

**MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD
11 JULY 2012**

The Mayor – Councillor George Simons

Present:

Councillors Allen, Arculus, Ash, Casey, Cereste, M Dalton, Davidson, Day, Elsey, Fitzgerald, Fletcher, Forbes, Fower, JR Fox, JA Fox, Goodwin, Harper, Harrington, Hiller, Holdich, Jamil, Johnson, Khan, Knowles, Kreling, Lamb, Lane, Lee, Maqbool, Martin, McKean, Miners, Murphy, Nadeem, Nawaz, North, Over, Peach, Rush, Saltmarsh, Sanders, Sandford, Scott, Seaton, Serluca, Shabbir, Shaheed, Sharp, Shearman, Simons, Stokes, Swift, Sylvester, Thacker, Todd, Thulbourn and Walsh.

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Annual Council Meeting 23 May 2012

The minutes of the Annual Council meeting held 23 May 2012 were agreed and signed as an accurate record.

4. Mayors Announcement Report

Members noted the updated report outlining the Mayor's engagements for the period 23 May 2012 to 8 July 2012.

5. Leader's Announcements

There were no announcements from the Leader.

6. Chief Executive's Announcements

There were no announcements from the Chief Executive.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TIME

7. Questions with Notice by Members of the Public

One question had been raised by a member of the public and taken as read, this was in relation to:

1. Targets for educational attainment in Peterborough during 2013, 2014 and 2015.

A summary of the question and answer raised within agenda item 7 is attached at **Appendix A** to these minutes.

8. Questions with Notice by Members of the Council Relating to Ward Matters to Cabinet Members and to Committee Chairmen

Questions relating to Ward matters were raised and taken as read in respect of the following:

1. The installation of adequate locks, in particular shrouded locks, on security fencing to help prevent against illegal encampments;
2. Whether a purpose built pedestrian crossing to serve both the North and Southbound bus stops adjacent to Loder Avenue on Bretton Way was required; and
3. Introducing a Cumulative Impact Policy in the Millfield area of Park Ward.

Questions unable to be dealt with at the meeting due to time constraints were in respect of the following:

4. The sale of the former Peverells care home site and its intended future use; and
5. Disposal of the former playing field land on the former John Mansfield School site.

A summary of all questions and answers raised within agenda item 8 are attached at **Appendix A** to these minutes.

9. Questions with Notice by Members of the Council to representatives of the Police and Fire Authorities

No questions to the representatives of the Police Authority or the Fire Authority were raised.

10. Petitions Submitted by Members or Residents

Councillor Allen submitted a petition from concerned local residents of Orton Waterville who were concerned at the loss of the Chequers public house to make way for a branch of Tesco's.

Councillor Shabbir submitted a petition from concerned local residents who objected to the proposed closure of Greenwood House.

EXECUTIVE BUSINESS TIME

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

Questions to the Leader and Members of the Executive were raised and taken as read in respect of the following:

1. Update on savings made by Enterprise Peterborough during 2011 / 2012;
2. The reasons for the use of consultants during the recent refurbishment of the museum;
3. The Council's policy for the use of capital receipts generated from the sale of homes for the elderly;
4. The lack of bunting and flags put up in the city centre for the Queens Diamond Jubilee and the lighting of the millennium beacon;
5. Senior Officer compensation payments upon resignation;
6. The formulation of the latest policy with regard to the future of Greenwood and Welland House.

Questions unable to be dealt with at the meeting due to time constraints were in respect of the following:

7. Review of banking arrangements in view of the recent call for criminal investigations into the operations of Barclays Bank.

A summary of all questions and answers raised within agenda item 8 are attached at **Appendix B** to these minutes.

12. Questions without Notice on the Record of Executive Decisions

Members received and noted a report summarising:

1. Decisions from the Cabinet Meeting held on 10 July 2012;

2. Use of the Council's call-in mechanism, which had not been invoked since the last meeting;
3. Special Urgency and Waiver of Call-in provision, which had not been invoked since the previous meeting; and
4. Cabinet Member Decisions taken during the period 11 April 2012 to 27 June 2012.

