

**PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD**  
**23 FEBRUARY 2010**

**The Mayor – Councillor Keith Sharp**

**Present:**

Councillors: Allen, Arculus, Ash, Benton, Burton, Cereste, M Dalton, S Dalton, S Day, Dobbs, Fitzgerald, Fletcher, Fower, JA Fox, JR Fox, Goldspink, Goodwin, Hiller, Holdich, Hussain, Jamil, Khan, Kreling, Lamb, Lane, Lee, Lowndes, Miners, Morley, Nash, Nawaz, Newton, North, Peach, Rush, Saltmarsh, Sanders, Sandford, Scott, Seaton, Serluca, Shaheed, Sharp, Simons, Stokes, Swift, Thacker, Todd, Walsh, Wilkinson and Winslade.

**One Minute's Silence and Prayers**

The Mayor invited the meeting to observe one minute's silence in memory of Mrs Laura Walsh, mother of Councillor Irene Walsh and Company Sergeant Major Colin Beckett.

The one minute's silence was followed by prayers.

**News Crew**

The Mayor addressed the meeting and stated that there was a local news crew present wishing to film part of the Council meeting. Members agreed to the news crew filming, as required by the Council's Constitution.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Collins, D Day, Eley, Harrington, Murphy and Over.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Members were advised that any submission on their Register of Interest form, which had been distributed to each Councillor prior to the meeting, need not be declared. The forms had been made available due to the Budget, item 7(i)b, being considered and anything declared on individual forms would be taken as having been declared as a personal interest.

It was further advised that whilst all Members had an interest in agenda item 7(iii)a, the Review of the Members' Allowances Scheme, there was a dispensation under paragraph 10 of the Members' Code of Conduct stating that they did not have a prejudicial interest in the item. It was therefore proposed that a personal interest be recorded for all Members of the Council for this item.

Councillor Swift addressed the Solicitor to the Council and questioned whether Councillors would be gagged from speaking on every single item going forward, due to the extent of their declarations?

As a point of information, Councillor Cereste stated that the new Coalition Government were to address this issue.

The Solicitor to the Council responded to Councillor Swift's query and stated that advice had been offered to all Members who had sought it and that the advice given had been of a more permissive nature than conservative. If Members had continuing concerns regarding the advice given to them, then they were to approach the Solicitor to the

Council after the meeting. It was further stated that it was not the case that Members could not speak on any issue.

Councillor Miners declared a personal interest in item 7(i)b due to the nature of his partner's employment, and although he would not be speaking on the item, he would like to exercise his vote.

### **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2010**

The minutes of the meetings held on 8 December 2010 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as an accurate record.

### **4. Communications Time**

#### **4(i) Mayor's Announcements**

Members noted the report outlining the Mayor's engagements for the period 29 November 2010 to 12 February 2011.

The Mayor addressed the meeting and stated that he had one verbal announcement he wished to make and that was to pay tribute to Mr Mike Heath, the Director of City Services who had served Peterborough City Council for the past 14 years. Mr Heath was due to move to the Enterprise Group, which had been set up to look after City Services. Mr Heath's past achievements were acknowledged and he was thanked for all his hard work and effort over the years.

Following the Mayor's address, Group Leaders were invited to say words of thanks to Mr Heath if they so wished.

#### **4(ii) Leader's Announcements**

There were no announcements from the Leader.

#### **4(iii) Chief Executive's Announcements**

The Chief Executive addressed the meeting and expressed further gratitude to Mr Heath on behalf of the Corporate Management Team and Officers of the Council.

A presentation was made to Mr Heath by the Mayor.

### **5. Community Involvement Time**

#### **5(i) Questions with Notice by Members of the public**

Questions were asked in respect of the following:

- Funding for English as an Additional Language (EAL) children;
- Loss of grant monies and funding;
- Redundancy payments;
- The move of St Teresa's to Bretton; and
- The Professional Development Centre

Details of the above questions and associated responses are set out at **Appendix A**.

#### **5(ii) Questions with notice by Members of the Council relating to ward matters to Cabinet Members and to Committee Chairmen**

There were no questions raised.

### **5(iii) Questions with Notice by Members of the Council to representatives of the Police and Fire Authorities**

There were no questions raised.

A summary of all questions and answers raised within agenda items 5(i) are attached at **Appendix A**.

