

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING
HELD WEDNESDAY 26 JANUARY 2022
ENGINE SHED, SAND MARTIN HOUSE, PETERBOROUGH**

THE MAYOR – COUNCILLOR STEPHEN LANE

Present:

Councillors Ansar Ali, Imtiaz Ali, Jackie Allen, Steve Allen, Ayres, Barkham, Bashir, Bisby, Andrew Bond, Sandra Bond, Brown, Burbage, Casey, Cereste, Coles, Day, Dowson, Elsey, Mohammed Farooq, Saqib Farooq, Fenner, Fitzgerald, John Fox, Judy Fox, Harper, Haseeb, Haynes, Hemraj, Hiller, Hogg, Howard, Howell, Ishfaq Hussain, Mahboob Hussain, Iqbal, Jamil, Joseph, Knight, Lane, Moyo, Murphy, Gul Nawaz, Shaz Nawaz, Over, Qayyum, Robins, Rush, Sainsbury, Sandford, Shaheed, Sharp, Simons, Skibsted, Tyler, Walsh, Warren, Wiggin, Yasin

In attendance virtually:

Councillor Jones

79. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jones and Councillor Yurgutene.

80. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

81. Minutes of the Council meeting held on:

(a) 8 December 2021 – Special Meeting

The minutes of the Special Council meeting held on 8 December 2021 were approved as a true and accurate record.

(b) 8 December 2021

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 8 December 2021 were approved as a true and accurate record.

(c) 16 December 2021 – Extraordinary Meeting

The minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 16 December 2021 were approved as a true and accurate record.

COMMUNICATIONS

82. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor invited Councillor Hiller, as the Chair of the Honour's Panel to announce the follow Civic Award winners for 2022:

Community Involvement Civic Award

- Ann Deane
- Brenda & Martin Tibbles
- Dorothy Halfhide
- Erin Lee
- GLADCA
- Hussaini Islamic Centre
- Janet Hagan
- Jane Hale
- Joseph Dobson
- Keith Lievesley
- Nadia Abdur Rehman
- Peterborough Youth Council
- Peterborough Wombles
- Salaam Radio
- Salvation Army (Community Centre)
- Bhat Sikh Association
- Well Café @ Alpha Centre

Contribution to Art & Culture Award

- David Cramp
- Khalid Junvy
- Paul Stainton

Young Person's Award

- Abdul Khan
- Joshua Barnes

Sport Award

- Farida Bibi

Business Award

- Mark Broadhead

Outstanding Contribution to Environment Award

- David Lewenden

Lifetime Achievement Award

- Edward Ellwood
- Girlguiding, Peterborough
- Harry Brassey

83. Leader's Announcements

The Leader addressed the Council in congratulating Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Interim Chief Executive, on her retirement and lauded her work with Peterborough City Council and other authorities throughout the span of her career. This included work as a residential care working and developing a specialist fostering service prior to her promotion to Corporate Director for People and Communities across both Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. The Leader went on to list a number of Wendi's achievements, including the improvement of Children's Services, leading the development of the Early Help system and the Best Start in Life Strategy, the transformation of Adult's Services, as well as her exemplary leadership, particularly through the challengers of COVID-19.

Group Leader's echoed the Leader's comments and praised Wendi's positivity, enthusiasm and expertise, wishing her the best in her retirement.

QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

84. Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions from members of the public.

85. Petitions

(a) Presented by Members of the Public

There were no petitions presented at the meeting.

(b) Presented by Members

There were no petitions presented at the meeting.

86. 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

(d) To the Combined Authority Representatives

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

1. The Future of the Hodgson Centre
2. The Key Theatre
3. Voi Bikes
4. The Key Theatre Urgency
5. Future Plans for the Werrington Leisure Centre
6. Werrington Sports Centre Closure
7. Grant Thornton Spending
8. City Market
9. Brown Bin Collection
10. Recruitment of Social Care Workers
11. Leisure Services
12. Warding Funding for Road Repairs
13. Motion of Virtual/Hybrid Meetings
14. Rejected Waste Costs
15. Werrington Library
16. Clare Lodge
17. Local Transport and Connectivity Plan

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

RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS

87(a). Review of Peterborough City Council's Members' Allowance Scheme – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

The Council received a report from Cabinet in relation to the report of the Independent

Remuneration Panel on the Members' Allowance Scheme.

Councillor Cereste moved the proposal and stated that the Council agree to adopt the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).

Councillor Coles seconded the proposal and reserved his right to speak.

Council debated the proposal and the summary of the points raised by Members included:

- Members thanked the IRP for the report and the work undertaken on the review.
- It was suggested that, given the Council's current financial situation, it would be inappropriate for Members to increase their allowances when families across the city were struggling.
- Some Members indicated that, should a rise in allowances be agreed, they would hand the increase back to the Council.
- Queries were raised as to how the Special Responsibility Allowances figures for chair positions were reached, particularly in light of the level of remuneration that was to be paid to the new independent Chair of the Audit Committee, which was significantly less.
- It was commented that if the Council were to keep deferring a decision on an increase in allowances, this would result in a substantial increase after a longer period of time.
- Further comment was made that it was inappropriate for Members to vote on their own allowances.
- Some Members questioned the calculations set out within the report and suggested that the number of hours included to reflect the dedicated by Members to Council work was too high.
- Members noted the impact on rising levels of inflation, and that upcoming budget proposals may include significant cuts to services, and it was suggested that the Council should reject the recommendations as a show of solidarity.
- It was considered that there would never be a good time for Members to raise allowances and that the Council's financial position would not be worsened by the recommendations put forward by the IRP.
- It was further noted that the level of remuneration for the independent Audit Chair was not recommended by the IRP.

As seconder of the proposal, Cllr Coles commented that the IRP had given their advice and that Members would not be voting directly on a rise in allowances, but to accept the recommendations of the Panel. Members' allowances would still be below average in comparison to other local authorities.

As mover of the proposal, Cllr Cereste summed up by advising that there was never a good time to take such decisions, and that was why an independent panel was used, in order for outside individuals to make reasonable recommendations.

A vote was taken on the proposal and Council **RESOLVED** (29 voted in favour, 21 voted against, 8 abstained from voting):

1. Note recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, as set out in Appendix 1 and summarised in paragraph 2 of the report;
2. Agree to adopt the recommendations of the panel in relation to the Member Allowance Scheme.

87(b). Audit Committee Recommendation – Invitation to Opt into the National Scheme of Auditor Appointments from April 2023

The Council received a report from the Audit Committee in relation to the invitation to opt into the national scheme for auditor appointments from April 2023.

Councillor Over moved the recommendation and advised that Council needed to make an appointment to the position of external auditor by March 2022. The benefits of the national scheme included transparency, more easily identifiable qualified and registered appointees, and appointees that had previous involvement with local authorities and access to specialist teams.

Councillor Sainsbury seconded the recommendation and reserved his right to speak.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to agree to confirm the Public Sector Audit Appointments that it will opt into the national scheme for auditor appointments from April 2023.

87(c). Cabinet Recommendation – Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2026

The Council received a report from Cabinet in relation to the Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2021 to 2026.

Councillor Steve Allen moved the recommendation.

Councillor Howard seconded the recommendation and reserved his right to speak.

Council debated the recommendation and the summary of the points raised by Members included:

- It was requested that policies in relation to assistance provided to individuals who had been removed from temporary accommodation in hotels be reviewed.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to approve the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2026 and Action Plan.

87(d). Cabinet Recommendation – Budget Control Report November 2021

The Council received a report from Cabinet in relation to the Budget Control Report for November 2021 and approval of Capital Budget virements.