Questions were asked about the following:

Older People's Accommodation Strategy - 2012

A number of Members' raised queries in relation to the Older People's Accommodation Strategy – 2012. In summary, the main points highlighted were as follows:

- The word 'closure' should not have been included in the resolution;
- It would be possible to retain Greenwood House and Welland House without ensuite facilities;
- A wider consultation process was sought;
- There had been no dialogue with other Group Leaders;
- The report had been prepared with too much haste and the concerns of residents had not been properly taken into account;
- Were the proposed closures simply about making savings for the Council?
- What were the redundancy costs likely to be?
- Why had the Cabinet Member not visited the homes in question?
- The Leader was requested to change the wording of the resolution to state 'future of the two care homes' rather than 'proposed closure of the two care homes'.

Councillor Cereste and Councillor Fitzgerald responded to all queries and in summary, the responses were as follows:

- The Cabinet was extremely sympathetic to the situation and had been throughout;
- During the consultation, other options would also be considered if proposed and all views would be taken into consideration;
- It was in the opinion of Senior Officers that there were more adequate facilities in the city which could be offered to the current residents;
- The proposed closures were not about cost savings, but rather about improving the facilities available to residents;
- Any redundancy costs would be one off costs, however annual savings would be made each year if the homes were to be closed;
- Visits had been undertaken to a number of care homes across the city and had recently been undertaken to the two homes in question;
- Many residents had been spoken to and all of their views would be taken into consideration; and
- The consultation would be wide reaching and all views would be listened to.

Following discussion, Councillor Cereste committed to amending the resolution passed at the Cabinet meeting to show consultation on the 'future' of the homes, rather than 'closure', subject to legal advice.

A motion was put forward by Councillor Khan to suspend standing orders and to allow an additional 20 minutes for the item.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Shearman and a vote was taken (unanimous) and it was **AGREED** to suspend standing orders to allow for an extension in time for the item.

Delivery Strategy for Southbank and Surrounding Areas

Councillor Khan requested clarification as to whether university provision was still to be considered as part of the Southbank development? Councillor Cereste advised that

the university was still very much a priority for the city and the Southbank was considered to be a viable location for some form of university provision.

Development of Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Panels (Solar Farms) and Wind Turbines

Councillor Harrington queried whether the tenant farmers would be consulted and informed of the proposals? Councillor Cereste responded that all proposals would be going out for extensive consultation. Local Ward Councillors would be consulted and proposals would be submitted to the Rural Scrutiny Commission for inspection.

Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP): Incorporation as a Company Limited by Guarantee

Councillor Sandford sought clarification as to what funding had been provided for the electrification of the railway line. Councillor Cereste responded that he did not have the specific figures to hand but that he would request information on funding awards for electrification of railways and other infrastructure and circulate the information.

Section 75 Agreement with NHS Peterborough for Drugs and Alcohol Services

Councillor Shearman sought clarification as to why Councillor Walsh had been responsible for taking this decision. Councillor Walsh advised that Human Resources was included within her portfolio.

COUNCIL BUSINESS TIME

13. Committee Recommendations

(a) Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan

Cabinet, at its meeting of 10 July 2012, received a report presenting the refreshed version of the Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan which sought its endorsement prior to Full Council.

Councillor Walsh, the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Safety introduced and moved the recommendation that Council approves the 2012 revision of the Safer Peterborough Partnership 3-year Plan (2011-2014) as set out in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Todd.

Members debated the recommendation and raised points including:

- The document focussed too much on crime and not enough on communities;
- Further investigation would be undertaken to identify the possibility of implementing a night time SOS bus in the city;
- Road safety was a problem in the city and although a number of incidents could be attributed to the layout of some roads and the markings, the resources were not available to rectify all of these issues;
- The cost of crime across the city equated to £50m a year in economic and social costs. These costs were realised by all agencies as well as the Council;
- IOM was short for 'Integrated Offender Management'; and
- The Social Impact Bond was a payment by results scheme.

Following debate, a vote was taken (unanimous) and it was **RESOLVED** that:

Council approves the 2012 revision of the Safer Peterborough Partnership 3-year Plan (2011-2014).

