

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING
HELD WEDNESDAY 9 MARCH 2016
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

THE MAYOR – COUNCILLOR JOHN PEACH

Present:

Councillors Aitken, Ash, Ayres, Bisby, Brown, Casey, Coles, Elsey, Faustino, Ferris, Fitzgerald, Fower, F Fox, JR Fox, JA Fox, Harper, Harrington, Herdman, Hiller, Holdich, Iqbal, Jamil, Johnson, Khan, Knowles, Lamb, Lane, Martin, Miners, Murphy, Nadeem, Nawaz, North, Okonkowski, Over, Peach, Rush, Saltmarsh, Sanders, Sandford, Scott, Seaton, Serluca, Shabbir, Shaheed, Sharp, Shearman, Stokes, Swift, Sylvester, Thacker, Thulbourn, Whitby and Yonga.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Davidson, Forbes and Maqbool.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 January 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2016 were approved as a true and accurate record.

COMMUNICATIONS

4. Mayor's Announcements

Members noted the report outlining the Mayor's engagements for the period commencing 25 January 2016 to 9 March 2016.

Members commented that there was no mention within the report of the Deputy Mayor attending a Labour Party fundraising dinner in Dogsthorpe Ward on 27 February 2015. If it was not an official event, the wearing of the Mayoral Chain of Office had not been appropriate and was a clear breach of Protocol.

The Mayor clarified that the event had not been an official event and complaints to the Monitoring Officer had been made for further investigation.

The Mayor advised that the Mayor's Charity was holding the Last Night at the Proms on Saturday 23 April 2016 at Peterborough Cathedral and the Mayor's Ball on Saturday 21 May at the Holiday Inn, Thorpe Wood. Moreover, a Night at the Dogs event would be held on Saturday 12 March 2016 and Councillor Swift would be sharing his experiences at the An Evening with Charles Swift event on Friday 15 April 2016. There were tickets available for all of the events.

The Mayor further announced that Councillor Francis Fox, Councillor Miners, Councillor Scott and Councillor Swift would not be standing for re-election and thanked them for

their services to the Council. The Mayor extended his thanks to all Members who had not yet announced that they would not be standing for re-election and wished them all the best for the future.

5. Leader's Announcements

The Leader thanked Councillor Miners, Councillor Scott, Councillor Swift and all Members who had not yet announced that they would not be standing for re-election, for their services to the Council and wished them all the best for the future. The Leader also wished good luck to all of those Members who were standing in the elections.

The Leader announced that a retiring Mayors and Councillors event would be held on Sunday 3 July 2016 and invitations would be sent out in due course.

Councillor Jamil expressed his thanks to all Members who would not be standing in the upcoming election. Councillor Jamil offered his thanks to Councillor Swift and Councillor Miners on behalf of himself, his Group and the people of Central Ward.

Councillor Ash thanked Councillor Swift and Councillor Miners and complimented their continued hard work and effort. Councillor Ash commented that they would be sorely missed.

Councillor Okonkowski wished Councillor Swift the best for his retirement and thanked him for everything that he had done for the people of Peterborough. Moreover, Councillor Okonkowski thanked Councillor Miners for his services to the Council on behalf of himself and his Group and thanked all other Councillors who would not be standing for election in May.

Councillor Sandford thanked all Councillors who would not be standing for election and paid tribute to Councillor Swift and Councillor Miners for their long standing service and hard work.

Councillor John Fox stated that Councillor Swift would be greatly missed and wished the best to all retiring Councillors.

6. Chief Executive's Announcements

There were no announcements from the Chief Executive.

QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

7. Questions with Notice by Members of the Public

There were 2 questions submitted by members of the public. These were in relation to:

1. Streetlight repairs. Question responded to in writing; and
2. Litter in Paston. Question responded to in writing.

The questions and responses are attached at **APPENDIX A** to these minutes.

8. Petitions

(a) Presented by members of the public

There were no petitions from members of the public.

(b) Presented by Members

There were no petitions from Members.

9. Questions on Notice

(a) To the Mayor

(b) To the Leader or member of the Cabinet

(c) To the Chair of any Committee of Sub-Committee

Questions (b) to the Leader or Member of the Cabinet were raised and taken as read in respect of the following:

1. Polling stations in Hampton Hargate Ward;
2. Cost of fly tipping in Peterborough and specifically in Park Ward for 205/16;
3. Joining Cambridgeshire in a devolved partnership;
4. Anti-social behaviour in and around the Central Park area;
5. *Question withdrawn before the meeting;*
6. Pedestrian Crossing at the Baker Perkins roundabout. Question responded to in writing;
7. Syrian refugees;
8. Electronic information boards on bus shelters;
9. Reconsideration of decision not to fully staff Central Park over the Easter holidays; and
10. The Council's stance on gambling and the action being taken to mitigate its impact on individuals.

The questions and responses are attached at **APPENDIX A** to these minutes.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS

10. Executive and Committee Recommendations to Council

(a) Cabinet Recommendation – Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2016/17

Cabinet, at its meeting of 29 February 2016, received a report as part of the Council's formal budget process, set out within the Constitution and legislative requirements, to set a balanced budget for 2016/17. The purpose of the report was to consider budget proposals for recommendation to Council. Cabinet had endorsed the recommendations, including the recommendations to Council.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Seaton and he commented that under the budget proposals, there would be no reduction in services and there would be an increase in Council Tax of 3.99%. Half of this increase would be used to support Adult Social Care. Furthermore, staff responses to the employee terms and conditions amendments had been acknowledged and discussions were underway with trade unions.

