calendar. It is also true to say that from its conception in the 1970's when it was first held at Peterborough Rugby Club, the beer festival has been supported by volunteers who willingly give up their time to run it.

Financially Peterborough City Council will always endeavour to look sympathetically towards events. However, there has to be a limit as we do not have unlimited funds.

In respect to Peterborough Beer Festival the following points must be taken into account

1. The Beer festival is a very established and financially self-supporting event, now in its 36th year;
2. The beer festival is a profit making enterprise, essentially run by a private company CAMRA. It is not an event where Peterborough City Council have joint involvement/sponsorship;
3. Peterborough Embankment is a prime location, which is extremely sought after. The beer festival takes over the entire site for virtually the whole of August, which affects income generating opportunities for the council. August is one of the few months of the year that we can pretty much be assured the weather will be good, it is also a month for which we receive numerous enquiries from other event organisers to hold events but who have to be turned away. This is detrimental to the revenue opportunities of the council; and
4. PCC has an obligation to make the most of its income generating opportunities. If the council were to keep giving things away for free, it would ultimately result in additional pressure being placed the tax payers of Peterborough.

Things are hard, however if there is anything I can do in conjunction with Councillor Fox to see if there is anything that can be done, I am happy to meet with Councillor Fox,

Councillor Fox asked the following supplementary question:

Neither I nor CAMRA are asking for it for free. However, at some time, I ask that you sit round the table with the senior members of CAMRA to find a way forward to ensure that this event is not placed in jeopardy.

Councillor Elsey responded:

If you or the members of CAMRA would like to get in touch with myself to discuss it, I am happy to do so.

5. Question from Councillor Miners

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

Noting the Coalition Government support for 'fracking' and the financial support being offered to local councils to attract such development, can the Leader confirm whether PCC has any potential locations for this speculative venture within our local authority area?

Councillor Cereste responded:

DECC is currently consulting on its environmental report for the next onshore oil and gas licensing round (14th Round) <https://econsultation.decc.gov.uk/decc-policy/consultation-env-report-further-oil-gas-licensing/>. The Environmental Report contains a map on page 6, which shows existing licence areas and areas under consultation for the next licence round. It shows that the area under consultation cuts through Peterborough. Peterborough falls into the East of England and East Midlands area and part of Peterborough is shaded as under consideration for onshore licensing, but there is nothing more specific than that. As it's just at consultation stage, DECC hasn't published the specific areas at the current time.

Councillor Miners asked the following supplementary question:

Does Councillor Cereste think that the government's scheme is tantamount to bribery of local authorities?

	<p>Councillor Cereste responded:</p> <p>I will keep my personal opinions to myself on this. A decision regarding fracking will be made through the appropriate channels and you as Councillors will be the ones to ultimately make that decision.</p>
6.	<p>Question from Councillor Murphy</p> <p>To Councillor Seaton, Cabinet Member for Resources</p> <p>In relation to grants paid to voluntary organisations, would the Cabinet Member please clarify why the grant for the 'One Community Plan' for Gladstone Connect was not paid in 2012 and 2013, and how much was paid in 2011?</p> <p>Councillor Seaton responded:</p> <p>A revenue grant to Gladstone Connect Ltd was agreed in 2011 by Cabinet to cover the running costs of the Gladstone Park Community Centre.</p> <p>The grant agreed by Cabinet was as follows:</p> <p>2011/12 - £48,000 (to be paid in 3 instalments of £5,000, £23,000 & 20,000) 2012/13 - £27,000 2013/14 - £9,000</p> <p>The first year grant payment of £48,000 was made in full. The subsequent grant payments were not made as a result of conditional information not being received by the Council. There is clear documented evidence to show that this information was repeatedly requested and all communications to officers and board members highlighted that grant instalments could not be paid unless the information was received in line with the original agreement.</p> <p>Councillor Murphy asked the following supplementary question:</p> <p>Is the Cabinet Member aware of the income that Gladstone Connect generated from the hiring out and additional use of children's centres over the last eight years? Over £100k?</p> <p>Councillor Seaton responded:</p> <p>I am aware that there has been income generated but I think the question was about the failure to complete paperwork at Gladstone Connect.</p>
7.	<p>Question from Councillor Fower</p> <p>To Councillor Cereste, Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement</p> <p>At the end of last year, government plans to ban CCTV parking cameras were announced. As Peterborough uses CCTV enforcement vehicles to tackle dangerous and illegal parking outside schools including cars blocking driveways, driving along pavements and stopping on yellow zig-zag lines outside of school gates, could the relevant Cabinet Member please let me know if there are any plans to cease usage of CCTV enforcement vehicle?</p> <p>Councillor Cereste may have responded:</p> <p>The government plans to ban the use of CCTV for parking enforcement is in consultation and local authorities and the British Parking Association have been asked to respond on a</p>