### **5(iv) Petitions submitted by Members or Residents**

A Petition was received from Mr Martin, a Bretton Parish Councillor and local resident, signed by over 500 local residents. The petition was in opposition to the proposed cuts in the opening hours of Bretton Library by 15.5 hours a week.

Councillor Lowndes submitted a petition from the Princes Street Residents Association, requesting the implementation of a wide 20mph zone in Park Ward, with particular emphasis on the Council to review the situation at Princes Street, Princes Gate and Park Road junction. With the forthcoming opening of Kings School Primary School the increase in traffic would mean that a review of the junction would be necessary.

Mr Banhire submitted a petition on behalf of the ethnic minorities in Peterborough, in particular the African communities, requesting the implementation of an African Community Centre. This type of centre was needed in Peterborough and it would promote social interaction between the African communities and enable the effective sharing of resources and facilities.

Councillor Arculus submitted a petition signed by 351 Netherton residents, opposing the closure of the Spinney Walk public open space by the Longthorpe Primary School

## **6. Executive Business Time**

### **6(i) Questions with Notice to the Leader and Members of the Executive**

There were no questions raised.

### **6(ii) Questions without Notice on the Record of Executive Decisions**

Members received and noted a report summarising:

- Decisions from the Cabinet Meetings held 13 December 2010 and continued to 20 December 2010;
- Use of the Council's call-in mechanism, which had not been invoked since the last meeting;
- Waiver of Call-in provision, which had not been invoked since the last meeting; and
- Cabinet Member Decisions taken during the period 26 November 2010 to 14 February 2011.

The Mayor addressed the meeting and stated that any questions relating to the Budget should be raised during the discussion for item 7(i)b.

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

#### Neighbourhood Council Review – Initial Report and Recommendations

Councillor Ash queried whether Parish Councils should have been included in the scheme in order to make it more locally focused and if there was no Parish Council within

the Ward, should a democratically elected group have been identified to partake rather than selected unelected members speaking on behalf of the community? Councillor Cereste responded and stated that he agreed that Parish Councils should have more involvement with Neighbourhood Councils and there were proposals coming forward over the forthcoming weeks that would demonstrate commitment to this point. Neighbourhood Council's were an evolving, maturing project within the city and there were things which could be done better and this was the reasoning behind the review.

Councillor Khan queried whether the £25k funding, which had been guaranteed to each Neighbourhood Council, would be available for each to use as they wished? Councillor Cereste responded that £25k had been allocated to each Neighbourhood Council for each to use as they wished.

Councillor Khan further queried why Cabinet had rejected the recommendations to remove the Special Responsibility Allowance for Neighbourhood Council Chairs and that each of the seven Neighbourhood Councils should be responsible for electing their own Chair? Councillor Cereste responded that given the all of the work undertaken by the Neighbourhood Council Chairs, including giving up their weekends and evenings, it was unreasonable to state that the allowance should be removed when it was put into the context of comparison to other areas of similar size. With regard to the election of Chairs, it was not in the Council's interest to allow the Neighbourhood Councils to elect their own Chairs, this was a political decision.

Councillor Sandford congratulated the Leader of the Council for endorsing the recommendations of the Scrutiny Group and hence increasing the powers of the Neighbourhood Councils. However, was it not the right of any committee or group to be able to choose its own Chair? Councillor Cereste responded and stated that he had already answered this query in his earlier address to the meeting.

Councillor Fower queried what the level of mainstream revenue disaggregated budgets would be for Neighbourhood Councils. Councillor Cereste responded that he would provide a written response in relation to this point.

Councillor Sanders stated that, on a personal level, he believed Neighbourhood Councils should be abandoned and that any monies allocated to them should be directed to the Parishes, however as the Neighbourhood Councils were not to be disbanded, at the very least the Chairs of the Parish Councils should be given voting rights alongside the City Councillors. Councillor Cereste responded and stated that there would be future proposals coming forward which would lead to the further involvement of Parish Councils.

#### Write off approval for debts over £10,000 in relation to Non Domestic Rates

Councillor Fower queried what the total sum was that had been written off during the current financial year? Councillor Seaton responded that the write off was just over £720k. This figure went back a number of years and was in relation to companies that were in receivership. There was no possibility of receiving money from the receivership therefore, this would have no impact on the Council's balance sheet.