The approach taken focussed on building a strong and healthy economy, generating income in new ways to make the Council less dependent on Government funding, changing the culture of the Council to become more enterprising by looking for ways to improve value for money and reduce costs and using technology more effectively and efficiently. It was stated that the Council's strategic priorities and vision were currently being met and the Medium Term Financial Strategy would enable this to continue and develop.

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

The Mayor advised that Councillor Murphy had proposed an amendment to the recommendations. The amendment to be moved was as follows:

That the budget is amended:

- *For social services to receive an additional £0.6m of resources in order to tackle bed blocking and the associated increase in social services costs. The intended outcome is to benefit the elderly, reduce re-admissions to hospital which in turn result in a reduction in client care costs for the future; and*
- *For £1m to be earmarked for additional housing initiatives.*

These budget amendments will be funded by transferring £1.6m less funds to the Grant Equalisation reserve and creating a new reserve.

In moving the amendment, Councillor Murphy commented that there had been cuts to services in Peterborough and elderly people in particular needed help. The amendment was proposed on an invest to save basis with the intention of reducing hospital and A&E re-admissions to social services and allowing Officers to deliver the same good working practices to save money in the future. Furthermore, the £1 million to be earmarked for additional housing initiatives was proposed to finance the development of housing in appropriate areas of Peterborough.

Councillor Jamil seconded the amendment and reserved his right to speak.

Members debated the amendment and in summary raised points including:

- There had been opportunity to put the amendment forward at the Cross Party Budget Working Group and more information on the proposals of the amendment would have been helpful;
- The amendment had not been signed off by Officers nor discussed with Senior Officers in order to ascertain the need for such funding;
- If £1.6 million was taken out of the budget, the Council's debt would be increased in 2017/18;
- More Extra Care housing had been delivered in Peterborough than anywhere else in the country and the schemes were continuing to be developed;
- Adult Social Care spending currently operated at a balanced budget;
- Ward Councillors had seen a need for reform of the Adult Social Care process and a need for affordable housing;
- Although it was wise to save funds, it would be beneficial to invest further in Adult Social Care as this could save money in the longer term;
- If income tax levels were not increased then approximately £50 million worth of cuts would need to be made in a few years' time;
- A housing company would be set up by the Council, with funding of approximately £14 million, to build all types of different tenure housing in Peterborough;
- There were 90 families in Peterborough who were in priority need for housing and there was a particular demand for two bedroom properties;
- The amendment was a good idea in principle, but spending more money this year would mean greater cuts next year, which would negatively affect the most vulnerable in society;
- It was important to note that across the country there were thousands of blocked beds, but this was not the case in Peterborough. This was a credit to the work of both the NHS and the Council;
- A reduction in reserve finances could create a parlous state if an emergency were to occur; and

- Officers would have notified Members if extra funds were needed and beds were blocked. If this had happened then the funds would have been found but as this had not occurred, it was evident that the need was not required.

Councillor Jamil exercised his right to speak as seconder of the amendment and advised that an increase in expenditure of £600,000 would reduce the suffering that Adult Social Care would sustain as a result of government cuts and privatisation. He further advised that the proposed expenditure of £1 million could be used to create innovative and faster ways to reduce the size of the housing register.

Councillor Seaton, as mover of the original motion, replied and commented that neither bed blocking nor the proposal for £1 million for housing had been put forward for proper debate or raised at the Joint Scrutiny Meeting. Furthermore, it did not make sense to take £600,000 from the reserves to protect for the future because this was the purpose of the reserves in any event.

Councillor Seaton further advised that there were no delayed discharges due to bed blocking for Peterborough residents. He commented that the £1 million investment in additional housing initiatives would have to be taken from existing revenue. In order to build care homes or housing, the funds would be classed as capital expenditure and this would fall under a different budget.

A recorded vote on the amendment was taken:

Councillors For: Ash, Ferris, Fower, F Fox, Jamil, Johnson, Khan, Knowles, Martin, Miners, Murphy, Saltmarsh, Sandford, Shabbir, Shaheed, Sharp, Shearman, Swift, Sylvester, Thulbourn and Yonga.

Councillors Against: Aitken, Ayres, Bisby, Brown, Casey, Coles, Elsey, Faustino, Fitzgerald, JR Fox, JA Fox, Harper, Harrington, Herdman, Hiller, Holdich, Iqbal, Lamb, Lane, Nadeem, Nawaz, North, Okonkowski, Over, Peach, Rush, Sanders, Scott, Seaton, Serluca, Stokes, Thacker and Whitby.

Councillors Abstaining: None.

Following the vote (21 for, 33 against, 0 abstentions), the amendment was **DEFEATED**.

Members debated the original recommendations and in summary raised points including:

- A percentage of the Adult Social Care precept of 2% should be contributed towards carer's wages;
- The Budget Working Group was praised. It was now a well-established and valuable part of the Council decision making process;
- The Budget proposed £100,000 extra investment in public transport. This was commended;
- Queries were raised in relation to the Council's Capital Programme, in particular the retention of current Council property despite a proposed move of business operations to Fletton Quays;
- An increase in the National Living Wage over the next few years had been factored into the planned investment into Adult Social Care and would be financed by the Council;
- The Grant Equalisation Reserve was for issues relating to Adult Social Care and future unforeseeable events. It could not be moved into the Housing Budget;

- The proposed move to Fletton Quays, as outlined within the Council's Capital Programme, should have been consulted upon with all Councillors, residents, businesses and stakeholders. It was felt that the proposed move had been rushed through without serious consideration and there had been information withheld;
- It was considered unlikely that any businesses would want to rent office space from the Council; and
- The Budget was unclear, it did not add up and it was considered to be imprecise.

Councillor Holdich exercised his right to speak as seconder of the recommendations and advised that there was demand for commercial space in Peterborough and that the next area highlighted for improvements within the city would be Lower Bridge Street. He further commented that the proposed Budget was prudent and would put money back into the system and ease the impact in forthcoming years.