Councillor Coles moved the recommendation and advised that the virements being sought for approval related to Clare Lodge and the Nene Parkway. Both were 100% grant funded, so no borrowing would be required.

Councillor Fitzgerald seconded the recommendation and reserved his right to speak.

Council debated the recommendation and the summary of the points raised by Members included:

- It was queried which part of the Clare Lodge bid the virement related to, as one aspect had not been agreed by the Department for Education.

As mover of the recommendation, Cllr Coles confirmed that 7 of the 8 Clare Lodge projects had been accepted, and it was the final aspect that was relevant to the virement being approved.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to approve:

1. Capital Budget virements as outlined in Appendix C(i) to the report, these include:
 - a. Update on Clare Lodge Bid
 - b. A1260 Nene Parkway Junction 15 Improvements

87(e). Introductory Report of the Peterborough City Council Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel

The Council received a report from Cabinet in relation to ???

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation and advised that noted that there would be further reports from the Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel submitted to Council in the future. Members were further advised that panel members would be attending the All Party Policy meeting held on 27 January 2022 to introduce themselves to Members and answer questions.

Councillor Steve seconded the recommendation and reserved his right to speak.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to:

1. Note the report.
2. Approve the amendment to the Terms of Reference of the Panel to report to Council on a six-monthly cycle.

88. Questions on the Executive Decisions Made Since the Last Meeting

Cllr Fitzgerald introduced the report which outlined the record of Executive Decisions made since the last meeting.

Members asked questions on the following Executive Decisions:

Peterborough Climate Commitment

In response to a question, Cllr Simons advised that meant a great deal for the city and was a positive move towards the Council's environmental aims.

Proposed Closure of Key Theatre and Temporary Closure of Werrington Leisure Centre to the Public

In response to a number of questions Cllr Steve Allen and Cllr Fitzgerald advised the following:

- Urgency measures were required as potential redundancies meant that the Council had to announce the possible closure.
- The theatre was only closed for one day in practice.
- The running of the theatre was losing the Council money, with the new deal with a commercial operation saving £300,000.
- The Leader and Cabinet Member had been in discussion with a number of operators for several months, having been aware of the need to address the funding issues of the theatre since November 2021. These issues had resulted generally from the leisure service as a whole falling off during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- As soon as the Council was made aware of the significant level of loss anticipated, action had to be taken, with unfortunate timings.

- Negotiations with Selladoor were finalised as soon as possible to take over the running of the theatre.
- There had been no intention to bypass the scrutiny process, instead, simply to safeguard the future jobs of those working at the theatre.
- The chair of the scrutiny committee did question the use of urgency and this was discussed with the Monitoring Officer. All urgency criteria had been met.

89. Questions on the Combined Authority Decisions Made Since the Last Meeting

There were no Combined Authority decisions made since the last meeting.

COUNCIL BUSINESS TIME

90. Notices of Motion

90(1) Motion from Councillor Murphy

Councillor Murphy moved the motion and advised Members that the his motion was not asking for any immediate action, but for consideration to be given to including an elected mayor option within any governance review undertaken by the Council, as well as a committee or hybrid model.

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

Council debated the motion, and the summary of the points raised by Members included:

- Members noted that the Council had already committed to conducting a governance review and concerns as to what this included has been noted at the Financial Sustainability Working Group.

As seconder of the motion, Cllr Sandford emphasised the importance of the motion. Although he was not in favour of an elected mayor, a commitment to a governance review would include this alongside the consideration or a hybrid system or committee system. To not support the motion would indicate that the inclusion of a governance review within the Council's Improvement Plan was a superficial addition.

As mover of the motion, Cllr Murphy summed up by suggesting that voting against the motion would mean renegeing on the Corporate Strategy and Improvement Plan commitment. The motion was not specific about the outcome of a review, but would underline what the remit of any review should include.

A vote was taken on the motion moved by Councillor Murphy (9 voted in favour, 43 voted against, 6 abstained from voting). The motion was **DEFEATED**.

90(2) Motion from Councillor Ansar Ali

Councillor Ansar Ali moved the motion as amended and advised Members that he took no pleasure in doing so. The proposal to suspend the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances for three years would save the Council a significant amount of money, as well as sending a clear message to Peterborough residents. Those in receipt of SRA's had been running the Council for 10 years and had made mistakes in that time.

Councillor Hemraj seconded the motion as amended and reserved her right to speak.

Council debated the amended motion, and the summary of the points raised by Members included:

- It was suggested that it was appropriate for those in receipt of SRA's to accept a reduction in allowance in the Council's current financial circumstances.
- It was noted that many of those in receipt of SRA's undertook what was the equivalent of a full time job.
- Comment was made that the amount of SRA paid to those in Cabinet positions or chair positions was higher than reasonable.
- It was accepted that some chair positions required Members to take on more work than others, and that this should be considered by the IRP.
- It was considered by some Members that the motion inferred that the reduction of SRA payment would be a form of punishment, which was not appropriate.
- Members commented that the responsibility of the budget fell on the Council as a whole, and that if the intent of the motion was as moved then all Member remuneration should be reviewed.
- It was felt that SRA payment should not be linked to Council performance, as it was up to the electorate to vote Members out if it was felt they were doing a poor job.
- Comment was made that performance of the Council and affordability of allowances was not within the remit of the IRP and was not relevant in setting the level of allowance to be paid.
- It was suggested that linking the payment of allowances to performance was a slippery slope, and that there was no way that this could be measured.

As seconder of the motion as amended, Cllr Hemraj commented that recent pay rises had been below inflation increases, with the addition of increases in council tax and the cost of living. Reducing the payment of SRA's would show good will towards Peterborough residents.

As mover of the motion as amended, Cllr Ansar Ali summed up by advising that his intention behind the motion had not come through and that he did not mean to offend anyone. The motion was simply to suggest that if those in receipt of SRAs were about to sacrifice these for a length of time, this would send out a positive message to residents of Peterborough who were struggling.

A vote was taken on the amended motion moved by Councillor Ansar Ali (26 voted in favour, 31 voted against, 1 abstained from voting). The amended motion was **DEFEATED**.

90(3) Motion from Councillor Day

Councillor Day moved the motion and explained that the proposal had come from discussions within the Climate Change Working Group and the independent Climate Commissioner's report. While Peterborough had significant environmental ambitions, these did not include nature and biodiversity. Since the 1970's there had been a 68% decrease in the wildlife population, an emergency running parallel to that of the climate and, as such, the two were combined. The Council's last Biodiversity Strategy was agreed in 2004 and it was felt this was now due for a review. The motion asked for 9 months to draft a report for the scrutiny committee to consider.

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

Council debated the motion, and the summary of the points raised by Members included:

- It was noted that the motion did not commit the Council to any significant spending.
- Comment was made that a review by the scrutiny committee was the most appropriate way for any adaptations to policy around biodiversity to be made.
- It was considered that trees, wildflowers and other forms of biodiversity

improved people's quality of life, and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic local green spaces had played a vital role in maintaining people's mental health.

- It was felt to be important to include local Councillors in such projects.
- The idea that the motion had no attached cost was challenged, with comment made that 9 months of officer time was not without cost.
- Concern was raised about the implications of declaring an ecological emergency and whether there should be further debate on the topic.

As seconder of the motion, Cllr Sandford commented that it was recognised by many expert bodies that there was a link between the climate and biodiversity, and that producing a plan to tackle ecological challenges was important. It was felt that money could be spent in different ways to bring about benefits to the climate and biodiversity, rather than requiring additional funding. The motion before Members simply asked for the drafting of a proposal report at this point.