#### Grant support to Anglia Ruskin University

Councillor Fower queried what the benefit to the Council would be with regards to the £500k grant provided to Anglia Ruskin. Would the grant be repaid to the Council with interest? Councillor Cereste responded that the grant had been provided to facilitate the refurbishment of the university campus on Oundle Road. The University would not have been in a position to have located the campus on the site if the Council had not assisted with the refurbishment. The university would cater for 1000 students in the city and would provide high quality degrees and high quality levels of training. Therefore the grant was money well spent and would provide for future generations.

Councillor Sanders left the meeting.

## **7. Council Business Time**

### **7(i) Executive Recommendations**

#### **a) Peterborough Core Strategy**

Cabinet, at its meeting of 7 February 2011, received the Peterborough Local Development Framework: Peterborough Core Strategy (Version for Adoption) for consideration and was requested to refer it to Full Council to approve.

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Community Development, Councillor Hiller, presented the report and moved the recommendation that Council adopt the Peterborough Core Strategy as part of its major policy framework, incorporating the changes as recommended by the Inspector.

During his speech, Councillor Hiller highlighted the following points:

- The document was the single most important statutory planning document;
- The document set out the Council's strategy for the future of the city over the forthcoming 15 years;
- The final document before Council was a testament to the hard work and expertise of many Officers within the Authority, notably Mr Richard Kay, the Policy and Strategy Manager;
- The document had been thoroughly examined by the Independent Planning Inspector, who had concluded that the Council's strategy was a robustly prepared, sound document based on solid evidence;
- All of the Inspectors recommendations were required to be adopted, if not, then the whole process would need to be started over again.

Councillor Hiller further stated that, in his opinion, all of the Inspectors recommendations were sensible and all of those recommendations had subsequently been incorporated into the document.

Councillor Serluca seconded the recommendation and urged all Members to vote in support.

During debate the following points were raised:

- Councillor Khan commented on the ambitious nature of the strategy with regards to regeneration and queried how the neighbourhood management approach to delivering sustainable communities across Peterborough would work if the Neighbourhood Councils could not be guaranteed their £25k?;
- Councillor John Fox stated that 100 dwellings had been identified in the Core Strategy as being allocated for build in or within 800 metres of the Werrington Centre. Where were these dwellings going to be situated, as there was no room available for such a development in this location?;
- Councillor Miners stated that noting the instances of multiple deprivation locally, could the Core Strategy deliver those services and those resources so required in the Peterborough Wards which contained areas of significant deprivation, in order to help towards their removal from national and regional listings?;
- Councillor Ash commented that the emphasis appeared to be on freight warehousing and could more be done to encourage manufacturing industry and a more sustainable working environment, hence meeting the needs of people looking for long term employment?;

- Councillor Goodwin addressed the meeting with regards to the expansion in Eye. She had received an email from a number of local Eye businesses requesting she address the meeting on their behalf in order to convey their opinion that additional dwellings and further employment development would be welcomed in Eye and as a collective the businesses were disappointed that they had not been consulted on the plans for expansion;
- Councillor Jamil commented that there needed to be more of a balance with regards to the levels of housing earmarked for the city centre. Housing developments also needed to be situated further afield to enable Peterborough to grow properly.

Councillor Cereste responded to points raised during debate and as a point of order stated that in response to Councillor Khan's query regarding the allocation of £25k to the Neighbourhood Councils, this had already been clarified. Councillor Cereste further stated that the document in front of Members was the Core Strategy and not the Land Allocations Document. This additional document would be coming later on in the year and would offer Members the opportunity of allocating specific sites. With regards to the Core Strategy, this document had been arrived at as a result of proper consultation and needs assessments and was based on evidence of the best needs of the city going forward. The city was growing at a tremendous rate and if the situation was not addressed there could be serious repercussions in the future. There had been a significant amount of hard work that had gone into the documents production and it was hoped that Members would show their support for it.

Councillor Walsh addressed the meeting and stated that she was happy with the document in general, however Councillors should be given the opportunity to oppose individual planning applications as and when they came up. Councillors needed to reserve the right to oppose a particular part of the Core Strategy if necessary.

Councillor Hiller summed up and stated that a document such as the one before Members was required and in the Inspectors words, our document was robustly planned and based on solid evidence. Members were reminded that the Inspectors recommendations could not be looked at on an individual basis, all were required to be implemented, if not then the whole process would have to be repeated from the start.

Following a vote (36 in favour, 5 against and 10 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** to:

Adopt the Peterborough Core Strategy as part of the major policy framework, incorporating the changes as recommended by the Inspector.

The meeting was adjourned for ten minutes.

