

**MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING
HELD AT 4:00PM, ON
MONDAY 18 DECEMBER 2023
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Cabinet Members Present: Councillor Mohammed Farooq (Chair), Councillor Howard, Councillor Elsey, Councillor Bisby, Councillor Saqib Farooq and Councillor Hiller.

Cabinet Advisors Present: Councillor John Fox and Councillor Harper.

61. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the Director of Public Health, Executive Director for Children and Young People's Service and Executive Director Corporate Services.

The Service Director- Financial Management was in attendance for the Executive Director Corporate Services.

62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations interest.

63. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 4 DECEMBER 2023

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 4 December 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

64. PETITIONS PRESENTED TO CABINET

There were no petitions presented to Cabinet.

STRATEGIC DECISIONS

65. AWARD OF BLOCK CONTRACTS FOR THE PETERBOROUGH COMMUNITY SHORT BREAKS FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR COMPLEX NEEDS

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the Award of Block Contracts for the Peterborough Community Short Breaks for Children & Young People with Disabilities and/or Complex Needs.

The purpose of this report was for Cabinet approval to award 8 block contracts for the delivery of Community Short Breaks.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services introduced the report and provided an overview of the key points which included:

- It was a statutory duty for the council to provide community short breaks and daybreak opportunities.

- There had been a formal recommissioning exercise to ensure that the sufficiency statement for children and young people had been met with this offer.
- The new contracts would better meet the needs of the children and young people who used the support.

Cabinet Members debated the report and in summary responses to questions raised included:

- The Cabinet were advised that due diligence had been followed in the procurement exercise as the sufficiency statement had to be followed.
- Parents, carers and professionals were engaged with throughout the process.
- The Cabinet commended the service and could see the benefits of the short breaks provision.
- There was a method to track engagement however with targeted services this had been more difficult. Engagement in specialist services could be shared through the disability dashboard where there had been an increase in uptake.
- The Cabinet praised the work of Family Voice and their support for those with low level needs who were not eligible for the rest bite services.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

1) Approve the award of 8x block contracts for the delivery of Community Short Breaks from 01.04.2024, each with an initial contract term of 3 years; with an option to extend up to 2 years, in increments of 12 months, as follows:

i. A1 – All Year Small Group awarded to Circles Network (Company Number: 02972700), with a value of £60,000 per annum (£300,000 for the contract term including extension period).

ii. A2 – Holiday Only Small Group awarded to Circles Network (Company Number: 02972700), with a value of £60,000 per annum (£300,000 for the contract term including extension period).

iii. A3 – Term Time Only Small Group awarded to Circles Network (Company Number: 02972700), with a value of £30,000 per annum (£150,000 for the contract term including extension period).

iv. A4 – Holiday Only Small Group awarded to Breakthrough Therapy (Company Number: 11919412), with a value of £25,000 per annum (£125,000 for the contract term including extension period).

v. B1 – All Year Large Group awarded to Circles Network (Company Number: 02972700), with a value of £32,000 per annum (£160,000 for the contract term including extension period).

vi. B2 – All Year Large Group awarded to Peterborough Limited (Company Number: 1493249), with a value of £28,000 per annum (£140,000 for the contract term including extension period).

vii. B3 – Holiday Only Large Group awarded to Circles Network (Company Number: 02972700), with a value of £28,000 per annum (£140,000 for the contract term including extension period).

viii. B4 – Autism Focused Large Group awarded to Romsey Mill Trust (Company Number: 3556721), with a value of £25,000 per annum (£125,000 for the contract term including extension period).

2) Delegate approval to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Commissioning following consultation with the Executive Director for Children and Young Peoples Service for the decision whether to invoke the extension period for each or any of the

8x block contracts following the initial contract term and in accordance with the contract provisions.

3) Delegate approval to the Executive Director Adult Social Care & Commissioning to agree an uplift (per annum) of the contract value, subject to internal governance arrangements

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Community Short Breaks are a statutory service and a key part of the provision offered to children & young people with disabilities and complex needs, and their families, within PCC. The current Community Short Breaks contracts end at the end of March 2024, with all extension periods utilised.

The recommissioned Community Short Breaks enables PCC to meet their statutory duty of offering a range of short breaks, as well as meeting the priorities identified in Section 4.3.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

If the current contracts were to come to an end in March 2024 without recommissioning a new Community Short Breaks offer, Peterborough City Council would be going against their statutory duty to deliver a range of Short Breaks for children/young people with disabilities. There is also no option to extend the current contracts due to the 2 year extension period already being implemented from 2021. An alternative option was to commission this support through a Framework or Dynamic Purchasing System arrangement. However, this option was rejected following soft market testing indicating a lack of interest from the provider market due to inconsistency of funding leading to lack of sustainability.