As mover of the motion, Cllr Day advised that Members were often asked to bring ideas forward. This was a bold idea that had been run by officers already. If it was agreeable to Members, amendments could be made to the wording, or the motion could be brought back to a later meeting if further debate was required. It was considered to be important to put a plan in place, as without a strategy the Council would have difficulty accessing funding.

A vote was taken on the motion moved by Councillor Day (29 voted in favour, 29 voted against, 0 abstained from voting, with the Mayor's Casting vote against). The amended motion was **DEFEATED**.

90(4) Motion from Councillor Moyo

Councillor Moyo moved the motion and shared her experience of County Lines with Members. This included a man approaching her outside of school when she was sixteen years old and grooming her into the County Lines operation before she was able to remove herself from the situation. Councillor Moyo continued to explain that such things happened every day exploiting young people in the name of illegal drug supplies. Cambridgeshire County Council had no systematic data collection for drug crimes, and the motion before Members proposing a dedicated officer to liaise with Operation Spotlight. The motion also sought to take a more public health orientated approach to identifying factors within such exploitation cases, in order to assist with the operation and support neighbourhood teams in evaluating its impact.

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

Council debated the motion, and the summary of the points raised by Members included:

- Members supported the intention behind the motion, though it was questioned whether the action request was already being taken, as Operation Spotlight was already in effect.
- It was suggested that the Police and Crime Commissioner may have dedicated funds for such projects, which could be applied for.
- Members suggested that supporting the police on such projects was a benefit to all.
- It was commented that the Council could go beyond what was being asked in the motion and evaluate the statics data available within Peterborough.

As seconder of the motion Cllr Sainsbury advised that becoming a victim of County Lines could happen to anyone, and it was important to reaffirm any support that was available to victims and how the Council could support the police to address this issue further.

As mover of the motion Cllr Moyo thanked Members for their comments and confirmed that she had been in communication with the relevant Council officers to ensure that the motion captured what further support was needed to support those young people impacted by County Lines. Drug issues were not about arrest and supply, but about sharing information, which would be a key part of the success of Operation Spotlight in determining how vulnerable people were being drawn into criminal spaces.

A vote was taken on the motion moved by Councillor Moyo. The Council **AGREED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) the motion as follows:

“County Lines are gangs who operate highly sophisticated criminal networks. The criminals export illegal drugs from big cities into smaller cities such as Peterborough and towns across the country. Child Criminal Exploitation is common in county lines. It occurs where an individual or group coerces, controls, manipulates or deceives a child or young person under the age of 18 to move, sell, store drugs and money for those higher up in the network. The hierarchy is designed to protect the leaders to evade capture by the police and to distance themselves from the criminal act of physically dealing drugs. Nonetheless, vulnerable adults can be victims too of the criminal networking.

The Council notes:

1. Perpetrators operating county line networks are commuting to the city of Peterborough, frequently evolving their techniques to groom and exploit young people and vulnerable adults to deal Class A drugs such as crack cocaine and heroin.
2. According to Cambridgeshire Constabulary, in the last 12 months there were approximately 791 drug related crimes reported.
3. The exact numbers of young people affected by County Lines is unknown and there is currently no systematic data collection.
4. Children aged 15 to 17 years are those most commonly identified as victims of County Lines exploitation, although those younger and older are also at risk of exploitation.
5. Studies show the coronavirus pandemic is driving a rise in inequality, poverty, and mental health conditions, particularly among already vulnerable groups, pushing more people into drug use and exacerbating existing dependency issues.
6. There are now county line gangs originating from Peterborough operating networks across Cambridgeshire.

The Council resolves:

1. **To support Operation Spotlight a pilot scheme co-ordinated through the Safer Peterborough Partnership (SPP) to examine and publish a review of the scale and impact of County Line exploitation of young people and vulnerable adults in Peterborough.**
2. **To assist Safer Peterborough Partnership with applying for external grant bids to fund for a dedicated officer to manage Operation Spotlight’s delivery plan effectively and report back to the Council.**
3. **To take a more co-ordinated public-health approach in identifying risks and protective factors for preventing County Lines exploitation within Peterborough by working collaboratively with Operation Spotlight to deliver key strategic aims.**
4. **Provide Operation Spotlight with better intelligence and research to:**
 - **identify children most at risk and those already exhibiting signs of involvement with County Lines.**

- understand safeguarding needs of children exploited through County Lines.
 - assist young people to gain early help and advice and ensure young people know how to access help.
5. Support Neighbourhood Support Teams (NST), the local Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) and Neighbourhood Watch Teams with identifying vulnerability indicators and encouraging residents to report drug suppliers or suspicious activity through better training and communication.
 6. Evaluate and measure the impact of working with schools, community groups, public health teams, police officers and youth services as well as, develop contingency plans to address areas of improvement.”

91(a). Appointment of Interim Section 151 Officer

The Council received a report in relation to the appointment of an interim Section 151 Officer.

Councillor Coles moved the recommendation and advised that, in accordance with legislation, local authorities must make arrangements to secure a Section 151 officer, the appointment of which was reserved to Full Council. This duty currently fell under the remit of the Director for Resources. The previous post holder had left the Council's, with duties being picked up by the Deputy Section 151 Officer. The appointment of Cecilie Booth was recommended until recruitment to the position could be progressed as someone with vast knowledge and experience in the area.

Councillor Fitzgerald seconded the recommendation and thanked Kirsty Nutton, the current Deputy Section 151 Officer for her work during this challenging time, and for the work of the finance team.

Council debated the recommendation and the summary of the points raised by Members included:

- A query was raised in relation to the notice period of the previous post holder.
- Members endorsed the comments made in relation to the Deputy Section 151 Officer.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) approved the appointment of Ms Cecilie Booth as the Interim Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer for Peterborough City Council.

91(b). Appointment of Independent Audit Committee Members and Chair

The Council received a report in relation to the appointment of independent Audit Committee members and an independent Chair.

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation and advised that this was the right approach to take in order to strengthen the Council's audit function, as highlighted through external reviews. Councillor Fitzgerald was please at the quality of appointments achieved.

Councillor Steve Allen seconded the recommendation.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to:

1. Agree to appoint Chris Brooks to the position of Chair of the Audit Committee for a term of four years ending in May 2026, with the position being awarded an honorarium of £3000 per annum, plus travelling and subsistence expenses.
2. Agree to appoint Mike Langhorn and Dr Stuart Green as independent members of the Audit Committee for a term of four years ending in May 2026, with the positions being awarded honorariums of £1500 per annum, plus travelling and subsistence expenses.
3. Agree the revised Audit Committee Terms of Reference at Appendix 2 to the report.

91(c). Revised Political Proportionality, Committee Seat Allocation, and Appointment of Chairs

The Council received a report in relation to revised political proportionality of the Council, the allocation of committee seats and the appointment of committee chairs.

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation.

Councillor Steve Allen seconded the recommendation and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Shaz Nawaz moved an amendment to the recommendation and advised that while the Labour Group was required to sacrifice a seat on one of the Council's committees to the Conservative Group, it was also a requirement of proportionality that the Council's committees stay as reflective of the overall proportionality of the Council as possible. As such, the most appropriate committee for the exchange of seats was the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee, rather than the Planning and Environmental Protection Committee, as proposed by Councillor Fitzgerald.

Councillor Yasin seconded the amendment and reserved her right to speak.