## **b) Budget 2011-12 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2015-2016**

Cabinet, at its meeting of 7 February 2011, received the budget proposals for 2011/12 through to 2015/16 in line with the provisional local government finance settlement and considered any amendments following public consultation feedback and government spending plans.

The final budget document had been put forward to Council following the announcement of the final local government finance settlement and any changes arising from the settlement were incorporated within the final document before Members.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Seaton, presented the Budget and moved the recommendations detailed within the Budget Book. During his speech, Councillor Seaton highlighted the following points:

- The Budget had been prepared against the most challenging financial position that councils had experienced for several generations;
- The October spending review had announced that councils would face a reduction in grant of 28% over the next 4 years and Peterborough was no exception to this;
- Before next year, Peterborough's grant would reduce by £15m with an increase to £25m in 4 years time;
- The loss of grant had inevitably meant that difficult choices had had to be made;
- Cabinet had met with Officers in June 2010 when the issues faced had first become clear. Proposals had subsequently been developed that were fair and balanced, and sought to deliver efficiencies in the way Peterborough City Council worked before looking at the important services provided;
- This was not just a budget based on savings alone. Preparation for the future was vital, therefore despite budget pressures, investment had also been proposed;
- Further investment would ensure that the city was in a good position to take advantage when the recession came to an end and investment would also improve the city for current communities and generations to come;
- Investment was vital to ensure the needs of vulnerable people were met including those requiring help in Adult and Children's Social Care, investing in schools and higher education in order to create the capacity needed for a growing city, investing to improve the environment, investing in key growth sites across the city, investing in the city centre and working hard to attract new businesses;
- The investment had been balanced against the grant shortfall due to the significant work carried out to make the organisation as efficient as possible;
- £68m had been delivered in efficiency savings since 2006, gaining national recognition and winning national awards;
- A further delivery of £28m was aimed for next year, whilst ensuring that services were still provided;
- Council tax levels in Peterborough were amongst the lowest in the country, being the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest out of 56 unitary authorities in the country;
- A council tax freeze was proposed for 2012;
- Peterborough's proposals were amongst the first to be set out in the country. This had allowed for the consultation to be launched on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2010, a month earlier than usual;
- Particular thanks were extended to the Chief Executive and Rachel Thornton from the Communications Team with regards to the layout of the Budget document;
- The consultation had been a comprehensive process with a web based consultation and a special edition of Your Peterborough magazine. Copies of all of the proposals had also been placed in all libraries and receptions of Council buildings and a number of meetings with partners and stakeholders had been undertaken throughout the city;
- Thanks were extended to all contributors;
- Responses had been made to every element of feedback received;
- Not all proposals had universal support and regard had been given to this prior to the production of the document, however a balance had to be struck in order to meet the required level of savings;
- Where strong and persuasive arguments had been received for changing the proposals, action had been taken;
- Specifically with regards to libraries, further representation had been received since the consultation had ended. Libraries were extremely important to the local community and Peterborough were not closing libraries, unlike other councils;
- Careful consideration would be given to the responses received to the ongoing Vivacity consultation with regards to the reduction in operating hours of the libraries. This would identify the best way forward for these important facilities;
- The proposed Budget struck the right balance in delivering a bigger and better Peterborough by supporting vulnerable people and minimising the impact on services, meeting the financial challenges and placing the Council on a sound financial footing moving forward, recognising the impact the recession was having

on our communities and minimising their tax burden and ensuring the proposals reflected the feedback received from communities in recent months.

Councillor Seaton commended the Budget 2011-12 and the Medium Term Financial Plan to 2015-16 to the Council. Councillor Cereste seconded the proposals and reserved his right to speak.

The Mayor announced that the item was open for debate and reminded Members that they would only be permitted one address on the proposals. During debate the following points were raised:

- Councillor Fower stated that due to concerns he had with regards to several significant areas being overlooked, namely the lack of pay cuts taken by Senior Officers, the ongoing publication of the Council's Your Peterborough magazine which was perceived as an ongoing financial burden to the authority, SRAs not being removed, the possible removal of the Mayors car due to it being costly and rather pretentious and the unspecified losses made through the Icelandic Banks, he would not be supporting the Budget;
- Councillor John Fox stated that credit was to be extended to Councillor Seaton for listening to the views of all concerned, however it was the duty of the opposing groups to scrutinise the administration and due to several concerns that he held with the proposals, he would not be supporting the Budget;
- Councillor Swift addressed the meeting and thanked Councillor Seaton and Mr John Harrison, Executive Director Strategic Resources, for the production of such a comprehensive and detailed document. He stated that the document detailed the challenges, risks and uncertainty faced for the forthcoming years with the reorganisation of local government and warned that in a matter of years the Council could face a situation of substantial overspend. He further stated that reliance would have to be placed on outsourcing in order to fulfil commitments and also reliance would have to be placed heavily on the sale of assets. Councillor Swift concluded that, the Budget had not been one of choice due to the reduction in government grant. Local Government was going backwards and not forwards;
- Councillor Fitzgerald stated that cuts were a necessity not a choice, the choices were reflected in what cuts were made. Councillor Seaton and Council Officers were to be commended on the work they had undertaken and for the difficult decisions that had been made;
- Councillor Judy Fox requested clarification on the wheelie bin charges, as revised at Cabinet on 7 February 2011. When wheelie bins were damaged by the refuse collectors would residents receive a new bin and not a recycled bin as a replacement? Had a supplier for the bins been identified already and if so, how much would the bins cost? It was believed that the majority of residents would like to receive a free of charge recycled bin if theirs was stolen rather than paying for a newer replacement;
- Councillor Lee addressed the meeting and stated that high levels of investment in the city were contained within the Budget and whereas other councils were being forced to close their leisure facilities, this was not the case in Peterborough. Facilities such as the museum were quality facilities which had received large investment sums and Peterborough's bereavement services were amongst some of the best in the country and large sums had been invested in these. With regards to Your Peterborough magazine, sponsorship from private sector businesses was sought to keep the magazine running. Flag Fen was to be kept open and kept as an attraction, bringing tourism and investment into the city. The amount of money being invested in the South Bank would lead to culture, leisure, retail and residential development on a derelict run down area of land. The development at Peterborough United Football Ground, specifically in relation to the new stands, would also bring in viable business units. Street lighting was also to be improved across all Wards. Overall, the Budget was an excellent one and



there had been tough decisions made, some of which had not been ideal, the Budget was fair and invested in the future of the city. In response to Councillor Judy Fox's query with regards to the bins, Councillor Lee advised that if the bins were damaged then the Council would replace the bin free of charge;

- Councillor Shaheed addressed the meeting and expressed concern at the increase in adult social care charges and the impact these increases would have on individuals. Confirmation of the number of people expected to be affected monetarily by the increase was still awaited. Also, with regards to redundancies, the programme would leave frontline services short of staff and many other members of staff would be left with increased workload. Finally, Councillor Shaheed commented that Peterborough's Cabinet was one of the largest in the country for a unitary authority and the Liberal Democrats believed a decrease in 3 posts should be implemented, which would save the Council around £50k per annum from the Members allowances budget;
- Councillor Samantha Dalton addressed the meeting and stated that from an environmental aspect, some cuts were good, for example cutting the Council's energy bill would ultimately lead to a reduced carbon footprint. This would be achieved by further investing in street lighting and solar panels on some Council buildings as well as numerous other initiatives. Reductions were needed, as from 2012, a charge of £12 per tonne of carbon emitted was to be introduced and this would cost the taxpayer £380k from year one, moving to £411k per year;
- Councillor Sandford addressed the meeting and acknowledged that there had been more consultation undertaken with the public than during previous years and the document was easier to understand. It was also positive in terms of Area Committees as the Cabinet had accepted a number of proposals put forward by the working group, giving meaningful powers and meaningful amounts of money to these Committees. However, in a number of areas there had been a number of incorrect choices made such as adult social care charges, the cuts in library service, the increase in charges for sports services, the financial impact of larger projects such as the future incinerator and Cathedral Square leading to the Council's borrowing requirement being up to £65m in 2013, concerns around possible future issues arising from the transfer of City Services to Enterprise, the spend on interim managers and consultants, the lack of cuts in Senior Officer pay and the car parking charges, which appeared to be biased towards Councillors. There had been difficult choices faced and there had been a number of areas where the wrong choices had been made. The Budget hit hardest at those people who couldn't afford to pay and failed to make choices which tackled areas of wasteful expenditure and future projects, with the levels of borrowing would put the future financial situation of the Council in jeopardy. It was for these reasons that Councillor Sandford stated both he and his Liberal Democrat colleagues would not be supporting the Budget;
- Councillor Khan stated that the Local Authority had had its hands tied with regards to decisions made within the Budget due to it being led by the Coalition Government and he expressed concerns regarding to the loss of frontline service staff, questioning how services would be maintained in the city going forward. Further concerns were highlighted with regards to Peterborough losing its unitary authority status in the future. For these reasons Councillor Khan stated that he and his colleagues would not be supporting the Budget;
- Councillor Scott addressed the meeting with regards to children's social care and stated that there had been nothing implemented within the Budget that would affect the future safeguarding of children in the city or children in care. This was a positive decision taken by Cabinet. Confidence was high that the savings within Children's Services could be made through innovative ways of delivering and it was hoped that the impact on frontline services would be minimised. A number of areas would need to be looked at and if any Members would like to become part of the reference groups Councillor Scott would be happy to hear from them;
- Councillor Holdich stated that the Budget was a balanced one and tough decisions had been made. There was a lot of investment for young people,