14. Committee Recommendations

(a) Neighbourhood Committees – Chairmen and Special Responsibility Allowances

Councillor John Fox introduced and moved recommendations following a request from the Peterborough North Area Committee held on 12 June 2012, the Dogsthorpe, East and Park Neighbourhood Committee held on 14 June 2012 and the Central and North

Neighbourhood Committee held on 19 June 2012 to amend the way that the chairmen of the Neighbourhood Committees were appointed and to remove the Special Responsibility Allowances payable to them. This was seconded by Councillor Sandford.

Members debated the recommendations and raised points including:

- Not all of the Neighbourhood Chairmen currently serving received an allowance;
- The Chairmen were not voted in democratically. Each Neighbourhood Committee should have the right to nominate its own Chairman;
- It should make no difference as to which political group the Chairman was representative of, Neighbourhood Committee meetings should be non-political;
- Each Chairman currently appointed was a Ward Councillor from the relevant Neighbourhood area;
- There were non-Conservative Vice Chairman serving on the Committees;
- The competency of the Chairman was of prime importance.

Following debate, Councillor John Fox stated that he was disappointed with the general view expressed by Council and he felt strongly that it was time for a change.

Councillor Lee proposed that the recommendations be moved to the vote. This was seconded by Councillor Dalton.

A vote was taken (25 in favour and 30 against) and the recommendations contained in the report were **REJECTED**.

15. Notices of Motion

1. Councillor Shearman moved the following motion:

That this Council:

1. Is concerned that public confidence in the council's ability to safeguard its children and young people has been damaged by the lack of leadership shown by the administration in general and the Cabinet member for Children's Services in particular;
2. Is mindful that during the Cabinet member's tenure of her portfolio, OFSTED has undertaken four inspections, and the findings of them all have served to undermine public confidence;
3. Recognises that under the professional leadership of the Interim Director for Children's Services good progress is being made in addressing shortcomings and in view of this believes that the Cabinet Member, given her direct association with three years' of failure, is ill-suited to provide appropriate political leadership; and
4. Calls on the Cabinet Member for Children's Services to resign with immediate effect.

During his speech, Councillor Shearman stated that the Children's Services department had suffered a steady decline and that the Cabinet Member for Children's Services had not shown the ability to provide the appropriate political leadership that the department required.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Harrington, who stated that the motion was in no way personally reflective of the Cabinet Member, it was simply around the failings of the Children's Services Department.

In response, Councillor Cereste stated that he was saddened by the motion. Both the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Cabinet Member for Education had spent considerable time and effort to identify the root causes of the issues in the department. The department was now improving and the loss of the Cabinet Member would be detrimental to this. Councillor Cereste further requested that a recorded vote

be taken on the motion.

All Members agreed to a recorded vote being taken.

Members further debated the motion and raised points including:

- The motion was in no way personal towards the Cabinet Member who was an extremely good Councillor but simply lacked the ability to provide the political leadership required by the department;
- The Cabinet Member had placed confidence in the information that had been given to her by Officers. This information had subsequently been proved inaccurate. Therefore the Cabinet Member should not be held accountable for this;
- Unfortunately, the public confidence had been damaged, and the public could not understand why the Cabinet Member was still in post;
- The progress being made could not be attributed to the Cabinet Member, it was down to the work of Officers;
- There had been a significant amount of money put into the department recently, this had improved the service;
- The department needed continuity and stability, if the Cabinet Member stepped down, this would cause further upheaval.

In summing up his motion, Councillor Shearman stated that his feeling had not been swayed by the debate. The department had received a number of poor Ofsted reports and the main concern was for the young children of the city. The 2009 Ofsted report had highlighted an inadequate overload on social workers and this had already been highlighted previously in 2007. Why therefore had nothing been done about the situation? Members were urged to support the motion.