Council debated the recommendation and the amendment, and the summary of the points raised by Members included:

- It was suggested that the positions of scrutiny chairs should be allocated to opposition members, however it was noted that the most appropriate time to do so would be at the Annual Council meeting in May.
- It was suggested that that the original recommendation resulted from a desire to hold the majority of the Planning and Environmental Protection Committee, which was a decision-making body, unlike the scrutiny committee.
- Comment was made in relation to the importance of decisions of the Planning and Environmental Protection Committee being made without political pressure.

Councillor Murphy moved that the vote be put. The Mayor considered that there had not been sufficient debate on the item.

Council continued the debate, which included:

- It was suggested that the initial proposal had been made in order to maintain the status quo on the Planning and Environmental Protection Committee.

As seconder of the amendment, Cllr Yasin urged Members to support the amendment.

As seconder of the recommendations, Cllr Steve Allen commented that the original recommendation should be supported as it was clear and transparent.

As mover of the recommendation, Cllr Fitzgerald summed up by advising that there was no political motivation behind the recommendation, and the proposal before

Members was simply a preference of the Conservative Group.

A vote was taken on the amendment to the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (29 voted in favour, 28 voted against, 1 abstained from voting) to accept the amendment.

A vote was taken on the recommendation as amended and Council **RESOLVED** (29 voted in favour, 0 voted against, 29 abstained from voting) to:

1. Agree the allocation of seats on committees subject to political balance arrangements (Appendix 1 to the amendment) to reflect:
 - Planning and Environmental Protection Committee – Conservatives to lose one seat, Peterborough First to gain one seat
 - Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee – Conservatives to lose one seat, Peterborough First to gain one seat
 - ~~Planning and Environmental Protection Committee – Labour to lose one seat, Conservatives to gain one seat.~~
 - Children and Education Scrutiny Committee – Labour to lose one seat, Conservatives to gain one seat.

2. Appoint the Chair of the Council's Committees as follows:
Children and Education Scrutiny Committee - Councillor Over Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee – Councillor Mohammed Farooq
Planning and Environmental Protection Committee – Councillor Harper

91(d). Draft Programme of Meetings 2022/23

The Council received a report in relation to the draft programme of meetings for 2022/23.

Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation.

Councillor Steve Allen seconded the recommendation.

A vote was taken on the recommendation and Council **RESOLVED** (unanimous with no Members indicating to vote against or abstain) to approve, in principle, the draft programme of meetings for 2022/23 (attached at Appendix 1 to the report).

The Mayor
6:00pm – 10:02pm
26 January 2022

**FULL COUNCIL 26 JANUARY 2022
QUESTIONS**

Questions were received under the following categories:

<u>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</u>	
<u>Questions from members of the public</u>	
1.	Nil.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

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 Judy Fox

Councillor Allen, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities

Would you Leader of the Council please tell residents what they have in mind for the future plans for the Hodgson Centre at Werrington.

Under the Community Asset Transfer we were told that the council were looking for groups to take over the running of this centre and to date we have heard nothing.

We have put a local business man in touch with PCC as he has an interest in running this facility for the community and to date he has not really had any positive contact with anyone.

Would the leader please chase this up so the residents of Werrington have a better understanding what is going to happen to this community facility.

The Cabinet Member responded:

The Hodgson Community Centre has been advertised previously as an opportunity through the council's Community Asset Transfer programme, however the council did not receive any viable bids to take on the management. I understand however that the group currently managing the centre are keen to strengthen their management committee and volunteer bank, and continue to run this important community facility.

More generally, work on the Community Asset Transfer programme has paused pending the adoption of the council's new asset management strategy.

Supplementary question:

Could you please reassure me that the ward councillors are kept up to date with what is happening with this centre because we are getting a lot of residents asking us about this all of the time so I appreciate if you could please thank you.

The Cabinet Member responded:

I will answer in the affirmative Hodgson Centre is a community group but building and I think that any change in the use or participation in the Hodgson Centre will be kept abreast with the ward counsellors.

2.

Question from Councillor Harper

Councillor Allen, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities

The people of Peterborough have been informed that the Key Theatre is projected to lose £325k this year and the council, citing budget pressures, has therefore announced its closure.

Could the leader therefore please explain as to how it was possible for this administration and the cross party financial working group, to confidently make this decision to close the theatre without being in possession of all the detailed profit and loss information from the previous year and the forecast for this and further, how the Communities Scrutiny Committee could possibly and effectively scrutinise that decision when committee members were also denied access to those figures, figures that surely and for the sake of transparency, should have been shared by way of a closed session if commercial confidentiality was as is being claimed, thought to be at risk.

The Cabinet Member may respond:

I just need to correct the first sentence of your question, the £325,000 this year is an erroneous figure. The in year loss for the Key is £270,000 and the forecast loss of £300,000, was notified to officers at the end of November by the Theatre operator, City Culture Peterborough.

Officers then worked with City Culture to understand and interpret the financial information provided, which was comprehensive. This determined the accuracy of the data and the importance of requesting an urgent decision to be made.

As with any decision made by the Executive, this decision required all necessary clearances by senior officers including from our legal and corporate finance teams, prior to my giving it my consideration.

Members will know that the urgency procedures and the call-in waiver are used in exceptional circumstances only, and only after the Scrutiny Chair and Monitoring Officer give their approval.

City Culture Peterborough is a private limited company and the detailed financial data is their commercially sensitive data.

However, moving on, Members will now know that the Council has entered into an arrangement with New Theatre Peterborough to operate the Theatre – I believe a great result to our city.

Supplementary question:

It is great it's great news that the theatre is to continue certainly for the next one to five years depending on how things progressed.

I just like to ask you quickly if you wouldn't mind, considering public money was used to help fund these sorts of things with City Culture do you not think it's right that that is fully disclosed to, not necessarily the public, but certainly to councillors and without doubt scrutiny committees and would you support a motion that called for that.

The Cabinet Member responded:

	<p>I agree with you councillor Harper that it would be best if City Culture limited did provide the information that you've had indicated. They are however a private limited company and although we can ask them to reveal that information, we can't force them to do so, but of course the accounts of city culture will be revealed should the councillor wish to request that information. So, I don't think there's any kind of desire to be oblique but it's just not procedure for a private limited company to publish their figures unless required.</p>
3.	<p>Question from Councillor Moyo</p> <p>Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Commercial Strategy and Investments</p> <p>Voi electric bikes were temporarily suspended in October last year. This brought disappointing news for many residents in Peterborough who not only benefited from cycling more across city, but felt we took a step back towards making our city greener and achieving our climate targets.</p> <p>Can members be advised of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When will the service be resumed? 2. How is the fleet going to be protected from future vandalism? 3. Are there prospects of expanding the service to e-scooters? <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>Like Councillor Moyo and other Members I was very disappointed that acts of vandalism resulted in the temporary withdrawal of the e-bike service trials by Voi in the City. I know they were popular with many of our residents and visitors. This area is also within Councillor Simons environment portfolio and he has asked me to share with Members tonight the good news that the e-bike scheme will be restarting soon either late February or early March. Apparently, the firm have developed and implemented hardware changes which would prevent the reoccurrence of the issues they suffered. On the prospect of expansion Mr Mayor, both Councillor Simons and I, and I'm sure many others would like to see the facility well managed, complementary and operating in the wider City and possibly those rural areas, which are within commutable range of the City Centre. With regard to Escooters, Councillor Moyo questioned the scooters, I have to say that I am less convinced so far resisted the trial in Peterborough due to the concerns raised about accidents recorded, some quite serious I understand involving pedestrians. Unlike bikes, these motorised scooters would be somewhat an unfamiliar sight within our City, but we have asked our officers to monitor other areas where these vehicles are being used and it may well be that we do a trial at some future date if the reports are acceptable</p>
4.	<p>Question from Councillor Skibsted</p> <p>Councillor Allen, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities</p> <p>In view of the fact that there have lockdowns and closures of many council supported services since March 2020 and a detailed analysis undertaken of the council's finances, why was it necessary to announce the shutting of the Key Theatre and Werrington Leisure Centre as an "emergency measure" on 16th December 2021.</p>

There has been knowledge of the council's financial situation for some time prior to that date and making a decision in this way prevented any scrutiny or input from other councillors.