£145m over 5 years, going towards investments such as skill centres, the university and schools etc, this was a positive contribution for the future of the city;

- Councillor Ash stated that he did have some concerns, namely with the sale of assets the privatisation of services, due the past failures in this arena and also not obtaining S106 money for services. Councillor Ash further commented that with regards to damaged wheelie bins, if the Council were to replace them it was hoped that the money would be recouped from the company concerned with the damage.

Councillor Cereste addressed the meeting in response to the points raised by Members and the following points were highlighted:

- The Council had to find £50m of cuts out of its budgets;
- With regards to the comments made about cuts in Senior Officers pay, as an administration it was believed the best way to make savings had been to freeze salaries and to remove a post. The salaries would continue to be frozen and this would save a substantial sum over the long term;
- With regards to the Your Peterborough magazine, Councillor Cereste agreed that a different way of delivering the magazine was needed, but in the context of £50m cuts, the monetary value associated with the magazine was low;
- With regards to the rise in adult social care payments, these were means tested and if people could not afford to pay then they would not have to pay;
- With regards to the incinerator, Councillor Cereste stated that a proposal was required in order to run in parallel with other options. If the incinerator was not built then fines would be faced that would take millions out the Budget;
- It was believed that the right choices had been made in a difficult time and Councillor Cereste commended the Budget to the Council

Councillor Seaton summed up and extended thanks to all Party Members for their involvement in the Budget discussion. Overall, objections to the proposals had been nominal and hard work had been undertaken to develop proposals which were fair and balanced and delivered efficiencies in the way that Peterborough City Council worked before looking at the important services provided. Commitment to a vibrant city was still maintained therefore investment was included to stimulate the economy and to create a better place to live. It was considered overall that the Budget proposals struck the right balance and Members were asked to support it.

Following a vote (36 in favour, 5 against and 10 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** to adopt:

- a. The changes to the budget proposals arising since Cabinet, as outlined in paragraph 2.1 of the report;
- b. The revenue budget for 2011/12 and the medium term financial plan for 2012/13 to 2015/16, set in the context of the sustainable community strategy, as outlined in pages 41 to 66 of the report;
- c. The capital programme for 2011/12 to 2015/16 and related strategies and indicators, including the proposed change to the Council's approach to calculating the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) as outlined in the Treasury Management Strategy;
- d. The council tax freeze for 2011/12 and indicative increases of 2.5% for 2012/13 to 2015/16;
- e. The council tax setting resolution for consideration as set out in Appendix A to the report; and
- f. The reserves position, including the carry forward of the declared surplus in 2011/12 and 2012/13 to contribute towards a sustainable financial position in future years.

The Cambridgeshire Fire Authority met to set their budget and council tax on 17 February, after these Budget papers were released. The council tax resolution was based

on the proposals to be considered at that meeting. If different proposals were approved by the Fire Authority, then it would be necessary to submit an addendum to the Council meeting.

## **7(ii) Notices of Motion**

1. Councillor Swift moved the following motion:

That this Council:

Regrets the measures it has to take to impose increased charges on the majority of its services and reduce grants to outside organisations. Whilst recognising that nationally there are serious financial difficulties and that it is the duty of all sections of society to bear an equal share, for Peterborough City Council to try and recoup, within such a short period of time, the loss of substantial Government grants of over £12million pounds to facilitate an amended structure is as a Council, too much to bear.