	<p>number of issues relating to Parking by the 14th February 2014.</p> <p>Under consideration:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the balance in how parking is enforced (use of CCTV) • Freeze penalty charge levels • Local Authorities to make clear all revenue streams and costs. <p>The Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA 2004) provides the regulatory framework; in particular the law is clear that local authorities must not use their civil parking enforcement powers to raise revenues.</p> <p>Concerns have been raised in respect that overzealous parking enforcement is driving people out of town centres and making it harder for people to park reasonably and go about their everyday lives.</p> <p>Consequently the government is inviting views on amending significant elements of local authority parking policy and one thing in particular is :-</p> <p>Stopping the use of CCTV for on street parking enforcement.</p> <p>In the main this refers to static CCTV coverage predominantly in London Boroughs, Peterborough parking regulations are covered by foot patrols with Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO's) patrolling the streets, which allows officers to communicate with drivers and request drivers move their vehicles, not the noting and photographing an alleged offence by a CCTV and the driver receiving a Parking Charge Notice (PCN) in the post.</p> <p>The transport Select Committee has stated "As long as the use of cameras remains legal, local authorities must ensure that they are not used as a matter of routine, particularly where permits or exceptions not visible to the camera may apply. However the committee pointed out that cameras can still be helpful for enforcement in some area where the use of a CEO is not practical.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day / Night Patrols of clearways • School dropping off and picking up times. <p><u>Schools</u></p> <p>Safety of children is paramount and the use of the CCTV vehicle allows for a visible presence and deterrent to drivers who park their cars in an inconsiderate and dangerous manner, the main objective is to deter drivers from parking in a dangerous manner in and around schools.</p> <p>This would cover the enforcement of zig zag lines and other parking restrictions relative to schools.</p>
8.	<p>Question from Councillor Shearman</p> <p>To Councillor Walsh, Cabinet Member for Cohesion, Safety and Public Health</p> <p>I regularly receive complaints about the disgusting habit of people spitting in public places, including spitting out chewing gum, and the issue was raised at a recent Police and Community Panel meeting. I understand that since we have no by-law prohibiting this behaviour neither the police nor our own enforcement officers are able to take any action. Would the Cabinet Member be prepared to meet with me with a view to obtaining cross-party support for the introduction of a by-law aimed at eliminating this offensive habit.</p> <p>Councillor Todd may have responded:</p>

	<p>Spitting in the street is dirty, antisocial and unwanted in Peterborough.</p> <p>Until recently, the possibility of enforcement action by the Council against perpetrators meant relying on the lengthy process of introducing a local by-law. However, during the course of 2012/13 a number of councils decided to use the non-exhaustive definition of littering under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act to enforce spitting as a littering offence. This allowed the use of Fixed Penalty Notices as a means of disposal; an approach upheld by local magistrates courts.</p> <p>The current legal position remains fluid as Magistrates Courts do not set case law and thus each court at present can reach their own decision without legal precedent having been set.</p> <p>Council officers will engage with our local magistrates to affirm that Council wishes to consider the use of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act to enforce spitting as a littering offence.</p>
9.	<p>Question from Councillor Sylvester</p> <p>To Councillor Cereste, Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement</p> <p>With the introduction of the 'bedroom tax' many families may opt to downsize to smaller properties. Most parents would find it less disruptive to their child's education to keep them at the same school to continue their studies and this could lead to lengthy bus journeys to and from school each day. Children below secondary school age would often be accompanied by a parent or carer on these journeys also.</p> <p>The weekly cost of one mega-rider is currently £13 per week per person. The 'bedroom tax' is £14 per week for one extra room per £100 rent due each week.</p> <p>If the Cabinet Member is aware of the small saving arising from such a potentially unnecessary disruption to family life, could they advise of what steps have been taken to raise public awareness in this matter?</p> <p>Councillor Cereste may have responded:</p> <p>The Spare Room Subsidy was introduced by Government as part of the Welfare Reforms, and in Peterborough, 2100 households are affected.</p> <p>The council, with our partners, has worked hard to support affected families through initiatives such as enabling mutual exchanges of social housing properties and providing skills and employment initiatives to enable affected households to take up training or work or to increase their household income.</p> <p>It is important that affected households take into account the full range of cost implications (such as increased travel costs to work or school) before making a decision whether to downsize property. In supporting individuals and families in reviewing their housing options, officers encourage householders to consider wider cost implications before making a decision.</p> <p>The Peterborough Community Assistance Scheme can provide help and advice for anyone facing financial difficulties. Any resident looking for support should contact Citizens Advice Bureau for advice.</p> <p>Finally, we are currently planning PCAS delivery for 2014/15, and one of the things we shall focus on is employability and skills, including the barriers to taking up work or training opportunities.</p>
10.	<p>Question from Councillor Fower</p>

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

This year sees the planned devolution of spending decisions for the EU structural and investment funds (ESIF) to local enterprise partnerships (LEPs), worth a reported £5.3 billion. Could the Cabinet Member please inform me as to what this administration's plan is to access this money, what they intend to use it for and where members of the public can go to find out more about the delivery and programme management of the scheme?