Councillor Seaton summed up as mover of the recommendations and responded to the points raised. He advised that additional funding towards carer's wages would occur through the National Living Wage and explained that an exempt annex which had been circulated in relation to the Council Office Consolidation decision had included rent details.

A recorded vote was taken:

Councillors For: Aitken, Ash, Ayres, Bisby, Brown, Casey, Coles, Eley, Faustino, Fitzgerald, F Fox, JR Fox, JA Fox, Harper, Harrington, Herdman, Hiller, Holdich, Iqbal, Lamb, Lane, Nadeem, Nawaz, North, Okonkowski, Over, Peach, Rush, Sanders, Scott, Seaton, Serluca, Sharp, Stokes, Swift, Thacker and Whitby.

Councillors Against: Ferris, Jamil, Johnson, Khan, Knowles, Martin, Murphy, Shabbir, Shearman, Sylvester, Thulbourn and Yonga.

Councillors Abstaining: Fower, Miners, Saltmarsh, Sandford and Shaheed

A vote was taken (37 for, 12 against, 5 abstentions) and it was **RESOLVED** that Council:

NOTED:

1. The advice of the Chief Finance Officer per Schedule A, the continuing uncertainty of national public finances, and the risks surrounding forecasts and budget proposals.
2. The outcome of the Final Local Government Finance Settlement as outlined in the report and Schedule A.
3. The feedback to date on the budget proposals from residents, staff and community groups as detailed in Schedule H.

APPROVED:

4. The Council Tax Resolution (pages 11-15) which proposed:
 - A rise in general Council Tax of 1.99%
 - An Adult Social Care precept of 2.00% as detailed in Schedule A (i)
5. The draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 – 2025/26 (including Phase 2 budget proposals and subsequent adjustments) as set out in the attached Schedules which comprise of:

Council Tax Resolution

- a. Report of the Chief Finance Officer
 - i. Adult Social Care Precept Briefing

- b. Forecast Revenue Outturn 2015/16
- c. Budget Proposals, Key Figures & Cash Limits
- d. Treasury Strategy, Prudential Code & Minimum Revenue Provision
- e. Capital Strategy, Programme & Disposal 2016/17 – 2025/26
- f. Asset Management Plan

6. The Fees & Charges proposals as detailed in Schedule C, part 13.

11. Questions on the Executive Decisions made since the last meeting

In relation to the Selective Licensing of Privately Rented Accommodation item, the Monitoring Officer advised that Members who were landlords within the Selective Licensing areas had a disclosable pecuniary interest. It was further advised that this should appear on their Register of Interests form and would mean that they could not ask a question which relates to the Selective Licensing item as they were not entitled to speak.

Councillor Holdich introduced the report which detailed executive decisions taken since the last meeting including:

1. Decisions from the Cabinet meeting held on 8 February 2016;
2. Decisions from the Cabinet meeting held on 29 February 2016;
3. Use of the Council's call-in mechanism, which had been invoked once since the previous meeting, this being in relation to the decision taken by Cabinet on 7 December 2015, and republished on 31 December 2015, relating to 'City Centre Anti-Social Behaviour Enforcement'. The call-in request was considered by the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee on 20 January 2016. Following consideration of the reasons stated on the request for call-in and the response to the call-in, the Committee did **not** agree to the call-in of this decision on any of the reasons stated. Under the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution (Part 4, Section 8, and paragraph 13), implementation of the decision would take immediate effect.
4. Special Urgency and Waiver of Call-in provision, which had not been invoked since the previous meeting; and
5. Cabinet Member Decisions taken during the period 3 February 2016 to 19 February 2016.

Questions were asked about the following:

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2016/17 to 2025/26

Councillor Murphy sought confirmation that the Strategy had re-mortgaged the Council's debt over a longer period. Councillor Seaton advised that the life of Council debt had been extended out to the average asset life.

Councillor Fitzgerald requested clarification as to the content of the Annual Audit letter. Councillor Seaton advised that the Council had been given full value by the auditors and that the proposed savings plans and ability to achieve them had been considered.

Safer and Stronger Peterborough Multi-agency Prevention and Enforcement Team

Councillor Whitby asked whether the Safer and Stronger Peterborough Multi-agency Prevention and Enforcement Team could aid with the prevention of anti-social behaviour in Central Park. Councillor North advised that the new team would have a greater presence across Peterborough and its work would be particularly relevant in the park.

Extension to the Framework Agreement for the Supply of Social Care Temporary Agency Workers

Councillor Saltmarsh sought clarification as to whether the Council could ensure that the temporary agency worker suppliers as listed under the Framework Agreement paid the National Living Wage to their employees. Councillor Fitzgerald advised that this would be a contractual condition with the Council and allowances had been made so that money could be increased in areas so that the burden did not fall solely upon the suppliers.

Councillor Shearman asked why a short term period had been specified. He further queried whether the employment of alternatively qualified social workers had been factored into the figure stated and whether the figure was smaller than it would have been had the Council not hired alternatively qualified social workers. Councillor Shearman sought clarification of the total number of temporary agency workers as a percentage of social workers employed across Peterborough. Councillor Seaton advised that the end date of 30 June 2016 was linked into the work that was being undertaken on alternatively qualified social workers. Councillor Seaton further advised that in relation to whether the figure was smaller due to the hiring of alternatively qualified social workers or the percentage of alternatively qualified social workers, he would ask the relevant Director to respond to Councillor Shearman directly.

Councillor Ash asked what was meant by the term 'temporary' and how would the Council ensure that all staff were paid at least the minimum wage. Councillor Seaton advised that 'temporary' referred to a time period which would be as short as the Council could make it and he referred to Councillor Fitzgerald's previous answer regarding the National Living Wage.