With affirmation of the above, I move that this Council:

1. Informs Her Majesty's coalition Government that we are outsourcing services to the private sector/Trusts and the question we are asking ourselves is what, if anything, will be left for future Councillors to administer?
2. Calls upon Her Majesty's coalition Government to stage over a longer period of time the funding cuts required nationally to balance the books.
3. Asks Her Majesty's coalition Government to define to Local Authorities, like Peterborough, what the future role of Local Government will be compared to its inception.

The motion was seconded by Councillor John Fox and he reserved his right to speak.

During debate, it was commented that the Council's responsibility to administer local services would not diminish in any way. The key factor would be how the delivery of those services would be identified. Outsourcing the Council's services to private companies with their individual areas of expertise, would, with the support of the Council, enable them to grow. If services were not delivered to a satisfactory degree, then the Council would still have full control to pull those services back and to identify the next steps in order to address the situation.

Following further debate, a vote was taken and the motion was **DEFEATED** (10 in favour, 39 against, 1 abstention).

## **7(iii) Reports and Recommendations**

### **a) Review of Peterborough City Council's Members' Allowances Scheme – Report of the Independent Members' Allowances Panel**

Council received a report outlining the findings of the Independent Members' Allowances Panel.

The Council was required by law to have an Independent Members' Allowances Panel. The Panel had met on 30 September 2010 in order to review the current scheme and to consider specific issues relating to the level of the basic allowance, car parking permits for Members, special responsibility allowance payments for the Leader, Cabinet Advisors, Chairs of Scrutiny Committees/Commissions and Chairs of Neighbourhood Councils.

Councillor Cereste addressed the meeting and moved alternative recommendations to those contained within the report. Councillor Cereste stated that the proposed recommendations reflected a fair and sensible scheme and recognised the commitment of all Councillors.

Councillor Burton seconded the recommendations and reserved his right to speak.

During debate, it was commented that unless the recommendations of the Independent Panel were questionable, the recommendations drawn should be those implemented. If not, there was no point in having the Panel in the first instance.

Councillor Cereste responded to the comment raised and stated that if the recommendations proposed by the Independent Members' Allowances Review Panel were approved, then the amount of money paid to Councillors would increase and in this very difficult and austere time, this would not be morally acceptable.

A vote was taken (35 in favour, 10 against, 2 abstentions) and it was **RESOLVED** to:

Approve the recommendations proposed by Councillor Cereste, those being:

1. A further review of the Basic Allowance take place at the same time the Council considers charging staff for car parking and in the meantime there should be no change in the current basic allowance of £7962.08;
2. The travel allowance of £227.45 within the basic allowance remain unchanged;
3. The telephone allowance of £568.68 within the basic allowance remain unchanged;
4. The scheme of allowances does not continue to be updated for inflation by the use of the Local Government Association's daily rate issued each February and that the Members Independent Remuneration Panel is asked to meet again, to carry out the further review that they suggest and report their findings to the October Council meeting;
5. Certain special responsibility allowances (SRAs) be subject to ongoing review and that no increase be made in the Leader's allowance at this time;
6. The existing arrangements for group leader's allowance is kept and is not paid only to the Leader of the majority group and the main opposition group leader;
7. The Licensing Committee and the Licensing Act 2003 Committee merge into one committee, and pay the Chair of Licensing the amount currently paid to the Chair of the Licensing Act 2003 committee, but discontinue the SRA payment to the Chair of the Licensing Act 2003 Committee;
8. There be no change in the allowance paid to the Chairman and Members of the Standards Committee until the implications of the Localism Bill become clear;
9. The scheme be updated to record the entitlement of certain categories of members to be in receipt of Blackberries, etc;
10. Members continue to be restricted to one SRA; and

The members allowance scheme formally adopt the Councillors car parking scheme with an amendment that the Leader of the Council should not pay a reduced rate, but should pay the same rate as an officer on the same "salary" would pay and on the same basis as below:

| <b>Position</b>   | <b>Net<br/>Amount<br/>£</b> |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Leader of The Council                                   | 400.00                      |
| Deputy Leader   | 151.65                      |
| Cabinet Member  | 139.99                      |
| Cabinet Advisors  | 93.32                       |
| Chair of Planning & Environmental Protection Committee  | 93.32                       |
| Chair of Audit Committee                                | 93.32                       |
| Chair of Scrutiny Commissions                           | 93.32                       |
| Chair of Scrutiny Committee                             | 93.32                       |
| Chair of Neighbourhood Councils                         | 93.32                       |
| Leader of Opposition Group - (SRA part based on 9 / 17) | 71.37                       |
| Leader of Opposition Group - (SRA part based on 3 / 17) | 54.90                       |
| Leader of Opposition Group - (SRA part based on 2 / 17) | 52.15                       |
| Chair of Licensing Committee                            | 69.99                       |
| Member with no SRA                                      | 46.66                       |

Meeting closed at 10.30 p.m.