Following debate, a recorded vote was taken. Members voted as follows:

Councillors for: Ash, Davidson, Fletcher, Forbes, Fower, JR Fox, JA Fox, Harrington, Jamil, Johnson, Khan, Knowles, Lane, Martin, Miners, Murphy, Saltmarsh, Sandford, Shabbir, Shaheed, Sharp, Shearman, Sylvester, Thulbourn

Councillors against: Allen, Arculus, Casey, Cereste, Dalton, Day, Elsey, Fitzgerald, Goodwin, Harper, Hiller, Holdich, Kreling, Lamb, Lee, Maqbool, McKean, Nadeem, Nawaz, North, Over, Peach, Rush, Scott, Seaton, Serluca, Stokes, Swift, Thacker, Todd and Walsh

Councillors abstaining: Simons.

The motion was **DEFEATED** (24 for, 31 against, 1 abstention).

16. Reports and Recommendations

a) Localism Act – Members' Complaints Procedure

Council received a report which outlined the new Member's Code of Conduct and new arrangements for dealing with complaints at Peterborough City Council under the Localism Act 2012.

Councillor Lee moved the recommendations in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Goodwin.

Councillor Sandford addressed the meeting and requested that a further recommendation be implemented in addition to those contained within the report, this being to review the procedure after 12 months.

Councillor Lee responded and stated that he was happy to incorporate the recommendation from Councillor Sandford.

Following debate, a vote was taken (unanimous) and it was **RESOLVED** to:

- 1) Approve the Code of Conduct (annex A);
- 2) Approve the arrangements for receipt, investigation and consideration of complaints against councilors (annex B);
- 3) Approve the terms of reference for the Audit committee dealing with complaints against members (Annex C);
- 4) Agree that seats on the Audit Committee be exempt from the political balance requirements of Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to allow the Liberal Democrat group a seat on the committee (revised committee of 8 to comprise of 4 Conservative, 2 Independents, 1 Labour and 1 Liberal Democrat);
- 5) Agree the Monitoring Officer can grant dispensations to members to speak at meetings where they have a disclosable pecuniary interest;
- 6) Agree that any dispensation to take part in the debate and/or vote on any matter in which the member has a disclosable pecuniary interest can be granted by the Audit Committee;
- 7) Approve an annual retention fee should to paid to the independent person and their deputy as set out at paragraph 6 to the report;
- 8) Authorise the Monitoring Officer to make any consequential amendments to the Constitution to reflect this new complaints process; and
- 9) Offer a vote of thanks to the former independent and parish members of the Standards Committee for the work they have undertaken

It was further agreed to that the procedure would be reviewed after 12 months.

Prior to the close of the meeting, Councillor Shearman addressed the meeting and advised all present that he would continue to work closely alongside the Cabinet Member for Children's Services.

The Mayor
19.00 – 22.10

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Questions were received under the following categories:

<u>COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TIME</u>	
7	<u>Questions with notice by members of the public</u>
1.	<p>Question from Nicola Day-Dempsey</p> <p>To Councillor Holdich, Cabinet member for Education Skills and University:</p> <p>I asked you a question at February's Council Meeting and you assured me improvements were being made to the poor educational attainment of our city. Peterborough schools currently sit within the bottom 10% of all schools in the Country. Can you tell us the targets this City Council has for our overall educational attainment in 2013, 2014, 2015? Please answer with specific, league table targets (%/numbers) with real figures so we know our improvement targets as a city. Are we aiming for bottom 15% in 2013, for example?</p> <p>Councillor Holdich responded:</p> <p>Peterborough has seen significant improvements in its results in the last 5 years and continues to improve its position in the national league tables despite a significantly changing demographic. The setting of local targets by Local Authorities was removed as a requirement in 2011 by the Department for Education however we continue to challenge schools on their performance and as an authority our ambition is to be top quartile in relation to our statistical neighbours (i.e. sharing similar characteristics) and to close the gap on the national average for England. We do not set targets according to league table positions.</p> <p>Our targets for 2012 which we have agreed with schools are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Stage 2 - English and Maths at Level 4 or above are 75% which puts us above both national average and statistical neighbour average for 2011. Our targets for levels of progress in English (89%) and Maths (86%) continue to put us above national average and statistical neighbour average for 2011. All targets show an increase on last year's figures. • At Key Stage 4, our targets are at 56% 5 A*-C including English and Maths, an increase of 7% on last year and will put us above the statistical neighbour average and within 2% of national average from 2011. <p>These targets show a significant improvement against the 2011 position. We await the 2012 results and the publication of the 2012 national and statistical averages.</p> <p>The success of schools is also measured by Ofsted reviews. Ofsted has categorised Peterborough schools as 'performing well'. The city continues to see a rising trend of good or outstanding Ofsted reports in the last academic year. The quality of teaching and learning continues to improve and we continue to receive praise for our improvement team's work.</p> <p>Nicola Day-Dempsey asked the following supplementary question:</p> <p>What were the targets for 2013 / 2014 and 2015 in relation to the national league tables?</p> <p>Councillor Holdich responded:</p>