COUNCIL BUSINESS TIME

12. Motions on Notice

1. Motion from Councillor Knowles

Air pollution from road traffic is a serious public health issue. Official figures state that 29,000 deaths a year are directly attributable in the UK to fine particulate exhaust pollution. Figures released on 23rd February 2016 by The Royal Colleges of Physicians and of Paediatrics and Child Health state that outdoor air pollution contributes to 40,000 early deaths per year in the UK.

This Council, noting the intention in the 4th Local Transport Plan regarding the use of the electric and low emission vehicles, will continue to highlight the use of electric and low emission vehicles through its policies and recommend that in implementing the 4th Local Transport Plan consideration be given to the installation of a further electric vehicle charging point in St Peters road and allow free parking for hybrid and dual fuel vehicles for 1 hour in St Peters Road.

In moving his motion, Councillor Knowles advised that the issue of air pollution was a nationwide problem which badly affected a lot of people. He further commented that there were very few working charging points in Peterborough and that more were needed to compete with other Councils across the UK.

Councillor Ash seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

Members debated the motion and in summary raised points including:

- Members applauded Councillor Knowles' modest motion which nudged the Council in the right direction;
- Peterborough sadly lagged behind cities such as Milton Keynes and Cambridge in electric vehicle innovation and charging points; and

- The motion sent out the right message and would help drive innovation in the city.

A vote was taken (unanimous) and the motion was **CARRIED**.

13. Reports to Council

(a) Pay Policy Including Local Government Pension Scheme Discretionary Policy

Council received a report which requested approval of the Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17 as was required by the Localism Act 2011.

The Council as an admitted body under the LGPS was required to formulate, publish and keep under review a statement of policy on certain discretions under the pension scheme. The draft revised policy included the addition of one new discretion arising from the LGPS (Amendment) Regulations 2015. The policy also included the previously published discretions which applied to the 2008 and the 1997 regulations.

Councillor Nadeem moved the recommendations, stating that both policies were required by law and must be considered by the Full Council. Attention was drawn to the fact that the Chief Executive's full salary was shown in the Policy Statement. Councillor Nadeem commented that 50% of the salary was paid for by Cambridgeshire County Council. With regard to the LGPS, all councils were required to publish how they operated the local government pension scheme discretion.

This was seconded by Councillor Holdich who commented that the document had stayed mostly the same except for the update of the Chief Executive's salary.

Members debated the recommendations and in summary raised points including:

- The Pay Policy Statement had been published prior to the 1 April deadline;
- The ratio between the lowest and highest earners had decreased since February 2013 to below 1:10; and
- It was important to pay low wage earners an appropriate salary.

A vote was taken (unanimous) and it was **RESOLVED**:

That Council agreed:

- (i) the 2016/17 Pay Policy; and
- (ii) the revised copy of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) discretionary policy.

The Mayor
7.00pm – 9.21pm

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questions were received under the following categories:

<u>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</u>	
7.	<u>Questions from members of the public</u>
1.	<p>Question from Ms Ward</p> <p>To Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development</p> <p>There is a situation regarding the faulty streetlight outside my home in Freston, Paston. When this particular light goes out it leaves the area, which covers entrances to a few homes, in absolute darkness. When initially repaired the streetlight stopped working immediately after being fixed. The process for getting this fixed and speaking to the correct people was far from easy or enjoyable and somewhat upsetting in the first place. Peterborough City Council and their contractors are continuing to provide an inadequate service and failing in their duty of care to vulnerable adults.</p> <p>As you may be aware the area is not safe. One evening at approximately 02:30am after visiting my elderly disabled mother's home for a personal matter I returned home, to darkness outside my home. I had just reached the dustbins outside when I heard a noise coming from the back garden area. It was pitch black and I was frightened. Before I could get the few paces to my door a person dressed all in black emerged, only a dark shape visible which was startled and shocked me. Fortunately for me it was a neighbour locking up his bike. I was very shaken and physically affected by the event. I have a long term condition where stress and anxiety do actually have a physical impact and consequences. I feel very lucky because this could have been a completely different scenario resulting in god knows what!</p> <p>My question is, how long does it take to get a streetlight fixed and is the case at Freston an isolated one or general bad practice? What is the statistical comparison for different areas in the city?</p> <p>Councillor Hiller responded in writing:</p> <p>The Council was contacted on the 4th February and advised of a faulty light. A 7 day standard routine repair order was subsequently raised on the 5th February with a target date of the 12th February 2016 and in accordance with the street lighting contract. The fault was attended to on the 11th February and a new lamp was installed with the column working on departure.</p> <p>I can confirm that Street Lighting have not received any further reports of the light being out following the original communication, however an assumption has been made following this question that the column has developed a further fault for which an attendance order has been raised. I will ensure that the matter is satisfactorily concluded.</p> <p>As part of the budget we are proposing a significant investment in the city street lighting network which will reduce a significant number of faults in the system in the near future.</p>

2.

Question from Mr Brackenbury

To Councillor Elsey, Cabinet Member for Digital, Waste and Street Scene

There is an unkempt area opposite 18 Honeyhill (side of 13 Honeyhill) where nothing is ever done to it. We are constantly picking rubbish up from this area. The area needs to be cleared and possibly grassed and fenced, with a nice tree or large shrub in the centre. We are sure as residents we or other residents would cut the grass as the raised bed area that was replanted last year has been maintained by us as a community. There is also an area being used as a dumping ground for people's household rubbish, alcohol bottles and cans, is behind the post box and right under the CCTV camera near the Chadburn shopping centre. We presume the camera does not work as surely with fines for litter at £80 a time nobody has been caught. If this was switched on surely it would pay for itself.