Please can the cabinet member provide an explanation for this action taken in this way.

The Cabinet Member responded:

The urgent decision taken to propose closure of the Key Theatre was based on information provided to the council by the operator, City Culture Peterborough. The decision was based solely on the scale of financial losses the operator was forecasting - at least £300,000 for the year 2022/23. Of course, we have no reason to doubt those figures provided by the company.

The Theatre - as with many parts of society - has been severely affected by the pandemic meaning that there hasn't been a 'typical' operating period since before our contract with Vivacity came to an end. This made the job of determining the true operating costs for the Key a real challenge.

However, as soon as City Culture were able to confirm the position, it was appropriate that we acted hastily or quickly for want of a better word, so as to avoid further losses. The nature of theatre management and the need to book acts and shows many months in advance meant we needed to act swiftly.

In relation to Werrington Leisure Centre with a separate operator of course, being Peterborough Ltd, requested the temporary closure because of severe staff shortages across leisure services. And I think some people, many people have short memories when it come to the real challenges that we are encountering coming out of Covid. The staff situation was impacting the safety and reliability of all sites, and we needed to stabilise that position so as to avoid membership losses. It was important to do this from the start of January - the point at which Gym memberships peak and new deals and offers are made available.

As with any request to use urgency procedures or to waive call-in, the agreement of the Scrutiny Chair was obtained along with approval from the Monitoring Officer.

Members will now know of course that we have saved the future of the Key Theatre for the forthcoming one to five years with a deal with the New Theatre and I'm sure you will agree that it is a great outcome for our City!

Supplementary question:

I just want to ask with regard to the Key Theatre despite the fact there is a now a temporary deal with the New Theatre, I believe that the hasty decision to close the Key Theatre on the 16th of December, still in my mind shows a clear lack of democracy not least to the people of Peterborough many of whom have been financially supporting the Key Theatre. Was the public feeling and involvement not taken into account given that we are in fact aspiring to be a City of Culture and about to open a university.

The Cabinet Member responded:

I agree that on the surface it looked as though the decision was hasty but that was not

the case and because of the need to bring in phase one of the budget and to comply with HR rules what we had to say was the theatre closure was possible and perhaps temporary based on those requirements. All the time conversations negotiations were taking part with other operators with view to the continuance programming at the Key. Unfortunately, time was not on our side, and I think I made it clear in any conversation or indeed broadcast or interview that the key building was still there, and we wanted the Key to remain open and we'd use every endeavour to do so and what we have done is achieved that. Unfortunately, a little bit of muddiness with the need to make the announcement to comply was perhaps unfortunate but unavoidable.

5. **Question from Councillor Andrew Bond (1)**

Councillor Allen, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities

Following the recent announcement of the temporary closure of the well-loved Werrington leisure centre, which not only services the Werrington area but the whole of the North of the City, could the relevant cabinet member update us on plans for a long-term arrangement for the future of the centre?

The Cabinet Member responded:

Key and Werrington Leisure Centre very sensitive issues as proven by the amount of questions tonight, and rightly so. I would say the closure of the Werrington Leisure Centre to community use is, indeed, as acknowledged in your question, temporary. The leisure industry is facing a severe shortage of qualified staff including duty managers, gym staff and lifeguards, and this was impacting services locally making them unreliable and difficult to manage.

Our operator, Vivacity (Peterborough Limited), is working hard to recruit and train new staff so that the Centre can reopen as quickly as possible.

It is worth noting that school use of the Centre is unaffected by this temporary closure, and importantly following representations and negotiations that we have put in place arrangements for some regular user with their own insurance will also continue to access the facilities. I believe you will agree this is a sensible and satisfactory outcome.

Supplementary question:

I was just wondering, you say their training new staff and trying to recruit new staff. Do we have a time scale on how long this will be? I mean three months, six months a year? I know it is a difficult one to answer, but?

The Cabinet Member responded:

Without being facetious I do not have a crystal ball. I'm sure they're recruiting to ensure that the centre opens within the period designated which is by September as I recall, so we can hope that they find the staff. But I will say people after Covid have a very short memories of the difficulties that lots of industries are facing in this country, but I'm sure every endeavour will be put in place to get that centre open again for the community.

6.

Question from Councillor John Fox

Councillor Allen, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities

From the outset of the Leader's term of office on Peterborough City Council he promised to work with Members across the Council's political spectrum to address its current financial problems, and created a new, cross-party Financial Sustainability Working Group that has been well-attended by all political groups. He publicly stated that his door would always be open, and most Members considered this a welcome gesture of collaboration.

Of course, one might expect that open-door policy to work both ways, and that any proposal from this administration would be discussed well in advance and at the earliest opportunity. However, at December's FSWG meeting the decision to temporarily cease public use of Werrington Leisure Centre was proposed. Amazingly, FSWG members did not receive any notification of this until a few hours before that meeting.

It is obvious that a decision as bold as this was not made overnight, so can the Leader provide the timeline of events leading to this being proposed to FSWG, explaining why there was no consultation and apologise to Members for not maintaining the collaboration that he so strongly championed?

The Cabinet Member may respond:

Although the question is directed to the Leader, this issue falls within my portfolio and accordingly I respond.

It is indeed unfortunate that Ward Councillors were not given prior notice and it should be noted that from the outset our Service Director has expressed his regret that he and his team didn't contact the local councillors about this issue before it went to the Financial Sustainability Working Group and he would like to place on record his sincere apologies. Whilst providing prior notice would not have affected the decision, I have absolute commitment from officers to engage as early as possible with local councillors on matters that affect their wards.

Further context in relation to this particular decision, Vivacity contacted the council on 25 November requesting that the Centre be temporarily closed because of severe staff shortages across the leisure estate. After a period of discussion, I and the Leader gave approval on 1 December based on the information provided to us. A discussion at Cabinet Policy Forum then took place on 13 December followed by the Financial Working Group on 15 December. That provides the chronology.

On a positive note, I'm now pleased to confirm that, with the support of the Werrington councillors, Ken Stimpson School, and local community representatives, arrangements have been able to be put in place allowing a small number of groups that are regular users of the centre and who have their own insurances in place to continue that usage during the closed period. I can also confirm that the Centre will reopen to general community use at the earliest opportunity.

I would reinforce the Leader's commitment to open door policy and confirm that it also applies to myself and other Members of the Cabinet. This is an administration that places a high value of transparency and engagement with Members across the

Chamber.

Supplementary question:

As soon as we are aware of the full facts, I personally called a meeting with officers the principal and staff of Ken Stimpson school, Vivacity , Ward Councillors, Neighbourhood Werrington Council and most important of all, the user groups to try to find a solution. to keep the centre running as best we could under the financial circumstances. I would like to place on record that after only two meetings we now have.... that after only two meetings we now seem to have user groups back using the facility thanks to the help from all concerned especially. Special thanks goes out to principal of Ken Stimpson School and his staff in helping to find a positive but not ideal solution to the situation The question is simply will you guarantee us that you will fully consult with us in the future so this doesn't happen again we have a solution.

