

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL LIAISON MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL ON 11 FEBRUARY 2014

Members Present: Councillor Nigel North, Chairman
Councillor Joe Dobson, Helpston Parish Council
Councillor Paul Froggitt, Orton Waterville Parish Council
Councillor Dennis Batty, Glinton Parish Council
Sandra Hudspeth, Deeping Gate Parish Council
Councillor Jane Hill, Deeping Gate Parish Council
Councillor Philip Thompson
Councillor Jason Merrill, Bretton Parish Council
Tony Hovell, Thorney, Newborough and Borough Fen
Councillor Andy Godsell, Eye Parish Council
Councillor John Bartlett, Thorney Parish Council
Councillor Ian Allin, Orton Longueville Parish Council
Councillor Olive Leonard, Hampton Parish Council
Kate Day, Hampton Parish Council
Councillor David Roxburgh, Barnack Parish Council
Geoffrey R Smith, Werrington Neighbourhood Council
Sarah Rodger, Castor Parish Council
Councillor David Seaton, PCC
Councillor John Holdich, PCC

Officers Present: Kim Sawyer, Director of Governance, PCC
Steven Pilsworth, Head of Strategic Finance, PCC
Cate Harding, Communities, PCC
Dania Castagliuolo, Governance Officer, PCC

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Ian Dewar, Patricia Stuart-Mogg, Councillor Henry Clark, David Hedges and Martin Greaves.

2. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 18 December 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2013 were approved as a true and accurate record.

3. Medium-Term Financial Strategy Proposals from Cabinet

Councillor Seaton, Cabinet Member for Resources and Steven Pilsworth, Head of Strategic Finance delivered a presentation on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The following key points were highlighted:

Peterborough City Council remained committed to:

- Growth, regeneration and economic development of the city to bring new investment and jobs.
- Improved educational attainment and skills for children and young people including investing in the multi-university approach.
- Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

- Environment Capital agenda including pursuing new income streams from solar energy and wind farm developments.
- Supporting the Culture and Leisure Trust to continue to deliver Peterborough's culture, arts and sport in the city.
- Keeping communities safe and cohesive.

Settlement 2014/15 and 2015/16:

- 2014/15 – The grant from Central Government would be £9m less than the previous year, this was roughly £1m worse than expected when budget planning started.
- 2015/16 – The grant from Central Government would be £12.5m less than the previous year, this was roughly £11.5m worse than expected when budget planning started.
- This was an overall reduction of 40% (£44m) across five years.

Pressures:

- Looked after children (£1m).
- Government changes to provision for adults with learning disabilities in residential care (£945k).
- Homelessness B&B costs (£150k).
- Special School Transport (£164k)
- Government changes to funding of long term Social Care (£319k from 2015/16)
- Welfare reform – responding to loss of Disability Living Allowance in adult social care (£108k)

Capital Investment on Key Projects:

- Extra care provision.
- Disabled Facilities Grant.
- Repairs Assistance.
- Roads, including junction 17 of A1m to junction 2 of Fletton Parkway and Bourges Boulevard.
- Continuation of public realm, including Long Causeway.
- Affordable Housing - £12.8m over two years.
- Schools - £45m over two years for new places.
- Renewables – income built into future years budgets.

Scale of financial Challenge:

- Summary position for 2014/15 –
 - Grant reduction of £9m
 - Financial Pressures of £10m
 - Overall budget gap of nearly £19m
- Gap increases in 2015/16:
 - Grant reduction of £12.5m
 - Financial pressures of £4m
 - Budget gap increases by £16.5m

Efficiencies:

- Adult Social Care transformation and personalisation (£637k).
- Reduced costs of looked after children (£245k increasing to £1.2m).
- Public Health – Savings on drug treatment and benefits from joining services to use the grant more efficiently (£1.1m).
- Office accommodation and property (£673k).

- Serco partnership and business support (£775k).
- ICT projects and support (£620k).
- Vivacity (£330k).