We have noticed that a lot of areas in Crabtree and Sheepwalk have all been improved, so why not here? It was mentioned that it was because most of the properties are being bought and are owned privately as they are in Sheepwalk etc.

This should not be an issue as the residents do not own the land. All we want is to see Paston improved and not the eyesore that it is at present, what will you do to ensure this happens?

Councillor Elsey responded in writing:

This area is cleansed on a monthly basis as part of scheduled street cleansing activities. The shrubs in the area have not been pruned this year due to the implementation of bi-annual pruning that was agreed at Full Council as part of last year's budget.

Paston's shrubs are scheduled to be pruned in Autumn of this year. Amey are arranging for the shrubs to be inspected to ensure there are no Health & Safety.

I am aware the council has previously worked with the residents on improving the raised bed area, as such I will ask them to make further contact to work on the other areas you have described. We are more than happy to work with residents to help improve their areas.

The area having issues with litter and the car park by Chadburn shopping centre are not Peterborough City Council owned land, so we would not cleanse this. However I will ask my officer to make contact with the land owners to ask for this to be cleansed.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

9. Questions on notice to:

- a) The Mayor
- b) To the Leader or Member of the Cabinet
- c) To the Chair of any Committee or Sub-committee

1. Question from Councillor Sandford

To Councillor Seaton, Cabinet Member for Resources

A number of concerns have been raised about the polling stations proposed for the Hampton Hargate Ward. Some residents at the north end of the ward in polling districts HAH4 and HAH1 will be required to travel to very long distances to get to their polling stations at Hampton Community Sports Association and Hampton Hargate Community Room. The distance for some residents travelling by car could be up to 2 miles and for those who have to travel on foot or by cycle it is likely to be much further, given that they need to find their way to the one footbridge across a busy parkway.

Could the cabinet member tell us what he/she is doing to find somewhere for these residents to vote nearer to their home? Even if additional polling places cannot be found, there are existing polling stations in neighbouring wards which are much nearer to parts of these polling districts and which could be shared so as to make it much easier for people to go and cast their vote.

Councillor Seaton responded:

The Boundary Review Group, of which Cllr Sandford is a member, has met twice to discuss the location of polling stations in new ward boundaries. This Group met to consider all polling stations sites before the proposals were put to Council and adopted in December 2015.

The Hampton Hargate ward was specifically discussed by the Group and several alternative options for a polling station were explored, including the Hemstead industrial area & a Cross Keys property but neither were suitable venues for a polling station. Locating polling stations in another ward is never a good option as it could create voter confusion and also creates a greater risk of cross contamination of votes, however the Elections team has considered two further locations in the neighbouring ward of Fletton & Woodston, but again neither venue is suitable.

The team has however taken some positive steps to assist voters and have agreed to supply details of the polling station, the opportunity for voters to apply for postal votes and the deadline for such applications in the Liberal Democrat newsletter for the area. Cllr Sandford is always at liberty to propose alternative venues in this area as he probably should have during the Group meetings or before the Council adopted the polling station list in December.

Of course, Mr Mayor, Hampton Hargate is currently within my Ward and Councillor Sandford's question outlines concern that residents might have to travel 2 miles to

get to a polling station. I'll leave rural Councillors to comment on that but Councillor Sandford may be interested to know that the furthest that anybody in Hampton has to travel at the moment to get to a polling station is 4.8 miles. But then the Liberals hardly put anyone up in the past, did they? Thank you Mr Mayor.

Councillor Sandford asked the following supplementary question:

I had hoped to get a serious and considered answer from Councillor Seaton but that was perhaps hoping a lot, wasn't it? I'm not going to respond to all his silly comments about distances from polling stations because surely he must accept that in an urban area we should be trying to give everybody an opportunity to get to the polling station not just by car but by whichever means they choose and by sustainable means, walking and cycling, if that is what they choose.

Now, the thing that I would actually put to him is there is an obvious solution to this problem. These areas have polling stations that are being used in other Wards that are adjacent or much closer than these polling stations that people have to go to. It is not true to say that the Council does not permit different Wards to share polling stations. In the Paston and Gunthorpe Community Centre it has traditionally been shared between two Wards and I'm not aware of it actually causing any difficulty. Isn't it the case, in this particular instance as in so many other instances with this administration that the convenience of the Council is being put ahead of the legitimate aspirations of the public?

Councillor Seaton responded:

Thank you Mr Mayor. I'm not sure I made any silly comments. Councillor Sandford is complaining in his question that people will have to travel 2 miles. In Hampton, at the moment, people have to travel 4.8 miles. What's silly about that? And Councillor Sandford says we're saying as a Council we don't want polling stations in another Ward. I didn't say that at all. I said that it's not a good option because it can create voter confusion and creates a greater risk of cross contamination of votes but I add, Councillor Sandford, that we have considered two further locations in a neighbouring Ward. So I'm sorry Councillor Sandford, if anyone is making silly remarks in this Chamber, it's yourself. Thank you Mr Mayor.

2. **Question from Councillor Ferris**

To Councillor Elsey, Cabinet Member for Digital, Waste and Street Scene

Could the Cabinet Member please tell me what is the total cost incurred for the collection of fly tipping across (1) Peterborough, and (2) Park Ward, for 2015/16?

Councillor Fitzgerald (in Councillor Elsey's absence) responded:

Mr Mayor, I am doubling for Councillor Elsey who unfortunately is delayed in traffic but has a prepared response to that question and it is as follows. Unfortunately if there is a supplementary we might have to get that in writing.

'The area is cleansed on a monthly basis as part of a scheduled street cleaning activity. The shrubs in the area have not been pruned this year due to the implementation of the bi-annual pruning that was agreed at Full Council as part of last year's Budget.'

