



**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES AND  
COMMISSIONS  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER- TOWN HALL  
ON 26 NOVEMBER 2015**

**Present:** Councillors N Sandford (Chairman), K Aitken, R Bisby, R Brown, P Faustino, R Ferris, L Forbes, D Fower, JA Fox, JR Fox, F Fox, D Harrington, C Harper, M Jamil, J Johnson, N Khan, Nadeem, S Martin, A Miners, J Okonkowski, J Peach, B Rush, B Saltmarsh, A Shaheed, J Stokes, J Whitby, J Yonga

**Also Present:** David Whiles, Healthwatch  
Steward Francis, Co-opted Parent Governor Representative  
Co-opted Members for Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities:  
Jo Dobson, Keith Lievesley, Henry Clark, Philip Nuttall  
Councillor Holdich, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University, and Communications  
Councillor Fitzgerald, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Integrated Adult Social Care and Health  
Councillor North, Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment Capital  
Councillor Seaton, Cabinet Member for Resources  
Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development  
Councillor Casey, Cabinet Advisor to the Cabinet Member for City Centre Management, Culture and Tourism (Culture and Recreation)  
Councillor Lamb, Cabinet Member for Public Health  
Councillor Coles, Cabinet Member for Children's Services  
Councillor Serluca, Cabinet Member for City Centre Management, Culture & Tourism

**Officers Present:** Gillian Beasley, Chief Executive  
John Harrison, Corporate Director of Resources  
Kim Sawyer, Director of Governance  
Simon Machen, Corporate Director of Growth and Regeneration  
Lou Williams, Service Director Childrens Services & Safeguarding  
Dr Liz Robin, Director of Public Health  
Adrian Chapman, Service Director, Adult Services & Communities  
Steven Pilsworth, Service Director, Financial Services  
Paulina Ford, Senior Democratic Services Officer

The Chair welcomed everyone present and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for all Members of each Scrutiny Committee and Commission to scrutinise Phase 1 of the 2016/17 Budget, Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26 and the

Council Tax Support Scheme as part of the formal consultation process before being presented to Cabinet on 7 December 2015 and Full Council on 17 December 2015.

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Ayres, Iqbal, Over, Sanders, Ash, Shearman, and Knowles. Councillors Nadeem, Miners and Johnson were in attendance as substitutes for Councillors Sanders, Ash and Shearman. The following co-opted members also sent apologies: Alistair Kingsley, Miranda Robinson and Andrew Read.

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor Maqbool, Cabinet Adviser for Children's Safeguarding, Councillor Elsey, Cabinet Member for Digital, Waste and Street Scene and Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Corporate Director for People and Communities.

### **2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations**

No declarations of interest or whipping declarations were received.

### **3. Budget 2016/17 and Medium Term Financial Plan to 2025/26**

Members were given an overview of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget by the Cabinet Member for Resources. The following key points were highlighted:

- Overview of current commitments
- Achievements
- Financial Challenges
- Budget conversation approach
- Approach to savings
- Spending Review 2015
- Next steps

Each section of the budget was then taken in order according to how it was presented in the Budget Book. Each section was introduced by the relevant Cabinet Member or Corporate Director before taking questions from the Committee.

Questions and observations were made around the following areas:

Item	Section of the Budget	Questions / Comment	Response from relevant Cabinet Member / Corporate Director
3	Introduction of the Budget and Overall Budget Strategy including approach and timeline	A key headline of the Chancellors spending review was the opportunity for councils to have an increase of up to 2% on their council tax to pay for adult social care. Has this been considered?	This has not been considered yet as the announcement has only just been made.
		National and local economy is improving. Has this been factored into the budget figures.	There was an existing set of assumptions and these will be moving to take into account these changes in the 2016/17 budget in phase two of the process.
The Committee noted the presentation made by the Cabinet Member for Resources.			
4.	People and Communities <b>Appendix 2 (Pages 10 – 16)</b>	Had the concept of using SMS as a mode of communication been considered and in particular for service users to be able to contact service's by text.	Using SMS will be an integral part of the front door arrangements. The SMS service will be used to push texts out to citizens, partners and businesses in a targeted way but is not yet in place. Assisted web based technology would also be used to assist vulnerable people in their own homes.
		Members sought assurance that there would be plenty of review points throughout the implementation of the Front Door Project to ensure that some of the more vulnerable people would not become disenfranchised.	Members were assured that existing channels of access to services would not be replaced. The Front Door Project would enhance the customer experience.