The Cabinet Member responded:

I understand the gist of your question Councillor Fox and I can understand your concern about the lack of information, and I've already addressed that issue in a previous answer. We commit and the officers commit to making Counsellors of every ward across the Chamber aware of any decisions that are being made.

7. **Question from Councillor Shaz Nawaz (1)**

Councillor Coles, Cabinet Member for Finance

The council spent a significant amount of money with Grant Thornton to assist with efficiency and transformation measures. Could you please confirm:

1. How much we spent with Grant Thornton through that process?
2. How much was identified as savings and improvements?
3. How much we actually saved by implementing Grant Thornton's advice and recommendations?
4. If there are unrealised savings – when will we achieve those savings?

The Cabinet Member responded:

1. How much we spent with Grant Thornton through that process?

The total spent was £2,539,888.61 +VAT

2. How much was identified as savings and improvements?

£25.8m of potential savings were identified through the “financial improvement programme” by officers and Grant Thornton working together. Further opportunities were identified as part of the “lean cost structure review” programme which took place in early 2020. These key lines of enquiry identified an estimated at £11.9m of savings opportunities, although business cases had not been developed for these to substantiate the value.

3. How much we actually saved by implementing Grant Thornton's advice and recommendations?

The total amount of savings included within the 2020/21 budget was £20.6m

which took account of Grant Thornton's advice and recommendations, which followed the validation of savings values through the business case process. Although this value falls short of the £25.8m that was identified by Grant Thornton, it is important to remember they also supported us to deliver some in-year spend controls during 2019/20, which reduced the forecast overspend significantly. As a result of reviewing the Council's top contracts they also identified actions which could be taken by the Council to avoid future cost pressures – and those actions we took.

4. If there are unrealised savings – when will we achieve those savings?

In March 2020, after a six week period of investigative service review, approximately £11.9m of savings were identified with the support of Grant Thornton. These have most commonly been referred to as the "Lean Cost Structure Review" savings, but unfortunately due to the pandemic this process had to be paused. And it is important to remember that these opportunities, were not fully developed or appraised plans. Throughout the 2021/22 and 2022/23 budget setting process, officers have continued to re-examine these, and where appropriate, validated savings totalling £8.2m which have been included in the budget. The remaining balance of £3.6m has been reviewed thoroughly as part of the budget process, but these do not present feasible budget opportunities at this stage and you will be aware, some of the budget controls mean merging directorates, so actually the picture has changed quite dramatically.

Supplementary question:

As you have highlighted there are still some possible identifiable savings in the future what efforts will be making personally to try and realise those savings in the fiscal year 2023-2024.

The Cabinet Member responded:

You'll be aware we are undertaking a forensic review of everything are assets are contracts and so forth. It may well be we'll be able to find much more in in way of savings and those and I also mentioned earlier that some of the savings that were identified probably won't be deliverable now because of the whole structure of the directions is changing, but as you may imagine I'm keeping my eye very closely on all opportunities to make savings through 22/23 and 23/24.

8. **Question from Councillor Hogg (1)**

Councillor Allen, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities

With plans for the relocation of the City Market to Bridge Street now clearer, can the Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities please explain why we feel that only 12 stalls are required for a city the size of Peterborough, bearing in mind that Oundle Market currently has an allocation of 19 stalls, Bourne Market has 20 traders?

The Cabinet Member responded:

You'll be aware that the Planning Committee approved the market yesterday, great outcome and I think that it showed support for what we are doing with the movement

	<p>of the market.</p> <p>The relocation of the City Market is part of our vision to reenergise our city centre. We need to build back better a market offer that is modern, dynamic and flexible and that offers our residents and visitors a great experience. This will take time and we need to do it well.</p> <p>The number of businesses on the existing site have reduced in recent years, most likely because of changes to shopping habits and more recently the impact of Covid, and we now have far fewer permanent traders. Of those listed many had ceased trading, whilst others were only using the site to store goods. Furthermore, some were found to have a history of pre-Covid bad debt and the Council must have confidence that the new market will be a viable offering for shoppers and traders alike.</p> <p>Therefore it will primarily consist of 12 permanent stalls for our full time traders, plus the Food Hall, in a fixed building location, but we will also have the ability to expand and contract this using pop-up stalls to allow for seasonal demand, artisan occasional markets and so on.</p> <p>Our expectation is that we will provide an attractive flexibility for the modern trader, many of whom will benefit from our occasional market offerings.</p> <p>Returning to our vision, we would very much like to see a large and successful market grow in our city, and we are making plans to increase the number of fixed stalls over the coming years if a demand is identified, subject of course to planning permissions.</p> <p>Supplementary question:</p> <p>It's my understanding that these twelve stalls will actually only be occupied by four traders from the existing markets some will be taking multiple units as it were so that they call like for like from the current market. Essentially we're in a situation where are city market has been devastated down to a point of only having four traders going forward and above that they are very concerned about the fact that the market rents are going to be trebled over a four year. Some of whom are..... how can you justify a trebling of rent over a four year.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>It's a commercial to make sure that market traders pay a viable amount to provide the financial stability of the market going forward. At the moment there's a sort of mixed pot of various rents for market traders and there's also a bad debts in that situation with many of the traders that were on the existing market site. What we're doing, we're putting our ducks in a row getting out financial prudence sorted out and making sure that the rate that the market traders pay which is not an instant increase is going to increase over a period of three years to then be at the level that is commercially viable.</p>
9.	<p>Question from Councillor Wiggin</p> <p>Councillor Simons, Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene and the Environment</p> <p>Could the relevant cabinet member please provide an update on progress of refunding fees paid for brown bin collections, and what the cost has been to the council for the</p>

	<p>administration of this?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>I'm pleased to say the vast majority of refunds have now been completed there may be the odd one or two to be completed and I would urge anyone who hasn't received the refund to contact us. PCC ICT were able to develop a system in house to enable us to do this with no cost to PCC.</p>
10.	<p>Question from Councillor Sandford (1)</p> <p>Councillor Allen, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities</p> <p>At the recent meeting of Communities Scrutiny Committee, we were told that City Culture only realised at the end of November that the Key Theatre was losing £300,000 a year after apparently having experts study the accounts for over 13 months. However, when the committee asked to see the accounts we were told by a lady from City Culture that this may not be possible as City Culture is a private company.</p> <p>Could the relevant cabinet member tell me if and when councillors will be given access to papers relating to the financial position of the Key Theatre?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>The financial information relating to the Key Theatre is owned by City Culture Peterborough Ltd, a private company. Although that information has been requested by the council, the request has been declined on the grounds of commercial confidentiality.</p> <p>Members will be aware that we have secured an alternative arrangement whereby the New Theatre Peterborough will be running the Key from the beginning of February, and I and my lead officers will engage with them at the earliest opportunity to introduce them to Members and with a request for them to share whatever financial detail they deem appropriate.</p> <p>The audited accounts for City Culture Peterborough are also available for Members to review - if this would be of interest please do let me know.</p> <p>Supplementary question:</p> <p>The information was requested on the 4th of January and understand the service director wrote the City Culture it's now 26 and January and Members of the Committee haven't been advised about the outcome you've just given us. We are aware that there's a plethora of joint venture companies and various private companies that this Council has hived its services off to. He maybe private companies but there spending millions of pounds of public funds so would he not agree with me but it's really important that if we're spending millions of pounds of public funds that these bodies are held to account. I'm also aware that the New Theatre is a private company, so is he actually telling us that the financial transactions between the Council and the New Theatre or the Selladoor or the company that owns it; are those transactions also going to be kept secret?</p>

