

**MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD  
29 JANUARY 2014**

**The Mayor – Councillor June Stokes**

**Present:**

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

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allen, McKean, Lane and Walsh.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Miners declared a pecuniary interest in item 10a 'petitions to be debated', following on from the petition presented at the Council meeting on 4 December 2013 relating to the children's centres, in that his partner worked for one of the service providers and would be affected by the new proposed delivery of the service.

Councillor Judy Fox and Councillor John Fox declared an interest in item 10a 'petitions to be debated', in that they sat on the Advisory Board for the Welbourne Play Centre.

Councillor Ash declared an interest in item 13a 'Council Tax Support Scheme 2014/15' in that he was a member of the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) Trustee Board.

Councillor Casey declared an interest in item 10a 'petitions to be debated', in that he sat on the Advisory Board for the Orton play centre, and that he was a governor at Brewster Avenue School.

A number of Members stated that they too may have interests in item 10a 'petitions to be debated' and the Legal Officer advised that advice would be given prior to the item being debated.

Councillor Murphy stated that his Council record of interests still included him as being the Company Secretary for Gladstone Connect, which operated a children's centre. This was no longer the case and he would update his interests accordingly.

**3. Minutes of the Meetings Held on 4 December 2013**

The minutes of the meetings held on 4 December 2013 were agreed as a true and accurate record subject to the following amendment:

- Councillors Ash, Fletcher, Miners and Saltmarsh not being present at the extraordinary meeting.

#### **4. Mayor's Announcement Report**

Members noted the report outlining the Mayor's engagements for the period commencing 2 December 2013 to 26 January 2014.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Saltmarsh for her generous donation to the Mayor's charities of the £580 raised at Mr Norman Saltmarsh's funeral and in response, Councillor Saltmarsh addressed Council and thanked all Councillors for their messages of support, attendance at the funeral and generous donations. Councillor Saltmarsh further thanked the Mayor, the Chief Executive, Councillor Miners and Councillor Ash for all their support over such a difficult time.

The Mayor further mentioned Sporting Saturday, which had raised over £1000 for the Mayor's charities. Gratitude was expressed to members of the charity committee and special thanks went to Councillor Chris Harper for acting as the master of ceremonies for the day.

#### **5. Leader's Announcements**

Councillor Cereste addressed Council and stated that the recently published 'Centre for Cities' report contained good news in relation to Peterborough.

The report highlighted that the city was the fastest growing in the country and was fifth out of the top ten cities with the highest housing stock growth and second in relation to cities with the highest private sector employment growth, with 3500 new jobs being created over the last 12 months.

All of the senior school rebuilds had now been completed, and the investments made were being reflected in the educational results. A total of 5000 new primary school places had been created, with 3200 still to deliver. The Skills Centre was being built at the current time and the city was now a 'gigabit city', with 100mb of broadband available to all businesses and households. The Public Realm works had been completed to a point, with the new works due to start, linking the £45m investment in the railway quarter directly to the city centre. The University Technical College (UTC) was also making a big difference to the children of the city and already 4000 students in city were undertaking university degrees.

Councillor Cereste concluded that difficult economic times were faced, however the city needed to continue to grow, particularly in relation to employment.

Councillor Khan stated that any good news for the city was welcome. In relation to the investments made in education, it was hoped that the borrowed funds would be paid back and that the positive education achievements would continue in the future, as improved education attainment was the way forward.

Councillor Harrington welcomed the good news for the city and stated that this had not been achieved solely by the work of the Council, but also by people's initiative and resolve. Going forward, the Council needed to focus on offering support to those people coming into the city, and offer support for new initiatives and investments.

Councillor Sandford welcomed the economic growth being achieved, along with the increases in employment, and queried what could be done to ensure that the employment generated was high quality employment, highly skilled and reasonably well paid and also what could be done to ensure that the economic growth achieved was environmentally sustainable?

The Leader responded to the points raised and stated that all people coming into the city were fully supported, hence Peterborough being one of the fastest growing cities in

the country. In relation to attracting new businesses and high value jobs, a mix of work was needed within the city, with lesser skilled jobs as well as higher skilled jobs in order to decrease unemployment figures, furthermore, wherever possible the most environmentally friendly jobs were attracted.

## **6. Chief Executive's Announcements**

There were no announcements from the Chief Executive.

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TIME**

### **7. Questions with Notice by Members of the Public**

There had been one question received from a member of the public, this was in relation to:

1. Peterborough's ranking in the schools performance league tables.

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

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

1. Flooding outside the Tesco Express Garage Shop in Werrington;
2. The state of the footpath along Ennerdale Rise;
3. Pedestrian improvements in the area of Foxcovert Road;
4. The Parking Enforcement Programme; and
5. Regeneration of the Werrington Centre.

A summary of all questions and answers raised within agenda items 7 and 8 are attached at **APPENDIX A** to these minutes.