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		<p>How would savings be made if the Front Door Project meant increasing services.</p>	<p>Getting people to access services at the right point, in the right place at the right time was the first principle. People with varying needs often enter the health service or council services at the wrong point. This project will enable people to receive the right service at the right time in the right place. It will ensure that wherever or how ever people access a service the response they get will be the same. The next phase will be to ensure that whoever is supporting the customer with their enquiry find the most cost effective solution for that person. Part of the solution is investing more in community services.</p>
		<p>Did the council pay full time social workers more money now than a year ago.</p>	<p>Children's services social workers were not paid more now than a year ago. A paper would be presented to Cabinet in January proposing to increase the recruitment and retention bonuses that are paid. If approved this would be implemented from March 2016. Peterborough currently paid more for full time social workers than neighbouring authorities.</p>
		<p>Members sought clarification with regard to savings quoted on page 13 regarding the development of a permanency service and page 22, investments – revenue and procurement relating to children's foster care. Should the figures quoted under procurement be subtracted from the figures quoted for savings.</p>	<p>The figures quoted for procurement are as a result of the Serco contract. If there is a level of addressable spend Serco would guarantee a level of savings. The procurement figure was therefore not all in relation to the fostering service.</p>

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		<p>Clarification was sought as to how much of the procurement pressure within resources was due to the proposed changes in the permanency service.</p>	<p>Members were advised that the information would be provided outside of the meeting as it was not available at the meeting.</p>
		<p>Following the recent announcement that the Education Support Grant was to be scrapped how will that affect the income generated through the schools improvement service represented in the budget. Will it have an effect on the income expected to be generated through the schools improvement service if the council did not provide a school improvement programme. Will it be necessary to provide transitional costs in to this year's budget.</p>	<p>The Education Services Grant had been reduced each year. It was not clear if the government were intending to actually abolish it or if the aim was to convert every school to an academy which would mean that a grant would not be needed to be paid out. The educational team will monitor what the likely transfer arrangements will be for academies.</p>
		<p>Councillor Sandford recommended that the Corporate Director for Resources provide the Committee with figures to show how much of the procurement pressure within Resources is due to the proposed changes in the Permanency Service in People and Communities.</p> <p>All Members unanimously agreed to this recommendation.</p> <p>Councillor Ferris seconded by Councillor</p>	

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		<p>Forbes recommended to Cabinet that the relevant scrutiny committee is provided with a regular report on the progress of the Front Door Project.</p> <p>The recommendation was put to the vote and unanimously agreed.</p> <p>Councillor Fower seconded by Councillor Sandford recommended that Cabinet explore the use of SMS as a communications tool across services but in particular as part of the Front Door Project.</p> <p>The recommendation was put to the vote and unanimously agreed.</p>	
<p>The Committee noted this section of the budget and made the following recommendation to Cabinet.</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the Corporate Director: Resources provide the Committee with figures to show how much of the procurement pressure within Resources is due to the proposed changes in the Permanency Service in People and Communities.</li> <li>2. That the Corporate Director for People and Communities provide the relevant scrutiny committee with a regular report on the progress and implementation of the 'Front Door' project. The frequency of the report to be decided on presentation of the first report.</li> </ol>			