	<p>Until the results for 2012 had been released the targets could not be identified.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p><u>Questions with notice by Members relating to ward matters To the Cabinet Members and to Committee Chairmen</u></p>
<p>1.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor John Fox</p> <p>To Councillor Elsey, Cabinet Advisor to the Deputy Leader:</p> <p>I would like to thank the hard work and commitment by Paul Hampshire and Mark Horsely on helping to remove the unauthorised encampment that was recently in situ in David's Lane, Werrington in record time. Can the Cabinet Member assure me that Enterprise Peterborough are now using adequate locks, in particular shrouded locking systems, on all security fencing to help prevent such incursions in the future?</p> <p>Councillor Elsey responded:</p> <p>I can confirm that Enterprise Peterborough do use adequate locks, manufactured to British Standards, for protecting open spaces from unauthorised encampments. The locks used are toughened and therefore this reduces the chance of the locks being cut. Shrouded locking systems are not deemed appropriate as there is still the potential for these locks to be removed, as well as this increasing the risk of more substantial damage being caused to whatever infrastructure (gates, fences etc) are in place protecting the area.</p> <p>Councillor John Fox thanked Officers for their work.</p> <p>Councillor Elsey thanked Councillor John Fox and stated that he would ensure Officers were made aware of Councillor Fox's gratitude.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Fletcher</p> <p>To Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Housing , Neighbourhoods and Planning:</p> <p>Following on from representation from myself over a period of several years and recently by Bretton Parish Council, PCC road traffic department carried out a survey to determine if there is a need for a purpose built pedestrian crossing to serve both North and Southbound bus stops adjacent to Loder Avenue on Bretton Way. This section of road is a dual carriageway with no designated access over the central reservation whatsoever.</p> <p>The survey carried out between 8.00am & 9.00am on November 24th 2011 found that only one person crossed the road but there were 911 passing vehicles recorded.</p> <p>On these figures and because of the lack of pedestrian traffic, it would appear there is no need for a proper crossing, but over the years many local people have formed the opinion that to cross this road presents a dangerous hazard and therefore pedestrian traffic is now at a minimum meaning the bus service loses many potential passengers.</p> <p>By the councils own figures a vehicle will pass at <u>circa 3 second intervals</u>. There is no access for a disabled wheelchair user or a pushchair and even pedestrian access through overgrown bushes is difficult.</p> <p>Would the cabinet member agree that this situation is unacceptable and that as a matter of urgency a simple access point should be installed to safeguard those existing users and encourage more people to use the facility of public transport?</p> <p>Councillor Hiller responded:</p>

There are currently two adequate crossing points, both within a reasonable distance of the bus stops, the underpass is approximately 425m north and the footbridge is approximately 150m south.

Given the dual carriageway nature of the road, and vehicle speeds in excess of 30mph, it would not be safe to construct an uncontrolled crossing here, therefore a signalised crossing would be required and an initial estimate of the cost is £150,000. This can not be justified on demand as the survey showed that there was insufficient demand for a crossing at this location.

The gaps in bushes and hardstanding in the central reservation are to provide access to the street lighting columns for maintenance works.

Councillor Fletcher did not ask a supplementary question, but stated that he was disappointed with the response.

3. **Question from Councillor Shearman**

To Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Housing , Neighbourhoods and Planning:

Could the Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Planning explain to the law abiding majority (of people) living in the Millfield area of Park Ward why the Council has not used its powers under the Licensing Act 2003, as defined in the Statutory Guidance which accompanied the Act, to introduce a Cumulative Impact Policy? Such a policy would have given the Council the power to refuse new licences in a clearly defined area whenever it received relevant representations regarding the potential cumulative impact of granting the licence.