### **9. Questions with Notice by Members of the Council to representatives of the Fire Authority and Police and Crime Panel**

There were no questions received.

### **10. Petitions**

#### **(a) Petitions to be Debated**

The Legal Officer provided clarification around declaring interests on the matter under consideration. It was advised that Members were appointed to Advisory Boards in a non-fee earning capacity, therefore these appointments were non-disclosable pecuniary interests, however there may be an issue in relation to predetermination, in which case Members would be able to speak but not vote on any decisions.

The Council had been asked to debate a petition on the Children's Centres, presented at the meeting held on 4 December 2013 and containing in excess of 500 signatures.

The Mayor advised that a copy of the petition entitled 'Save Peterborough's Children's Centres' was available to view, along with the recommendations already made by the Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee. Members were reminded that the purpose of the debate was to move recommendations to Cabinet to consider when they made their decision on the matter.

Councillor Murphy was invited to read out a statement on behalf of the lead petitioner, Mrs Emma Majewicz which provided an overview of her personal circumstances and detailed the support she, and others, had received from the Westwood and Ravensthorpe Children's Centre. It was highlighted that the local communities needed the Children's Centres and feedback from the public consultation had demonstrated that a high number of people were against redesignation.

Members debated the petition and in summary raised points including:

- The ringfenced Government funding available for free childcare, which would total more than £10m in the current year in Peterborough;
- Funding for Children's Centre Services was no longer ringfenced;
- The consultation had been extensive and a number of meetings had taken place with mothers;
- The children's centres gave mothers the opportunity to attend a number of various sessions;
- Doing nothing was not an option due to the financial challenges that were faced, and safeguarding children had to continue to be the priority;
- The proposals would continue to focus services on the children most in need but would make sure that there was support from social care and health for all mothers and children in the city;
- The Council would receive £44m less in grant funding, therefore the financial challenges faced in coming years were great;
- The Cabinet paper highlighted positive discussions with a private childcare provider with a view to them taking over the childcare centre in Hampton;
- The proposals would not have the best long term outcomes for the children of the city;
- Support was not just needed for deprived people, but also for those with no families in the area;
- The Equality Impact Assessment recognised the short comings of the proposals and had not been included within the Scrutiny papers;
- The £100k made available in order to support some activities was not considered to be enough, and would the money be made available year on year?
- The decision made in 2012 in relation to the children's centres was supposed to secure the future of the children's centres in the city;
- The Childcare Acts 2006 and 2009 imposed duties on Local Authorities to improve the wellbeing of young children in their area, reduce inequality and to make arrangements to ensure early childhood services were provided;
- Parents needed professional support, not just emotional support from families. The Council should do all it could to support individuals;
- The children's centres had proven their worth since they had opened and they should remain open until no other alternatives were available;
- Efficiencies needed to be saved from elsewhere and this could be achieved. The financials needed to be further explored;
- Closing the children's centres would cost the Council more, e.g. with redundancy payments;
- There was extra money coming into the Council for health visitors and they would need premises to operate from. If the children's centres were not utilised, then more money would end up being spent health centres;
- Officers had worked hard and listened to the consultation and the proposals addressed most of the issues raised;
- Services which played a vital role in nurturing children should not be cut;
- Efficiency savings and raising revenue from the centres could be further explored;
- The reason for the cuts was to protect the most vulnerable with the resources

available;

- Not all wards had access to children's centres and the new proposal would bring an improvement in access to these wards, reaching out to those more in need;
- Having the support of children's centres was a good thing for mothers; and
- In order to mitigate some of the impact on communities where there would not be a children's centres, Cabinet would be requested to deduct £100k from the proposed savings to support a number of areas, including maintaining health visitors and maternity clinics, support to schools and childcare providers and support to parents who were interested in running centres themselves.

During debate, a recommendation was proposed by Councillor Shearman that:

'Cabinet defer any decision making on the proposals to close children's centres until further alternatives and proposals have been thoroughly explored, considered and consulted on'.

This recommendation was seconded by Councillor Saltmarsh.

A recorded vote was requested and agreed. Members voted as follows:

**Councillors For:** Ash, Davidson, Fletcher, Forbes, Fower, JR Fox, JA Fox, Harrington, Jamil, Johnson, Khan, Knowles, Martin, Murphy, Saltmarsh, Sandford, Shabbir, Shaheed, Sharp, Shearman, Swift, Sylvester and Thulbourn.

**Councillors Against:** None.

**Councillors Abstaining:** Arculus, Casey, Cereste, Dalton, Day, Eley, Fitzgerald, Goodwin, Harper, Hiller, Holdich, Kreling, Lamb, Lee, Maqbool, Nadeem, Nawaz, North, Over, Peach, Rush, Sanders, Scott, Seaton, Serluca, Simons, Stokes, Thacker and Todd.