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3.		That Cabinet explore the use of SMS as a communications tool across council services and in particular as part of the Front Door project.	
5.	Resources including Strategic Commissioning and Partnerships <b>Appendix 3 (Pages 17 – 23)</b>	Clarification was sought regarding the amount of savings to be made.	£2M would be saved this year and £2M next year.
		New homes bonus grant. What will happen if the government decide over the next year to stop the grant.	It was unclear exactly what the government was proposing but it was clear that it was not about abolishing the grant. The grant would be paid over a four year period instead of six years, there was therefore a risk of losing two years' worth of money in the next financial year. The government have said however that they will invest more in social care. This will be made clearer in Phase 2 of the budget.
		Page 19. Peterborough Hardship Fund. Is it possible to work with Peterborough Energy to get a better deal on pre-paid energy cards.	Peterborough Energy provider OVO provide a pay as you go tariff which is approximately £70 cheaper than any other pay as you go tariff and this will be actively promoted. There is also the possibility of installing smart meters in people's homes which would also provide savings.
		Capital debt. Longer life assets will incur increased maintenance costs. Has this been taking into account.	All presumptions are based on the councils existing policy to maintain the assets at the appropriate level.
		Hardship Fund and Empower Communities project scheme. If someone is having difficulty paying	The installation of solar panels is not a means tested scheme. If people have the right shaped roof in the right direction and building society approval anyone

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		<p>council tax on a regular basis would it be possible/feasible to install solar panels to generate some funds over an agreed period. This may then help justify a reduction of council tax and the potential for the council to make some money.</p>	<p>can sign up for the scheme. The only issue would be if the government changed the feed in tariffs which would mean that those installations would not be cost effective. The administration of such a system would be complex.</p>
		<p>How is the expansion of the solar PV panel's scheme progressing. Are the anticipated savings going to be achieved.</p>	<p>The latest figures received for the current installations including Axiom Housing association have indicated that the savings will be achieved. Installations will continue to increase and will therefore improve the financial benefits for Phase 2 of the budget.</p>
		<p>Further detail was sought on the future delivery of property services.</p>	<p>The council currently has its property functions over various areas of the council. The work is delivered by Serco, Amey and through the Resources department. There is therefore scope to rationalise the delivery of property services. The partner of choice to deliver this service is NPS Property Consultants (NPS) who are part of the Norse Group who are a substantial property services company owned by Norfolk County Council. This is a public to public partnership not outsourcing and will build resilience.</p>
		<p>Capital debt realignment. What are the consequences of the 17 years of interest that we will have to pay? Has a lower rate of interest been negotiated now and what would happen if the interest rate were to rise.</p>	<p>The councils debt is fixed around different maturity positions, The extra cost of interest is built into the savings and there would be a penalty for paying the debt back early.</p>

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		<p>The incinerator energy from waste plant is currently being tested and will soon come on line. Councillors were informed that in the medium to long term this would deliver potential savings. When should we expect to see these savings.</p>	<p>Savings are already built into the budget as a result of the energy recovery facility going live.</p>
<p>The Committee noted this section of the budget.</p>			
<p>6.</p>	<p>Growth and Regeneration <b>Appendix 4 (Pages 24 – 25)</b></p>	<p>Clarification was sought on why Skanska had agreed to pay for the position of Head of Peterborough Highways Services.</p>	<p>Skanska and PCC were involved in long negotiations over a three month period and as part of those negotiations an agreement was reached regarding the Head of Peterborough Highways Services. Skanska sees Peterborough as a very good authority to work with.</p>
		<p>Clarification was sought as to how soon the Westgate development would be started.</p>	<p>The council was totally committed to make the development happen. However the developer only owns one third of the site. The council were working with the developer in a joint venture to ensure it happened.</p>
		<p>Savings – highway patching. How can this be classed as capital.</p>	<p>The council work very closely with other authorities who also do this and it can be legitimately classed as capital. Our accountants have approved this.</p>
		<p>7.15pm Councillor Shaheed left the meeting at this point.</p>	

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		There is no mention of increasing car parking charges. Can we expect to see this in Phase 2 of the budget.	Charges in general may come in Phase 2 of the budget but not necessarily car parking.
		If the council is moving into trading then the council should start to look at profit and loss. Would the councils accounting system be able to cope with this.	The accounting system has the flexibility to cope with accounting for profit and loss.
		Clarification was sought on how the Skanska contract worked and how the authority could make money by having this contract and what income had been generated so far.	<p>The contract was constructed with the intention to deliver highway services anywhere within the country. Because it is delivered through Peterborough Highways Services which is an EU procurement contract other local authorities can use Peterborough without having to go through the cost of an EU procurement process.</p> <p>Members were informed that the council had been selling its services to other authorities for many years.</p>
		Councillor Sandford recommended that Cabinet provide the Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee with a briefing note listing which council services were being sold to generate income and what income had been generated from the sale of these services.	