	<p>The Cabinet Member responded:</p> <p>I appreciate your supplementary Councillor Sandford. I can't deny I would like City Culture to provide the information you have requested that Councillor Sandford and indeed I feel they should in order to ensure complete transparency from their own point of view if nothing else. However, with City Culture being a private limited company and although we can request, we cannot demand them to provide the information. However, at this stage as further context I can announce that City Culture limited have now declared they are no longer able to deliver the Library and Museum services for the funding we offer to them and will be handing these back to PCC imminently. As part of the revised arrangement, it is proposed that Flag Fen will move to City College Peterborough in recognition of the education value of the site and its operation to Peterborough, the wider area of course nationally. And one further sentence to pop onto that, New Theatre will not be receiving any funding from Peterborough City Council, they will be running the business as a commercially viable business, but of course at this stage we are still somewhat reliant on final confirmation of Arts Council funding.</p>
11.	<p>Question from Councillor Hemraj (1)</p> <p>Councillor Walsh, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Public Health</p> <p>Will the council be applying for part of the new £300 million funding by the government to help with retention and recruitment of social care workers?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member response:</p> <p>I would like to thank Cllr Hemraj for her Question. The answer is a resounding “yes”. We did apply. And I am pleased to say that Peterborough City Council was allocated £992,000 of funding from the Government's Workforce Recruitment and Retention Funding for adult social care (Round 2).</p> <p>The purpose of this funding is to support local authorities to address adult social care workforce pressures between now and the end of March 2022. Recommendations for the use of funding are currently being finalised. We are intending to utilise 20% of it to support retention and recruitment of capacity to support frontline social care workforce provision. 80% of the funding will be passported direct to local providers to support care home and domiciliary care providers with the workforce pressures they continue to face.</p> <p>Plans are due to be finalised and approved by Cabinet Member Decision notice in the beginning of February 2022.</p>
12.	<p>Question from Councillor Murphy (1)</p> <p>Councillor Allen, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities</p> <p>On the 17th of December I wrote to you. “You may recall that full council debated a motion which was agreed that an option to be looked at for operating services previously run by Vivacity should be a co-operative model. Would you kindly let me know how far this was explored and ask the officers to</p>

provide a briefing paper on what was done and on how this option that can be revisited. It might be the sort of thing our local government and other pension schemes may want to invest in”.

Can you please let me know what has been done concerning the motion agreed concerning these services, or acknowledge that little was done on this council decision, hence the unnecessary and unplanned closures and the cabinet member decision notice, with no call in, and what now seems, at the time of writing, to be a hasty and far from transparent deal with the private sector without oversight or scrutiny by council concerning the Key Theatre.

The Cabinet Member response:

The culture and leisure sector has been - and continues to be - severely impacted by the pandemic, with customer numbers drastically below pre-Covid levels.

Any long term decision about the operating arrangements for these services needs to be based on a stable position to protect the interests of the council and to mitigate any financial and other risks.

We are grateful to both Peterborough Ltd and City Culture Peterborough for stepping in at short notice when the previous contract with Vivacity ended, but I would remind Members that these arrangements were designed to be a holding pattern whilst we continue to manage the Covid situation.

We are now also facing the budgetary challenges announced last week, and now is the right time to consider the best, most advantageous and most sustainable operating arrangements for these services going forwards. This work includes of course the suggestions set out in the Motion that Cllr Murphy is referring to.

13. **Question from Councillor Hemraj (2)**

Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Commercial Strategy and Investments

Could you please state how much funding per Ward has been spent on road resurfacing, pothole repairs and pavement works/replacements?

The Cabinet Member response:

I have discussed your request with our Highway Officers and unfortunately I am not able to provide you with the level of detail you have requested. Our Highways team do not record the data in this way, primarily because in a number of cases roads cut across ward boundaries with some boundaries even running through the centre of roads. As I am sure you would agree it is very difficult for our officers to accurately apportion cost in such scenarios. Crucially, comparing one ward to the next adds little value. All of the Council's roads are inspected regularly and interventions, whether they be a pothole repair or resurfacing scheme for example, are undertaken based on our duty to keep the highway safe and to prevent deterioration by following asset management principles. Therefore, any funding that the council is able to allocate across the city is prioritised to achieve that aim. This prioritisation process follows the national highways asset management processes as identified by the Department for Transport as part of their Incentive Fund assessment.

14. **Question from Councillor Sandford (2)**

Councillor Fitzgerald, Leader of the Council

Full Council at its meeting in July 2021 agreed a resolution on virtual and hybrid council meetings which said the following:

“Council therefore asks the Leader of the Council to lobby central government to put forward legislation giving all councils the necessary powers to hold virtual and hybrid meetings if they choose to do so and asks the chief executive to write to the local government minister and to our local MPs the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Chairman of the Local Government Association urging them to support this proposal.”

When I asked to see a copy of the letter sent by officers to the ministers and our MPs, I was told that no letters were in fact sent but officers instead decided merely to respond to an online LGA survey on the subject.

There continue to be concerns about the safety of holding large meetings such as Full Council with everyone present in person and we had the farcical situation at the 16 December meeting where most members were allowed to join virtually but were not allowed to vote.

So could the Leader of the Council tell me why the resolution of Full Council in July was not actioned as members had requested and what he is doing to move this issue forward?

The Cabinet Member response:

Thank you, Councillor Sandford, for your question, as you know the Government launched a national consultation on 25 March 2021, a 'call for evidence'. The scope of the consultation was to seek views on the use of the current arrangements which have provided express provision for Local Authorities to hold meetings remotely or in a hybrid format and to understand the experience of Local Authorities in the whole of the UK regarding remote meetings.

I can confirm that Peterborough City Council did respond to this consultation, which I recall was also discussed at a Group Leaders meeting. Officers also responded to online surveys through their professional bodies, which then made collective representations.

The "call for evidence" closed on 17 June 2021 and therefore this motion fell outside of that timeframe. Unfortunately, having searched our systems, it appears that letters have not been sent direct to those people mentioned in your motion, and we apologise that this action has been overlooked. However, the council had already sent clear evidence via the Government consultation process and completed online surveys with professional bodies for them to make a collective representation. I can confirm that these letters have now been sent to those people from the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council.

We are now waiting for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to respond to this 'call for evidence' consultation. It is clear that the Government were not minded to introduce any emergency measures for council meetings in the meantime,

	<p>with the reason given being lack of Parliamentary time.</p> <p>We await the response from the Government, but in the meantime, there is a petition launched by ADSO and LLG, via change.org that can be signed and runs until 25 March 2022, this currently has over 7,000 signatures. The petition is asking the Government to think again about its stance on the potential for remote attendance by councillors at council meetings. These professional bodies believe that the evidence of the last 2 years has demonstrated the ability of local authorities to properly manage such arrangements to ensure good governance. The petition can be accessed at https://chnng.it/q8vv6WYKnx</p>
15.	<p>Question from Councillor Shaz Nawaz (2)</p> <p>Councillor Simons, Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene and the Environment</p> <p>According to the Peterborough Telegraph, it is estimated that rejected waste cost the council £197,625. What is the cabinet member doing to address this cost?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member response:</p> <p>The cost identified by the Peterborough Telegraph is an estimate and has been calculated using a generic figure without consultation with the Council, therefore the information in the article is not accurate. The contract the Council agreed means the costs of disposing of the incorrect items are not borne by the Council but the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) operator Amey, once the recycling has been accepted any items not recyclable through the MRF process are the responsibility of Amey and the Council does not bear these costs. The importance of placing the correct items in the green bin is still a key challenge and measures are being put in place to tackle this and engage with residents to ensure items not recycled in the green bin such as textiles are recycled through another channel or disposed of in the black bin if they are not currently recyclable.</p>
16.	<p>Question from Councillor Andrew Bond (2)</p> <p>Councillor Allen, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities</p> <p>With the council currently looking at all areas of expenditure, residents have expressed concerns about the future of Werrington library which services a large part of the north of the city and surrounding villages.</p> <p>Can the relevant cabinet member please outline what plans, if any, are there to make any changes to the openings and operation of the Werrington library?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member response:</p> <p>Werrington Library is an important facility for residents to the north of the city, which benefits from a very active and successful friends group of volunteers. Its proximity to the secondary school and local primary schools, to residential areas, and to the nearby retailers makes the facility well-placed to meet many of the local needs.</p>

That said, and as set out in both your question and our budget consultation document, we do need to review all of our costs and we will be carrying out an expansive review of the library service as part of this. This does not necessarily mean library closures, but it does mean we have an opportunity to look at how we can deliver library services more cost effectively and more imaginatively, and in line with more modern ways of accessing information.