Following the vote (23 For, 0 Against and 29 Abstentions) the recommendation was **AGREED** and would be carried forward to Cabinet.

#### **(b) Submitted by Members or Residents**

Councillor Miners submitted a petition from residents of Bradgate Drive and Clifton Court requesting that the poor level of street light in some parts of the area, which had been made worse by the fitting of the new LED lighting, was reassessed for improvements.

Councillor Khan submitted a petition signed by residents of Allen Road referring to traffic problems in the area.

Mrs Margaret Randall submitted a petition signed by approximately 800 residents on behalf of landlords, tenants and residents, of Gladstone Street, the Gladstone Area, Millfield, New England and Eastfield and other areas, to stop the proposal of Selective Licensing on landlords.

The Mayor advised that as the petition on Selective Licensing contained over 500 signatures, the Director of Governance would contact the petitioner in order to ascertain how they would like the petition to be considered going forward.

## EXECUTIVE BUSINESS TIME

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

Questions to the Leader and Members of the Executive were raised, with all of the questions being taken as read, in respect of the following:

1. Keeping the Broadway Theatre open;
2. Attendance at Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee by the co-opted members;
3. The recent numbers of elderly patients admitted to hospital;
4. Possible financial assistance for the Beer Festival;
5. Potential fracking sites; and
6. A grant payment for the 'One Community Plan' for Gladstone Connect.

Due to the time limit for the item being reached, the questions relating to the following topics were to be responded to in writing outside of the meeting:

7. Cessation of usage of the CCTV Enforcement Vehicle;
8. The introduction of a by-law aimed at tackling people spitting in the street;
9. The cost of the Bedroom Tax in relation to public transport costs;
10. Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) funding;
11. The proposed increase in library users and attendance at theatre performances, as proposed with the 'Creating the UK's Environment Capital Action Plan';
12. The success of the recent 'Heathborough' initiative; and
13. Attracting further inward investment into Peterborough from companies based in other EU countries.

A summary of all questions and answers raised within agenda item 11 is attached at **APPENDIX B** to these minutes.

### 12. Questions without Notice on the Record of Executive Decisions

Members received and noted a report summarising:

1. Decisions taken at the Cabinet Meetings held on 16 December 2013 and 20 January 2014;
2. Use of the Council's call-in mechanism, which had been invoked once in respect of the decision taken by Cabinet on 18 November 2013 relating to 'Early Years Services Including Children's Centres'. The call-in request was considered by the Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee on 3 December 2013, and following discussion and questions raised on the reasons stated for the call-in, the Committee did not agree to the call-in of the decision.
3. Special Urgency and Waiver of Call-in provision, which had not been invoked since the previous meeting; and
4. Cabinet Member Decisions taken during the period 27 November 2013 to 10 January 2014.

**Questions were asked about the following:**

#### Environment Capital Action Plan

Councillor Sandford queried how the Council's current proposal to charge people for disposing of their brown bin garden waste would contribute to achieving a 100% reduction in household waste to be reused, recycled or recovered? Councillor North advised that the 'option to charge for brown bin removal' would save £804k. For those individuals that do use their bins, for under £25, there were a selection of compost bins which could be purchased.

Councillor Sandford further queried whether the proposal would mean that only 30% of households would continue to use the brown bin, as had been stated at the recent budget briefing, and would this not mean a detrimental impact on the ability to achieve targets within the Plan, along with others to do with public transport and cycling. Councillor North stated that the 30% was a best estimate figure from similar council's as to the percentage of brown bins still in use. Some bins could be shared by neighbours and others will no longer need the bins. In terms of cycling and public transport there were a number of initiatives in place.

Councillor Murphy sought clarification as to whether this was the first time the Council had produced a Plan and how long before achievements were realised? Councillor North advised that there had been previous documents, however these were not static documents and were forever changing and moving forward, subject to the funds available and the situations faced at the time and how to best achieve becoming an environment capital.

#### Transformation of Person Centred Activities for Younger Adults in Peterborough

Councillor Thulbourn sought clarification as to why a number of families of severely handicapped individuals had not been informed of the consultation and further highlighted that a number of the consultation events had become extremely heated, with some individuals even being injured. Councillor Fitzgerald responded stating that he had been assured that every individual, either through their advocate or carer had been contacted, therefore could Councillor Thulbourn provide a list of the names of those individuals he believed had not been contacted and this would be investigated.

Councillor Fitzgerald further advised that he was aware of some of the consultative events becoming quite heated, however if there were specific allegations of people coming to harm, would Councillor Thulbourn advise him and he would ensure that this too was investigated by officers.

Councillor Sylvester expressed concerns that people with profound and multiple disabilities would not manage the kind of transformation that was envisaged. Once the centres were closed and staff redeployed, who would care for those individuals and where? Councillor Fitzgerald advised that the changes would not be suitable for everybody and it was not expected that those individuals with profound disabilities would be affected. Those individuals would certainly not be left with anywhere to go.