Service reductions:

- Communities
 - Children's Centres (1.18m in a full year)
 - St Georges Hydrotherapy pool (£45k)
- Adult Social Care
 - Further savings from previously agreed policy changes 9£200k)
 - Review 'support cost estimate' (personal budgets) – (£125k)
 - Review respite policy (£150k)
 - Review older people day services 9£150k)
 - Service user transport (£175k)
 - Day opportunities for adults under 65 with learning disabilities 9£400k)
- Education
 - Special school transport (600k)
- Governance
 - Community Leadership Fund – reduce to £1k per Councillor (£183k)
- Resources
 - Sports club caretaker, grass cutting, shrub and flower bedding, play area inspection, Waste and Electronic Equipment Re-use (WEEE) facility (262k)
 - Introduce charge for garden waste collection (£804k)
 - Remove remaining discretionary funding from Parish Councils from 2015/16 (£100k)

Proposals for Parish Councils for 2015/16

- Remove remaining discretionary grant, including council tax support grant.
- Continue funding for Burial Grounds and recreation grounds.

Council Tax

- Peterborough had one of the lowest council tax levels in the country.
- The previously approved budget assumed 2% per annum increase (i.e. at the current referendum limit threshold).
- Proposals put forward were that council tax was frozen for 2014/15 and 2015/16.
- If council tax was increase then the freeze grant would be lost and the potential impact would be:
 - 2% increase costs taxpayers roughly £1.2m
 - Grant loss of around £0.7m
 - Net benefit of around £0.5m

Reserves, balances and risk:

- £6m working balance would be maintained.
- Capacity building reserve would be low
- A tight financial control would be even more important
- Key risks:
 - Business rate retention – impact if Government growth targets were not hit
 - Savings plans
 - Council tax benefit

The following questions and comments were raised and discussed:

- Vivacity had been able to make a number of savings. Since they had been separate from the Council they had been better able to obtain external funding.
- The new gym in Hampton was costly and too expensive for families to use it as a pay as you go gym.
- The expectation of the gym in Hampton for next year was to generate £37k income based on more people signing up to use the facility.
- The membership of the gym had increased to 2250 members. The leader of the Council was looking to take this model and use it on other facilities within the city.
- Would Parish Councils be offered the opportunity of filling gaps by maintaining their areas and paying the difference? Amey were keen to have discussions with Parish Councils regarding this.
- Concerns were raised regarding St Georges Hydrotherapy pool. PJ Care was not suitable for all disability needs whereas the Hydrotherapy pool was.
- Work was being carried out to try and raise £11k to keep the Hydrotherapy pool open for a further three months. A considerable amount had already been raised.
- The Hydrotherapy pool was not one of the Council's core functions therefore discussions would need to take place with the NHS.
- The garden waste collection would cost households £36.00 per year if registered before the end of May 2014 and £39.00 per year after.
- The Council would generate an income of £800k from the garden waste collection.
- Brown bins belonged to properties therefore they would not be removed if households opted out of the scheme. There would be a sticker on the bins of those who had paid for the collection. The collection would change to a 12 month service.
- The compost site at Dogsthorpe would remain in service.
- Two households could share a brown bin collection if desired.
- The garden waste service was a discretionary service that the Council offered therefore was not part of a core service.
- Concerns were raised regarding day services as there was only one day centre in Peterborough which was a mixed disability centre.
- Parish Councils would only have received the additional grant for Council Tax last year as this was discretionary. There were a number of Councils who were moving in the direction of removing the grant from Parish Councils.
- The latest forecast for the energy parks was presented to the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities on 16 December 2013. Recommendations were made at this meeting which Cabinet were now considering. It was expected that in five years the energy parks would make an income of £5m per year. An update would be presented to Cabinet on 24 February.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Seaton and Steven Pilsworth for attending the meeting.

Councillor Paul Froggitt, Orton Waterville Parish Council addressed the group and invited other Parish Councils to talk to him regarding encouraging people to become Parish Councillors.

ACTIONS

- Councillor Seaton to liaise with Councillor Fitzgerald regarding the day centre for disabled people.
- Steven Pilsworth to circulate a summary to the Parish Council Liaison regarding reductions to Parish Councils.

4. Date of Next Meeting

26 March 2014

CHAIRMAN
6:30 – 7.40pm

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