Councillor Hiller responded:

I understand our officers were in fact asked to investigate the possibility of introducing a cumulative impact policy within the Millfield and Lincoln Road area, about two years ago.

At a Safer Peterborough Partnership Meeting at that time, after reviewing the current information collated by officers, there wasn't enough evidential data available of the type needed to support a full consultation.

One of the reasons for this was the fact that many associated crimes weren't actually reported to the relevant authorities and therefore weren't officially recorded.

I think it's also relevant to mention that at the time legislation was such that a cumulative impact policy could only be used to control licenses that offered the sale of alcohol for "On-Sales" businesses such as public houses and restaurants. It could not be used to control the licenses issued to "Off-Sales" businesses like off-licenses or indeed convenience stores – the like of which I'm sure is the thrust of Cllr Shearman's question.

That omission, I'm sure members will appreciate, would have negated the effectiveness of any CIP restrictions, as the majority of licence applications were for off-sales premises.

I also take this opportunity to remind members that a cumulative impact policy even now can't actually set limits for the number of premises in a specific area or indeed automatically stop new licences being granted.

Where an application is received from within an area so controlled - it's still necessary for relevant representations to be received against the application at the licensing committee determination hearing.

	<p>Guidance also states that the absence of a special policy doesn't prevent any responsible authority or interested party making representation on a new application for the grant, or variation, of a license - on the grounds that the premises will give rise to a negative cumulative impact on one or more of the licensing objectives.</p> <p>Councillor Shearman did not have a supplementary question, but stated that the people living in the Millfield area did feel under stress due to the situation.</p>
4.	<p>Question from Councillor Miners</p> <p>To Councillor Fitzgerald Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care:</p> <p>Can we be advised on the progress in implementing the proposals for the sale of the former Peverells care home site, and can we be advised if it is still intended to use the site for some form of adult care homes?</p> <p>Councillor Fitzgerald may have responded:</p> <p>The Council continues to explore all options for disposal including timing of the sale. The site is included in the Council's Budget to be sold this Financial Year. We have neither included nor excluded the option to sell the site for care which may include care for adults.</p>
5.	<p>Question from Councillor Ash:</p> <p>To Councillor Seaton Cabinet Member for Resources:</p> <p>Can the cabinet member please advise if it is still current policy to dispose of the remaining former playing field land on the former John Mansfield school site?</p> <p>Councillor Seaton may have responded:</p> <p>Yes. However in the current economic climate it is essential the Council explores all options for disposal including timing of the sale. The Council will go to market with a site when these conditions are right and these are constantly under review.</p>
9	<u>Questions with notice by Members to Council representatives of the Police and Fire Authorities</u>
	No questions were received in this section.

EXECUTIVE BUSINESS TIME

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

1. **Question from Councillor Sandford**

To Councillor Lee, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation and Strategic Commissioning:

In this year's medium term financial strategy, Enterprise agreed to make a saving of £100,000 in their budget for 2011-12 by adopting less intensive landscape management techniques in selected areas of the city. Could the deputy leader give us an update on how they are getting on with this and, given that we are now over a quarter of the way through the financial year, could he tell us what savings have actually been achieved?

Councillor Elsey responded:

Enterprise Peterborough has submitted detailed plans proposing a significant change to the grass cutting regime across the City. In light of the current difficulties being experienced with grass cutting across the City it is essential that these proposals are thoroughly consulted on before being instated. The Strategic Client team has reviewed the proposals with a view start discussing the implementation process with elected Members.

To date no savings have been realised against budget.

Councillor Sandford asked the following supplementary question:

The £100k landscape management savings had not been realised, what other budget cuts were being proposed?

Councillor Elsey responded:

All options were reviewed and the savings in grass cutting had been identified as the best option. Additional savings proposals would also be made going forward.