I think that this is the right question, isn't it? It's the wrong answer! In which case,

apologies. It sounded good, Mr Mayor, but I don't think we have that question to hand, I don't think. Where is it? From Councillor Ferris, I missed the first part of the question, sorry. In which case it is a short answer.

'We pay Amey an annual charge of £81,522.31 to remove fly tipping from all Peterborough City Council owned land. It is not charged on a case by case basis as such we cannot give a figure for Park Ward separately.'

I hope that answers that question and sorry for the confusion. If you've got a supplementary then we'll try to answer. If not, I'm sure that Councillor Elsey will answer in writing.

Councillor Ferris asked the following supplementary question:

Would the Cabinet Member agree with me ... Would Councillor Fitzgerald agree with me then that the hugely popular, free community skips that the Park Ward Labour team provide at their own cost represent great value for money collecting tons of bulky household waste which may otherwise end up blighting our streets? Will the Cabinet consider the reintroduction therefore of free community skips to tackle the flytipping epidemic and possibly reduce the expenditure of £81,000 a year from Amey. Thank you.

Councillor Fitzgerald (in Councillor Elsey's absence) responded:

I can respond as me, if you would like? Which might be a different answer than Councillor Elsey might give you.

I have no idea about what Labour do as do most people in Park Ward but I would say to you, I was probably one of the few people that voted against the removal of the community skips, at the time three years ago, because I believe that we should have those community skips. I don't know what evidence, Councillor Ferris, you have to support the fact that they would reduce fly tipping. You would have to speak to Amey and indeed Councillor Elsey to see whether it has increased as a result of removing them. I believe that it is something that we should have continued to do and if it ever came back to this Council, I would support that view.

3. **Question from Councillor Shearman**

To Councillor Holdich, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University

To the Leader. At a recent meeting of the Council you emphatically stated that we would not be joining Cambridgeshire in a devolved partnership. What has changed?

Councillor Holdich responded:

Indeed Mr Mayor and thank you Councillor Shearman for your question. I believe that you are referencing the meeting at which the motion was put forward by Councillor Sandford, where I was requested to ensure that should there be a presumption that Cambridgeshire is our preferred partner in any future arrangements and that full consultation with Councillors, key stakeholders and Peterborough residents takes place before any final decisions are made.

I advised the meeting, and this is a matter of public record, that there had been early discussions with a number of authorities and Peterborough was not committed to a

devolution deal with Cambridgeshire and that it would be only through proper discussion, consultation and as a decision of the Council that any devolution deal would be secured with Cambridgeshire or with any other Council.

Nothing has changed. As a decision of Council, any devolution offer will be for you and the public to decide. Should a devolution offer come forward, I would expect the Council meeting to be to discuss this around the 1st or 2nd June this year. Thank you.

Councillor Shearman asked the following supplementary question:

Thank you Mr Mayor and thank you Councillor Holdich. That's what I had hoped to hear. I think you were saying and perhaps you would confirm this that no decision will be taken other than a decision taken by all of the Members of this Council and this will not be a decision taken by the Cabinet. There are clearly many Members here who recognise that this is in essence a good step but I've got in front of me another feeling, a comment from the Editor of the Peterborough Telegraph, that again I think many Members here would share and the headline is the 'City must not get lost in a super council'. So I'd like to make that comment but also ask you to confirm that we will make a decision and not the Cabinet.

Councillor Holdich responded:

I can give you a categorical assurance on that because legally I have to consult with the public and I have to consult with this Council and the Council will make the decision.

4. **Question from Councillor Shaheed**

To Councillor Elsey, Cabinet Member for Digital, Waste and Street Scene

In light of recent reports of suspected drug dealing and an increase in anti-social behaviour in and around the Central Park area, could you tell me what plans are in place to tackle the issue please? Someone I know was actually approached in broad daylight on the morning of Tuesday 1st March asking if they'd like to buy an illegal substance. If we know this is going on why has there not been an increased presence around the park? We've experienced similar issues at Itter Park in Walton and I feel it's no coincidence that these have increased since the wardens were removed from these sites.

Councillor Fitzgerald (in Councillor Elsey's absence) responded:

'We would need to be mindful when talking about the previous Amey presence within the park, at no point were the Amey staff classed as wardens. They were not in the park to confront drug dealers or to break up or deal with ASB - that is a police matter. They were there to carry out maintenance within the park.

We do however, take any ASB seriously and have been working closely with multi agencies including the police and PCC teams to try and tackle this issue.

As you will also be aware Cabinet have passed the paper for the combined enforcement team - even though one or two people tried to hold it up - and it is my desire, that one of the teams, be based within Central Park to offer a greater enforcement presence.'

Councillor Shaheed did not have a supplementary question.