66. WRITE OFF IRRECOVERABLE DEBTS IN EXCESS OF £10,000

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the write off of Irrecoverable Debts in Excess of £10,000

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Finance introduced the report and provided an overview of the key points which included:

- The Council were committed to the consideration of all actions before a debt was written off.
- There would always be some debt that would remain uncollected.
- Debt write offs were a necessary management tool and recommended as part of good financial management.

Cabinet Members debated the report and in summary responses to questions raised included:

- The Cabinet gave assurances that everything had been done to recover those debts and they were at this point after all options had been exhausted.
- The Leader noted the 0.05% collection rate and asked how many businesses within that period had opened.
- The Chief Executive advised that the Centre for Cities presented a report in January and in the last few years Peterborough had been in the top 10 for startup growth.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to Authorise the write-off of the irrecoverable debt shown as outstanding in respect of Non-Domestic (Business) Rates (NDR) accounts included in the Appendices to this report (which detail the financial year and the category for the write-off request). The total value of irrecoverable NDR debts in excess of £10,000 outlined in this report is £554,336.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The authorisation for write-off is requested due to one of the following scenarios:

- the individual/ company being made insolvent/ bankrupt/dissolved;
- recovery action attempted but no longer enforceable under the Limitation Act 1980 (Statute Barred); and
- all recovery action has been exhausted with no prospect of recovery.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The alternative option is to not write off this debt. This would result in irrecoverable debts continuing to be shown as outstanding, with a bad debt provision apportioned to these balances. It should be noted that once a debt is no longer collectable it should be written off in the Council's accounts and the debt provision adjusted accordingly.

All other alternative options available to the Council to collect the debt have already been undertaken before making a decision to recommend a debt for write-off.

67. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2024/25 AND COLLECTION FUND DECLARATION 2023/24

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the Council Tax Base 2024/2025 and Collection Fund Declaration 2023/2024.

The purpose of this report was to approve the calculation of the Council Tax Base and note the estimated positions of the collection fund for Council Tax and Business Rates.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Finance introduced the report and provided an overview of the key points.

- This was a necessary part of setting the Council's budget but did not make proposals for how much council tax residents will pay.
- There were 90,000 council properties and 65% of those were in the lowest band D.
- There would be an increase in the premium for long term empty homes and this had been noted within the report.

Cabinet Members debated the report and in summary responses to questions raised included:

- The Council were just behind target in collecting council tax and there was room for improvement.
- There had been continued success in the collection of non-domestic rates which would allow focus to shift to improving the collection of council tax.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

1. Approve the calculation of the Council Tax Base for 2024/25 set at a level of 62,103.69 Band D equivalent properties based on the existing council tax support scheme.

2. Note the estimated position on the Collection Fund in respect of Council Tax as at 31 March 2024 being: £2.437m Deficit
3. Note the estimated position on the Collection Fund in respect of Business Rates as at 31 March 2024 being: £2.224m Deficit
4. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Corporate Services and S151 Officer to amend the final estimated position on the Collection Fund in respect of Council Tax and Business Rates as at 31 March 2024 in accordance with the statutory Determination legislation and timescales.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Council Tax Base could be set at a higher or lower level. However, this could have the effect of either inflating unnecessarily the amount of Council Tax to be set or setting the tax at a level insufficient to meet the Council's budget requirements. A similar position could arise if the surplus or deficit were set at a higher or lower level.

The calculation and return of the information included in the NNDR1 is a statutory requirement which can be formally delegated to an officer. As with council tax if the amount of business rates estimated to be collected is increased or reduced or the surplus or deficit is set at a higher or lower level then the amount of income available to the council will change with the consequent effect on service provision or council tax levels.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

This report covered calculations that are all prescribed by regulations with the effect that no other options need to be considered.

68. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER TWO (2023/24)

The Cabinet received a report in relation to the Quarter 2 Corporate Performance Report.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Finance introduced the report and provided an overview of the key points.

- The new corporate performance reporting arrangements would ensure reporting against measures in achieving our corporate plan.
- This report focused on data from July to September 2023.

The Chief Executive advised that there would be engagement with all Councillors on the budget proposals.

Cabinet Members debated the report and in summary responses to questions raised included:

- It was the Cabinet and Scrutiny's role to look at the challenges identified and the timescales within the plan to see how they were being dealt with.
- The Leader asked Members to pay attention to the report and look for evidence that those challenges were converted into opportunities for the city.

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** note the Corporate Performance Report for Quarter Two, 2023/24.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The corporate performance report will support members to identify areas where improvement in performance is required.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Do not publish a regular performance report – this option was considered but rejected as it would not provide CLT and Cabinet with oversight of the council's performance and progress.

Leader
4.05pm – 4.26pm
18 December 2023