2. **Question from Councillor John Fox**

To Councillor Lee, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation and Strategic Commissioning:

Considering that the city council funded around £2m of the project costs, would the Deputy Leader please explain why, during the recent refurbishment of the museum, Vivacity paid consultants for advice on disability matters when there was already a qualified team of experts within the city whose advice and help are free of any charge to the tax payers? The disability forum was set up for such a task, acting in a consultative role for such work, remembering that no one person is an expert on disabilities as it is such a vast arena, so why did we not encourage them to use a free resource instead of spending money?

Councillor Lee responded:

Vivacity and the Council have developed a good and productive working relationship with The Peterborough Disability Forum in a number of ways and in particular when developing facilities and services.

Examples have included works at the Regional Fitness and Swimming Centre and also Bushfield Leisure centre, where advice from members of the disability forum has influenced design and led to appropriate modifications.

The original contract for the design works for the Museum was tendered over three years ago. The contract content and award needed to be approved at that stage by both the Council and the Heritage Lottery fund, who were providing additional funding for the project.

The project was tendered as a complete package to ensure that a single contractor was responsible for all aspects of design. This project was mainly a refurbishment of the exhibits and display areas where DDA requirements were not affected. However the opportunity was taken to ensure the museum is accessible to as many members of our community as possible.

Haley Sharpe Design provided specialists with experience advising on access and DDA requirements. A detailed report outlined improvements that could be made to the various area of the museum where alterations were taking place. Many of these items were taken forward and carried out as part of the project and approved by Building Control.

Councillor John Fox asked the following supplementary question:

Disability Groups should have been consulted on the proposals. Could this be looked into going forward?

Councillor Lee responded:

I give you my assurance that I will request that disability groups are consulted early on when developing new facilities.

3. Question from Councillor Johnson

To Councillor Seaton Cabinet Member for Resources:

Can the Cabinet Member for Resources advise what the council's policy is for the use of capital receipts generated from the sale of homes for the elderly?

Councillor Seaton responded:

The Council's approach to reinvesting money from the sales of assets is the same for any asset, in that the proceeds are reinvested to support Council priorities. Those proceeds are not ring-fenced to a particular service or area, unless there are specific requirements to do so. This ensures that this investment can be appropriately targeted, and not simply reflect where we have existing assets.

This prioritisation of capital investment is part of the budget setting process that is approved by Full Council every year.

As the question may have been prompted by discussions at Cabinet yesterday regarding the Older Peoples' Accommodation Strategy, I should stress that this remains the start of the consultation process, and no decisions have been made in this regard.

Also, as outlined in the Cabinet report, we have already taken into account the potential need to reinvest in the service, and as such the Capital Programme for Adult Social Care contains £6m which is potentially available for the provision of Extra Care and other provision in line with the Strategy.

Councillor Johnson asked the following supplementary question:

	<p>What was the cost of the maintaining care homes that were closed, but not yet sold?</p> <p>Councillor Seaton responded outside the meeting:</p> <p>Since closure, some costs have been incurred on these homes. These costs mainly relate to the residual costs of utilities and maintaining connections, security and insurance.</p> <p>As the Council expects to sell the sites, it is sensible to continue to make such provision to maintain the sites, in order that the best possible sale price can be realised.</p> <p>For Croft, these costs amount to £15,618, and for Peverels £63,323.</p> <p>Vawser Lodge is currently being demolished, after which it is expected that there will be very little on-going cost. Again we would expect the fact that we are able to provide a cleared site to potential purchasers to be reflected in the sale proceeds realised.</p> <p>.</p>
4.	<p>Question from Councillor John Fox</p> <p>To Councillor Cereste, Leader of the Council:</p> <p>Why was no bunting or flags put on in our City Centre to celebrate our Queens Diamond Jubilee and why was the Millennium Beacon in Central Park not lit also to mark this once in a lifetime event?</p> <p>Councillor Goodwin responded:</p> <p>The Queen’s Jubilee Office encouraged local authorities to promote street parties with the aim of bringing neighbourhoods together. Many towns and cities this size did not install bunting, however villages hosting tea parties did.</p> <p>If bunting had been installed throughout the city centre it would have had to be taken down prior to the Olympic Torch arriving due to the logistics of the street theatre act, the bunting would have precluded the performance.</p> <p>The amount awarded to street parties was £13,515 spent from cohesion grants and £11,127 from the community leadership fund.</p> <p>In advance of the beacon, we had to register as a city that we were going to participate with a beacon, and that we could then utilise either a church mounted beacon or a ground beacon. The churches were also separately invited and as a result, the single beacon within the cathedral grounds fitted the criteria.</p> <p>Councillor John Fox did not have a supplementary question, but stated that it was shame as it was an opportunity missed.</p>
5.	<p>Question from Councillor Sandford</p> <p>To Councillor Cereste Leader of the Council:</p> <p>When senior council officers resign due to serious failings in the services for which they are responsible, it has been reported that they sometimes receive “compensation” payments running into tens of thousands of pounds. Would the Leader consider amending senior officer contracts to ensure that such payments are either not made at all or kept to the bare minimum required to satisfy the Council’s legal obligations?</p> <p>Councillor Cereste responded:</p> <p>In all but limited circumstances the conclusion of an employment contract will necessitate</p>