MAYOR

## COUNCIL MEETING – 23 FEBRUARY 2011

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**AGENDA ITEM 5 - COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TIME****5 (i) Questions with notice by members of the public****1. Question to the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University from Mr Ed Murphy:**

Last year two authorities, Peterborough and Slough, received additional funding for exceptional circumstances based on English as an Additional Language (**EAL**) children; this was for **new** EAL children. Peterborough received almost £1m. You then top sliced for professional development and access to the DoE recruitment service. 50% (£420k) was distributed to schools based on EAL numbers and 50% based on the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (**AWPU**). This meant that West Town got £20484 for 221 EAL pupils worth £92 per child. A school (like Wittering for example) got £3906 for one EAL pupil. As this money was specifically to deal with the impact of immigration, mobility and EAL children this distribution of funds was unfair and a discriminatory practice.

Does the Cabinet Member regret the Conservative lead government's axing of this grant for Peterborough and can he explain why, when extra money was made available for these children, this Conservative Council choose to discriminate against the very children the Conservative Member of Parliament for Peterborough is now saying the government should help with more cash?

**The Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University responded:**

It is worth reminding ourselves that the Labour Government allowed 3 million migrants into this country leading to 96 different languages being spoken in our schools, causing us to be fairly well down the league tables in terms of results, because they were only in the schools for an average of a couple of years before they took their exams, and they only achieve at 18%. I would like to ask Members, in my reply it talks about the Schools Forum. Now the Schools Forum is a completely independent body made up of all head teachers from across the spectrum in Peterborough, not all head teachers from every school but special schools, secondary schools and primary schools. All there on behalf of their colleagues. So in response, in 2009/10 the local authority did indeed receive an allocation of £978k for its growth in EAL pupil numbers. Following a discussion with Schools Forum on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010 a working group was established (consisting of Schools Forum members) to develop the methodology for distributing this funding to schools. The methodology agreed was to top-slice the grant by £50,000 to target at specific projects. A large proportion of the centrally retained element was used to purchase EMAS UK, translation software, for all schools. The remainder of the grant was distributed to schools; 50% on EAL numbers and 50% on weighted pupil numbers (AWPU). West Town's allocation of £20,484 consisted of £4,040.13 for weighted pupil numbers and £16,444.32 for EAL pupil numbers. Wittering's allocation of £3,906 consisted of £3,832.46 for weighted pupil numbers and £74.41 for EAL pupil numbers.

The justification for distributing 50% of the funding on weighted pupil numbers (AWPU) was that EAL pupils within the authority draw down additional resources from other formula factors i.e. deprivation, low prior attainment and pupil turnover. It could be argued that this has resulted in a reduction in AWPU funding over the years as funding has been targeted at these factors. Interestingly if the DFE formula has been used to distribute this funding to schools both Wittering and West Town would not have received any funding as the allocations were based on growth in EAL of more than 2.5%.

Although the Exceptional Circumstances Grant (ECG) has now ended the government have mainstreamed the £1.5m received in 2010/11 into Peterborough's DSG allocation for 2011/12. It will therefore become permanent budget. On the 16<sup>th</sup> February 2011 Schools Forum committed to use this funding to create an EAL factor within the Peterborough's Schools Funding Formula. This factor will result in this funding being allocated to schools based on the number of EAL pupil's it has on roll in January plus an allocation for pupils of Gypsy/Traveller heritage.

**Mr Ed Murphy asked the following supplementary question:**

In the question, I did ask whether you regretted the cut that this Government had made to Peterborough in the exceptional circumstances and also while the debate is going on nationally at the moment; do you think that the current formula which is weighted heavily in free school meals is actually a good idea or do you agree with the Member of Parliament who is arguing that it's not a good idea?

**The Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University responded:**

I think as I said, instead of about £1m we are going to get £1.5m and it's going into our pooled budget so it should be there for ever and a day and on the free school meals; yes I do agree with the MP, its not reasonable to suggest that we should base our migrant numbers on free school meals as a lot of them aren't entitled to free school meals and don't know how to claim it if they were. And they are probably some of the most deprived people in the city, so I think to try and add something to the pupil premium was the right way to go.