5.	<p>Question from Councillor John Fox - THIS QUESTION HAS BEEN WITHDRAWN</p> <p>To Councillor Seaton, Cabinet Member for Resources</p> <p>I believe that a new finance software problem has been causing a delay in payments made by PCC to various local businesses for work carried out.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet member please reassure me that all outstanding debts have now been paid and the problem has been resolved.</p> <p>Was this software programme not researched properly before it was purchased and is there any reason why we could not have used the old system alongside the new one before we put ourselves in this position.</p> <p>QUESTION WITHDRAWN BEFORE THE MEETING</p>
6.	<p>Question from Councillor Davidson</p> <p>To Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development</p> <p>At the Baker Perkins roundabout on Werrington Parkway, would the Cabinet Member consider the installation of a pedestrian crossing with traffic lights near to where there is already access to cross the road, which most people are using now as they do not feel safe walking on the footpath at the back of the houses to reach the footbridge on the Linden development.</p> <p>The installation of a pedestrian crossing may be the cheaper option and would slow traffic down, giving easier access for traffic and pedestrians alike.</p> <p>Councillor Hiller may have responded:</p> <p>Thank you for raising this concern. Pedestrian safety is a top priority for the Council and in our Local Transport Plan. Pedestrians and those with mobility difficulties are at the top of our transport user hierarchy.</p> <p>I believe you are referring to the Paston Parkway which has an uncontrolled crossing near the roundabout. Signalising this crossing in isolation would not be advisable because vehicles would back up onto the roundabout and there would be road safety concerns with this approach as it is a 70mph road.</p> <p>The safest option is to encourage use of the existing footbridge by improving the footpath link to make it more attractive for pedestrian use.</p> <p>I will ask officers to investigate this issue and contact you directly with an update.</p>
7.	<p>Question from Councillor Sandford</p> <p>To Councillor Holdich, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University</p> <p>At the October meeting of Full Council, the Conservative group voted down two motions on the subject of Peterborough playing its part in accepting some of the refugees who are fleeing persecution from Syria. At the time, the Leader of the</p>

Council said that he needed more time to discuss the implications for the Council and the city of accepting refugees. Given that nearly 5 months have now passed since that meeting, could the leader tell us how things are going, how many refugees are going to come to Peterborough and when can we expect them to arrive?

Councillor Holdich responded:

This a very long answer Mr Mayor and you will have to stop me if you think that it is going on long.

The Government have specifically requested we consider assisting Syrian children.

In response to the call on Local Authorities to provide emergency assistance to Syrian children, initial scoping has identified the capacity to accept up to 15 children between the ages of 0-7 years.

I have considered the request for emergency assistance to Syrian children, and have discussed this matter with my senior managers. I would like to confirm that we are willing to assist if we are able to do so, but will need further information from Government before confirming this assistance. What I am doing is reading the letter that I sent back to them about a month ago.

We have been asked to provide "emergency" assistance. We have asked what is meant by this, are we being asked to accommodate children for a certain period, or are we being asked to take full responsibility for a number of children?

If we are being asked to take full responsibility for a number of Syrian children, we have the following queries:

1. We consider it likely that children will arrive with no identity documents like birth certificates and passports. If we are to take Court proceedings to provide security and permanence for these children, we will need them to have at least a birth certificate. Will the Syrian Embassy be able to assist, and if not, how is this matter going to be resolved?
2. We anticipate that some children may be orphans, but others will have families in Syria. The Court will want to have information about family members, so we will need to know what process is in place to assist us in obtaining this information. There may be family members in other countries, and we will be obliged to make attempts to contact those members of the family and we need to know if we will be given any assistance with this exercise.
3. If we obtain Care Orders or Placement Orders for any children, it will be necessary to obtain passports for these children, so that foster carers and adopters can take the children out of the country on holiday. We need to know what status these children will have and is there going to be a procedure for fast tracking any applications for citizenships in this respect. Also will there be a cost to the Local Authority in helping children to obtain citizenship and passports. If so, this will affect our cost estimate in providing assistance?
4. It may be that most children may not be able to speak English, and we have no foster carers from Syria with whom children can be placed. We need to know if there will be any arrangements in place for Local Authorities to be given relevant cultural information about these children.
5. It is highly likely, in our view that most, if not all, of the children will be severely traumatized and we will need to provide one to one work, or arrange for the assistance of a child psychologist. We need to know if

there is a Syrian expert in this country who could assist us and we haven't had a reply to that.

Councillor Sandford asked the following supplementary question:

I'm grateful to Councillor Holdich for that response, the continent of Europe is faced with a massive humanitarian catastrophe and I think wouldn't the Leader agree that it is important that both the British Government and the political administration here plays a part in responding to that. Can I ask him, he's done precisely the same as he did last October, he's gone through a whole list of qualifications, information that must be required. Now there's a number of other things being dealt with in this Council that can be dealt with what almost seems an unseemly haste, why can this not be dealt with in a speedy manner and would he tell us when these discussions, negotiations and whatever he's having are likely to reach a conclusion?

Councillor Holdich responded:

I think you have to understand that Peterborough is a dispersal area for asylum seekers / migrants. Currently it's gone up from 160 last time I spoke to 168 and from right across the world. And I had an email from Councillor Ferris the other day, he must have seen me on the television as I went to the conference to find out a bit more, and three speakers talked about one of the questions I asked. You will remember only too well in Park Ward when we had asylum seekers / refugees of which 440 were paid for by the Government and we'd actually got 1452 here, so one of the major questions that I asked is 'does the funding now follow the refugee' and the answer to that question, in the conference that I went to, two people said 'yes' and one said 'no', so I asked the Minister and he said 'yes', and I said 'well your Civic Servant in the Treasury has just said that it doesn't'. He said that 'he would reply in writing', which he did yesterday morning and it doesn't, because all the upfront costs are there so therefore if somebody chooses to move to another authority then the funding does not go with them and then you are looking at year two and three what might well happen, and that has not changed, that is still the same. We do have a problem with the refugee / asylum seekers that we have already got in (*inaudible*) because they can't get jobs unless they can speak the lingo. The questions I've asked about the young children, if they were all orphans and we had to go through the court procedure in the way that we have to go through the court procedure, that would cost this Council over £1m, so therefore we do need to make sure that these things are right, because it's not right that the people of Peterborough should pick up a bill of that size. So I think that answers the question and I have to say at that conference, there were all sorts of problems that have gone and in any case that you're doing something, the Government did get the thousand in by Christmas and they are now looking at other things, he understood that we have an awful lot of young people in this town, children in our schools speaking different languages, which are a reputational issue for these schools because they are under achieving in our schools by about 12% which drags the rest of our schools down and the reputation of this city, so you've got to take all these things into account.