	<p>a level of payment to the employee. These payments will usually relate to salary, holiday and notice entitlement, however, there will also be occasions when it is necessary to incorporate a compensatory sum. This is exceptional rather than standard practice and whilst I am restricted from discussing individual payments, I can confirm that any amount awarded is carefully negotiated with reference to the Council's minimum legal requirements.</p> <p>Councillor Sandford did not have a supplementary question.</p>
6.	<p>Question from Councillor Miners:</p> <p>To Councillor Fitzgerald Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care:</p> <p>In formulating the latest policy with regard to the future of Greenwood and Welland House can we have assurances that investigations made to formulate the policy have been thorough, all the implications of closure been considered and why this local authority is adamant the private sector can always deliver things better than the public sector?</p> <p>Councillor Fitzgerald responded:</p> <p>In formulating the refreshed Older People's Accommodation Strategy we have reviewed a range of guidance and good practice - which is referenced in the Strategy's appendix – and carefully considered a range of options. The refreshed strategy builds on and updates the previous strategy and confirms the direction of travel begun by that document. It outlines potential levels of demand and projections of needs for the medium and long term.</p> <p>Nationally, over the last 30 years Council's have worked to ensure both good quality services and value for money and have considered a range of options for the delivery of services including Adult Social Care. This has included the private, the not for profit and voluntary sector. Across the country the fees to councils for private sector care homes are substantially lower than the costs of local authorities directly provide these services. It is important to achieve both value for money and good quality care and to use the expertise the market has in relation to both quality and value for money.</p> <p>The Council's role is often to over see and management the market, working with a range of partners and stakeholders, rather than necessarily to run these services directly themselves.</p> <p>Councillor Miners asked the following supplementary question:</p> <p>Noting the competition, would in-house residential care be an option in order to compete with the private sector.</p> <p>Councillor Fitzgerald responded:</p> <p>There were a number of options available and this was a good idea which should be put forward as part of the consultation process. Any suggestions were welcome.</p>
7.	<p>Question from Councillor Murphy:</p> <p>To Councillor Seaton Cabinet Member for Resources:</p> <p>Would the cabinet member confirm whether the council is reviewing its banking arrangements in view of the recent call for criminal investigations into the operations of Barclays Bank and that obtaining the services of a mutual bank may prove to be more appropriate for Peterborough City Council as an organisation which still has a public ethos?</p>

Councillor Seaton may have responded:

Peterborough city council has a duty to obtain best value and protect council taxpayers money. Each year hundreds of thousands of transactions, and hundreds of millions of pounds pass through our bank accounts. The choice of bank is thus a critical element of this duty.

Which banks we are able to use is outlined in the treasury management strategy, approved by Full Council each year. This specifies the minimum credit rating that a bank must have for the Council to use them. As you would expect, the Council requires a high level of creditworthiness in any bank that it uses.

The treasury management strategy does allow the use of building societies where they meet our minimum rating requirements. Currently only the Nationwide meets these minimum requirements, and as such the Council cannot consider using others.

We do keep our choice of bank under continual review, taking into account credit ratings, value for money and overall service. We will continue to do so in the future.

We must also be aware of the impact that changing bank can have, especially for all those people who make payments to the Council for the council tax or business rates.