It is too early to confirm the outcome for any individual library, but you have my absolute assurance that ward councillors will be appropriately involved in discussions about libraries in your patch as part of that review process and before any firm recommendations are put forward for wider consultation.

17. **Question from Councillor Hogg (2)**

Councillor Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education, Skills and the University

Regarding the refurbishment of Clare Lodge, the decision paperwork suggested that funding for this was to be funded exclusively by DfE in the form of a grant, can the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education, Skills and the University please confirm that all the refurbishment works for Clare Lodge have been funded by this grant and that there was no cost to Peterborough City Council?

The Cabinet Member response:

The Department for Education is investing in Children’s homes and secure children’s homes in all nine regions of England. Clare Lodge submitted a bid in 2021 and was successful in securing £1,223,650 of grant funding from the Department for Education. This is for spend during 2021/22 and 22/23 budget years.

The monies have shown as a virement to Clare Lodge. It is important to confirm that this is simply the grant monies passing from the Department to Education into the Council and then onto the budget line for Clare Lodge. There is no cost to Peterborough City Council.

These grants enable Clare Lodge to improve the Home for the young people who live there and maintain its position as a secure home, licenced by Ofsted. In being successful in the grant funding applications the funding ensure there is no cost to the Council for as they are covered in totality by the grant from the Department for Education.

The grant funding is to cover seven improvement projects at Clare Lodge, these are:

- **£250,736** - Installations to update and improve the Audio Visual & security systems.
- **£257,919** Outside Area Improvements – Supply and install digital screening to fences, replace resin paths, replace warn rubber crumb Introducing LED lighting to support Safety, Security & Wellbeing
- **£243,163** Fire Alarm System – Replacing Smoke Detectors & Emergency Lighting throughout the building
- **£114,790** Replace young people’s bedroom blinds and polycarbonate windows & privacy panel. Repair and paint render to enhance outside areas.
- **£127,458** Replace electrical switching panels (lights, TV, blinds) for resident’s bedrooms to improve Health and Safety to residents with lower voltage switches.

- **£84,300** Feasibility to review use of rooms / car lock layout to support young people living and schooling at Clare Lodge & arriving stressed/distressed. This will inform for future potential bids.
- **£145,284** Replace all fitness suite Equipment and update power supplies as per requirements for the new equipment.

	<p><u>Questions on notice to:</u></p> <p>d. The Combined Authority Representatives</p>
1.	<p>Question from Councillor Sandford</p> <p>Councillor Fitzgerald, Combined Authority Board Representative</p> <p>We understand that the Mayor and the Combined Authority are in the process of developing a new Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. Could our rep on the Combined Authority Board tell me what is being done to involve Peterborough councillors and residents in this process at an early stage, bearing in mind that Peterborough is by far the largest city in the Combined Authority area.</p> <p>The Combined Authority Board Representative responded:</p> <p>It is very opportune that Councillor Sandford has asked this question tonight. As this very subject was included in a Board meeting that I attended today and have been up since a quarter past eight this morning attending in Cambridge and I will share this paper with Councillor Sandford, which was publicly available on the website of the Combined Authority, which is titled Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Local Transport and connectivity plan update.</p> <p>However, I will say to you I am working closely with the Combined Authority and with officers at this council to ensure that the new LTCP is right for Peterborough. I am in regular dialogue with key officers such as Charlotte Palmer on this and make sure it delivers for our city Councillor Sandford.</p> <p>This includes commitments in the plan for electric buses in Peterborough, something I have spoken often about, both in the Combined Authority and here in our Council meetings. We first have the problem of what we do with the city's bus station because it needs a massive infrastructure investment in order that we can move electric buses into the city and I know officers and the Combined Authority, particularly our Regeneration Team, are working on that as a solution. Plus the rail station quarter development, the Fletton Quays footbridge, build a bridge and they shall come, and other measures and policies that support our growth and our environmental commitments.</p> <p>In terms of wider Member engagement, we are inviting a representative from the Combined Authority to attend March's Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee where the plan is due to be discussed as it stands today. In addition, the Combined Authority have said that they are willing to attend other Member meetings too.</p> <p>An initial public consultation has taken place, as you will know and I have to say a very poor response from Peterborough, so that has been noted. Plus, a second full public consultation is planned to start in and around May 2022, following the local elections. So I and the Combined Authority would encourage all Members and residents to look at the proposals and make any suggestions that they see fit.</p> <p>Councillor Sandford, if you would like to take this document. That Mr Mayor will give</p>

Councillor Sandford and other Members if they want to check the Combined Authority website, the latest picture on where we are with the question on the LCTP.

Supplementary question:

I will certainly read it myself, but I don't really have the capacity to show the document to the entire population of Peterborough. I think one of the things that gives me concern is that you know there has thus far been no discussion within Peterborough City Council about the Transport and Connectivity Plan where we know the Combined Authorities already carried out one consultation and it's not going on to the agenda for our Scrutiny Committee for a two month period. So, I'm really pleased that we're actually going to have some consultation and involvement, but wouldn't you agree with me that it's regrettable that our Scrutiny Committee and our Councillors couldn't have been involved at an earlier stage of the consultation.

The Cabinet Member responded:

I think Sanford that's unfair to say there has been no engagement. I've just said that actually it is on the March Scrutiny. What's taking the time is that this is quite a detailed and complex piece of work and Members of Combined Authority today expressed their frustration about how long it's actually taking to do this, and I would lay the blame at the Labour Mayor of the Combined Authority and his basically slowness in bring this together. But maybe quote to you what Charlotte Palmer says about the LCTP:

We have been well engaged by the CPC officers as part of this update. We have drafted the Peterborough section to update all the schemes we want to deliver. This is a mixture of growth schemes parkway enhancements. They'll have walking and cycling commitments, walking and cycling schemes including Fletton Keys footbridge, the regeneration areas including the station quarter, walking and cycling schemes and indeed electric buses. In terms of delaying and extending the main consultation, we are supportive of this as it will allow for more wider Member engagement including Scrutiny in March, and the next Climate Change Working Group that CPC officers have said they are happy to attend. This is probably needed given the low number of responses from the Peterborough area in the first consultation.

So, Councillor Sandford, yes you can share it with all, the Council here and our comms team will do their very best to promote this and there is a comms team at the CPA. You can share through social media, you can say through any other number of outlets. So, I would suggest all Members, if I have an interest in transport and I know you do Councillor Sandford particularly, that that's what they do. There is time to do this, and it will be beyond the local elections now because it won't be completed before purdah kicks in. So over all to say that we've not been engaged is not entirely true but perhaps Member engagement could have happened a little quicker.