Councillor Cereste may have responded:

The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has been advised that it has been allocated F75.5m over the period 2014-2020. This equates to £15m per year across the 13 local authority areas within the LEP. The LEP's Officers have been busy producing the European Structural and Investment funds (ESIF) programme for the area over recent months. This work has been supported by Peterborough City Council officers and staff at Opportunity Peterborough throughout the drafting phase. Recognising that the bid is made in partnership with other areas we have made sure that Peterborough's individual priorities have been reflected. Once the LEP has received confirmation from Government we will be able to develop a local programme that will maximise Peterborough's financial return from the programme. Details of the strategy submitted by the LEP to government is located on the LEPs own website <http://www.yourlocalenterprisepartnership.co.uk/?s=European+strategy> where full details can be found.

11. **Question from Councillor Saltmarsh**

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

According to the new 'Creating the UK's Environment Capital Action Plan', it is intended to increase library users by 3% annually and also to increase attendance at theatre performances and arts events.

How can this be achieved when library opening hours have been reduced and there is only one theatre 'the Key Theatre' in the city which is capable of accommodating a sizeable audience?

Councillor Elsey may have responded:

The Environment Capital Action Plan has ten action topics, Culture and Heritage is one of the topics, focusing on increasing participation through cultural activities. The baseline and targets were set by Vivacity in partnership with the Council in October and have yet to produce a full year's data to review, after which the impact of the 15% reduction in library opening hours can be analysed.

Vivacity are confident that targets will be achieved through current service provision. This December/January has seen a record breaking Pantomime season at the Key Theatre. Over 20,000 tickets were sold for *Cinderella*, Vivacity's highest to date. This 'new format' Pantomime was well received by audiences with many, including first-time booking school groups, keen to book for next year already regardless of title.

The libraries are diversifying their offer from traditional book lending to attract more users, offering activities, events, online courses electronic and audio books to increase their membership. The libraries are on target to reach an increases in users.

To date, the library service has received over 397,812 visits.

12.	<p>Question from Councillor Judy Fox</p> <p>To Councillor North, Cabinet Member for Environment Capital and Neighbourhoods</p> <p>Would the Cabinet Member rate the recent initiative, Heataborough, as a success and could further information be provided to this Council on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the number of people within the city who have taken up this scheme; ii. the cost to PCC, including advertising and officer's time; and iii. the financial income benefit to the City Council's budget <p>Councillor North may have responded:</p> <p>Heataborough is a ground breaking initiative and a unique collaboration between the council and British Gas. It will save our residents money and ensure they can afford to heat their homes. The scheme has launched with an initial focus on supporting households in receipt of benefits, and so far 72 referrals have been made, 10 installations have been completed and 5 are in progress.</p> <p>Housing officers spend just 4 hours per month on the scheme and in relation to Marketing and Comms costs, marketing support was being provided for Heataborough and Ready to Switch, 2 days each week by a temporary member of staff procured via Serco from Athene Agency, charged out at £225.00 per day, based on 260 days (total of 58,500 for the year). Her contract was renewed every 30 days but she left on 24 December 2013 as she found full time work elsewhere.</p> <p>The total cost up to the date that she left is actually £33,266.00, which is being recharged to the Renewables project. She has not been replaced yet.</p> <p>There is no income to the Council as such. The scheme is all about providing energy savings measures to people who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford them.</p>
13.	<p>Question from Councillor Sandford</p> <p>To Councillor Cereste, Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement</p> <p>Could the leader of the Council tell us what is being done to attract further inward investment into Peterborough from companies based in other EU countries? Would he agree with me that the proposal advanced by some politicians both locally and nationally that the UK should leave the European Union could be a disaster for economic growth and employment prospects in Peterborough?</p> <p>Councillor Cereste may have responded:</p> <p>Opportunity Peterborough (OP) is charged with attracting inward investment into the City. OP have reported a strong level of interest in Peterborough from a range of companies across a broad geography. The specific link to Europe has been successfully developed by Opportunity Peterborough in two key areas.</p> <p>Firstly, through the six European projects they deliver, which includes partners from both public and private sectors. This has led to visibility not previously enjoyed by the city and is enabling two way conversations between our own local companies seeking to export to Europe and in OP developing links to individual companies who may be interested in establishing a UK base. This includes a current strong link to Estonia. This targeted activity has developed through project links which were initially identified by OP and their</p>

counterparts recognising mutual strength in green technology. Other ongoing discussions are in place with a number of cities across the European Union.

Secondly, Opportunity Peterborough have developed a highly visible social media presence via twitter. While the twitter phenomenon has developed OP has been building a business facing presence that is beginning to see an increase in enquiries from both Europe and beyond. Twitter has provided an effective mechanism for attracting interest in the city which enables OP to develop greater links with interested companies.

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