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	All Members unanimously agreed to this recommendation.		<p>The Committee noted this section of the budget and made the following recommendation to Cabinet:</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDATION</b></p> <p>1. That Cabinet provide the Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee with a briefing note listing which council services are being sold to generate income and what income had been generated from the sale of these services.</p>
7.	Governance <b>Appendix 5 (Page 26 – 27)</b>	Members noted the change in frequency that taxi drivers and operators had to replace their licenses from annually to every three years for taxi drivers and every five years for operators. Was the authority restricted to how many licenses could be allocated each year.	The Governance Director did not have the information available at the meeting but would provide a copy of the policy after the meeting.
	Coroner's Services. Clarification was sought regarding the merger of the three coronial areas and assurance was sought that the excellent service that was currently being provided to the Muslim communities in Peterborough would not suffer due to the merger.	The coroner was committed to continuing the provision of this service to the Muslim community and also to take this practice in to Cambridgeshire. The requirements of this service were built into the service level agreement.	How well were the arrangements for the shared Chief Executive role between Cambridgeshire and Peterborough working?
		Both Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council were satisfied with the way the arrangement was working.	

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	<p>The Chairman commented that it would be useful to hear the Chief Executives views on the two different styles of governance systems.</p>		<p>The Committee noted this section of the budget.</p> <p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p>The Director of Governance to provide details of the policy for taxi licensing, particularly regarding the limits placed upon the number of licences being issued.</p>
<p>8. Public Health <b>Appendix 6 (Page 28)</b></p>	<p>Members referred to the sexual health services contract and the 0-5 years old public health services contract. Clarification was sought on how value for money would be judged in those contracts. Could an example be provided of what efficiencies would be made on both contracts.</p> <p>Had clarification been received on whether the reduction in funding of the Public Health grant would continue in future years. The Government autumn statement had suggested that the money being put into the health service may not be new money and that this may come</p>	<p>The efficiencies on the sexual health contract had already occurred. The services were re-procured and won by Cambridgeshire Community Services. The saving had therefore already been made. The 0-5 services would be a total contract of approximately £3m. PCC also had its own 0-5 services and there was confidence that with the use of transformation and the working together of those services that the savings would be made without adversely affecting the services to children.</p> <p>There had been a government statement that there would be a 3.9% annual reduction in the Public Health grant. What is not clear is whether the base line is starting from this year's in year reduction or from the Public Health funding from the beginning of this year, this is still to be confirmed. From next year Public Health may no longer be ring-fenced.</p>	

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		from further cuts in Public Health.	
The Committee noted this section of the budget.			
9.	Staff Implications <b>Appendix 7 (Pages 29)</b>	No comments or questions were made on this section of the budget.	
The Committee noted this section of the budget.			
10.	Council Tax Support Scheme <b>Page 15 Appendix B of covering report in the Agenda Pack published on 18 November.</b>	No comments or questions were made on the Council Tax Support Scheme.	
The Committee noted this section of the budget.			
11	<b>General Comments, any overall recommendations and Conclusion</b>		
	There were no further comments or questions.		

The Chair thanked all members of the Scrutiny Committee and Commissions for attending the meeting and the Cabinet Members and Directors for attending and responding to the questions.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **People and Communities**

1. That the Corporate Director for Resources provide the Committee with figures to show what impact the extra spending on procurement with in Resources will have on the savings proposed on the Permanency Service in People and Communities.
2. That the Corporate Director for People and Communities provide the relevant scrutiny committee with a regular report on the progress and implementation of the 'Front Door' project. The frequency of the report to be decided on presentation of the first report.
3. That Cabinet explore the use of SMS as a communications tool across council services and in particular as part of the Front Door project.

### **Growth and Regeneration**

1. That Cabinet provide the Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee with a briefing note listing which council services are being sold to generate income and what income had been generated from the sale of these services.

## **ACTION**

The Director of Governance to provide a copy of the Licensing Policy to Members of the Committee.

CHAIRMAN

The meeting began at 6.00pm and ended at 7.45 pm