8. **Question from Councillor Fower**

To Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development

Could the relevant Cabinet Member tell me when bus shelters along the Gunthorpe section of the number 2 route will see electronic information boards installed, helping bus users know how long the next bus will be etc.

Councillor Hiller responded:

I thank Councillor Fower for his question. You'll be aware, Councillor Fower, that we have a programme of bus infrastructure improvements across the City, which involves installing shelters, raised kerbs and installing Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) equipment. The programme will generally take a corridor based approach or, where possible, will look to achieve efficiency and value through collaboration with other schemes and indeed other improvements that are happening at the same time.

Whilst there are no firm plans to upgrade the shelter infrastructure along this section of the bus network at present, passengers with access to the internet at home or smart phones when out and about are able to access RTPI data. I will however ask officers to log this request to ensure that RTPI is installed when funding and circumstances permit.

Councillor Fower asked the following supplementary question:

When was the last time you yourself used a bus in the Ward that you represent, which shelter it was and whether or not it has the information board on it?

Councillor Hiller responded:

The last time I used a bus in my Ward was last Thursday morning, Councillor Fower, and no it doesn't have the information on the bus stop. It is a rural bus stop. It has a little shelter and it has a bus stop.

9. **Question from Councillor Shearman**

To Councillor Elsey, Cabinet Member for Digital, Waste and Street Scene

In view of the catalogue of unfortunate occurrences in Central Park recently, will the Cabinet Member reconsider the decision not to fully staff the Park over the period of the school Easter holiday?

Councillor Fitzgerald (in Councillor Elsey's absence) responded:

Central Park falls within Councillor Elsey's portfolio, as you know, it wasn't within his gift to put back these services at a cost of £3,074 for the Easter Holidays back in as there is no longer a budget available. To make a Budget, as many of you will know this would need to be a decision made and agreed by Full Council.

He says that it is not his preferred option to reduce these services, however we, as the Full Council, were all aware of the implications when the majority voted in favour of these reductions in that part of the service as part of last year's stringent budget reduction.

Councillor Shearman asked the following supplementary question:

First of all, Councillor Fitzgerald, I know it's not your answer but Councillor Fitzgerald, you are saying that it costs £3,700, its costing something like £10,000 to erect a fence that has been decided by Councillor Elsey around the bowling green to prevent further damage to the bowling green. In recent weeks, we have had toilets not

flushing and members of the public being greatly embarrassed moving into toilets and finding whatever you do find in toilet pans. They're not flushing. The water in the bird's aviary was not on. The gates were locked when the plumber turned up and when the plumber was let in there was nobody to open the toilets for him. The bowling green has been badly damaged by cyclists, by wheelie bins and children playing football. This is not acceptable. This is, as many people would say and Mr Mayor would agree, a jewel in the crown of Park Ward. Surely we have got to protect it over the Easter Holidays? £3,700 is not a great deal of money when compared with what we have been forced to pay now for the fencing around the bowling green.

Councillor Fitzgerald (in Councillor Elsey's absence) responded:

Again I can only, if you want specific details, I'm sure Councillor Elsey will respond in person to your question if that could be framed in a question and sent to him but having just chatted briefly with the Leader, may I ask had you discussed these shortcomings with anybody else before getting to Council? If so, at an Officer level, I would ask why they weren't fixed or addressed? That's where I would start.

I know that you can't respond Councillor Shearman but if there is an issue then we need to sort that issue. It clearly needs doing and so we would have some sympathy as to the circumstances that you describe but again I would refer you back to Councillor Elsey and get some discussion going with all of the relevant parties connected to the park including all of the opposition members as well.

10. **Question from Councillor Nadeem**

To Councillor North, Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment Capital

A considerable amount of money is spent and lost in Betting Shops. In one report that I read it was revealed that over £100 million pounds had been gambled or put into machines over a 12 month period in licensed premises across Peterborough and that over £4 million alone had been lost in the same period at fixed odd betting terminals in those premises. The vast majority of these premises are located in the most deprived areas of Peterborough. There are 13 Betting Premises (Bookmakers) and 2 Adult Gaming Centres (Arcades) premises in the ward that I am councillor.

This concerns me particularly in light of the attraction this presents for people that are addicted to gambling and the impact that the losses being run up by individuals will be having on those individuals and their families and the knock on economic and social effect upon the local communities in these areas.

What is the Council's stance on gambling and what action is being taken to mitigate the impact of gambling on individuals and their families and the economic threats it poses.

Councillor North responded:

Thank you Mr Mayor. Thank you Councillor Nadeem. The Council does not have a formal stance on gambling it does however have a statutory duty to accept applications in relation to it. All applications are subject to full public consultation and are considered on their own merits and in accordance with the Council's own Statement of Principles (recently unanimously approved at Full Council in December 2015).

Every licence is subject to not only the Mandatory and Default conditions attached to it by virtue of the Act but also the codes of practice and conditions relative to it

attached by the Gambling Commission.

There are numerous social responsibility codes that operators must adhere to that ensure the customers wellbeing is recognised such as signposting to addiction charities and self-exclusion schemes and are regularly checked by the licensing authority upon routine inspection to ensure compliance.

Councillor Nadeem asked the following supplementary question:

Councillor North, thank you for your detailed and comprehensive response. My supplementary response is that what assurances can be given to ensure that no more new gambling or gambling licenses will be issued in Central or North Wards and concentration given to refuse to renew or extend existing licenses.

Councillor North responded:

Thank you Mr Mayor and thank you Councillor Nadeem for your supplementary question. As I have already stated, each license is looked at on its own merits and full public consultation takes place which of course includes the local Councillors. It is absolutely critical to ensure that where unsuitable places are being suggested that we address those and take those to licensing.