Councillor Sylvester stated that it had not been categorically stated as to what would happen to those individuals when the day centres closed in March 2014. Councillor Fitzgerald stated that each person would be individually assessed, as they were at the current time and those individuals would be given options and choices by social workers. If Councillor Sylvester had any concerns around individuals, then discussions needed to be undertaken with social workers.

Councillor Murphy sought clarification as to the position concerning the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust. When, where and how would the profoundly disabled people be assisted and could further clarification be provided as to why CPFT were no longer involved? Councillor Fitzgerald advised that the process had been complex, but ultimately it had been discovered that around 40 individuals involved at the Gloucester Centre, which was operated by the CPFT, had in effect been double funded by the Council, with money being paid directly to the Gloucester Centre and to the individuals by way of care packages. This could not continue and it was highlighted that even if the individuals wished to spend their personal budgets at the Gloucester Centre, this would not be enough to keep the facility running. The CPFT had therefore given notice that that was not sustainable and they would have to withdraw that service.

### Terms of Reference for Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Transport Body

Councillor Sandford queried what steps were being taken to ensure that the 'grouping' prioritised environmentally sustainable forms of transport in accordance with the policies in the Peterborough Local Transport Plan and also what steps were being taken to ensure Peterborough received a fair share of the resources being put forward by the Local Transport Body? Councillor Cereste responded that the environment was put as a high regard for everything that the council undertook and serious consideration would be given to the environmental impact of everything that was undertaken. Assurance was also given that Peterborough would receive its fair share of the resources.

### Award of Contract for the Construction of an Extension, Refurbishment and Remodelling to Accommodate the Expansion of Ravensthorpe Primary School

Councillor Murphy queried whether adequate facilities had been provided in the plan for children to receive school meals and was the kitchen big enough, following the introduction of free school meals for the youngest children, or would they have to have dinner in shifts? Councillor Holdich advised that he was not aware of the size of the kitchen but he had attended the consultation meeting with the staff and governors who had expressed their satisfaction at the plans submitted.

### Joint Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) Procurement for the Recycling in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (RECAP) Partnership

Councillor Lee queried whether the new MRF was one facility for the whole of Cambridgeshire or whether it was one of a number of facilities, and was the intention to build the facility in the city? Councillor Elsey advised that the final proposals were still being worked through so a definitive answer could not be given at the current time, however due to the changes in revenue for recyclates the market place dictated that larger bulk was needed in order to get the best results, therefore an agreement had been entered into in order to establish a process whereby the recyclates were grouped with the RECAP members and the financial benefits to the city would be increased accordingly.

### A1139 Fletton Parkway Junction 17 A1(M) – Junction 2 Widening Scheme – Appointment of Construction Contractor

Councillor Fower sought clarification as to how much, if any, of the money attributed to the work had come from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)? Councillor Cereste stated that it was a considerable amount, alongside a large Government grant. Further details would be provided to Councillor Fower in writing.

Councillor North sought clarification as to why the widening scheme was required, and whether it was necessary for a growing vibrant city, growing in jobs and homes for its people? Councillor Cereste stated that it was because of all of those reasons.

### Contract Award for the Provision of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Services

Councillor Shaheed sought clarification as to how the figures had been calculated and whether it had been based on the costs for the previous three years? Councillor Cereste advised that Councillor Walsh was not in attendance to respond to the query, and an answer would be provided in writing.

### Closure of Matley Primary School, Academy Transfer Agreement and Lease of Premises

Councillor Khan queried in relation to the 125 lease to Ormiston Academy, whether this was the only Academy negotiated with or had a tender process taken place? Councillor Holdich advised that the Governors had a choice of who they wished to go with.



### Award of Personal Care and Support Services Contracts

Councillor Khan sought assurance that the contract had been awarded in the proper manner as it was believed that there had been some inaccuracies, either in the process or in marking, and that the decision had been taken without due care. Councillor Fitzgerald advised of the process that had been followed and stated that, following concerns raised, an independent investigation had been undertaken by an officer and ultimately, some individuals had not reached the threshold of passing, even with individual help.

Councillor Khan further expressed concern that following issues raised, re-numbering had taken place, which had resulted in a change in scoring. Councillor Fitzgerald advised that people had had the chance to re-present. The scoring had changed slightly, but not significantly. Following re-scoring, individuals had still not reached the threshold.

## **13. Executive Recommendations**

### **(a) Council Tax Support Scheme 2014/15**

Cabinet at its meeting of 20 January 2014 received a report, following the consultation on the proposals made at the Cabinet meeting held on 16 December 2013. The report made a recommendation to Council on the Council Tax Support Scheme to be implemented in Peterborough and also sought Cabinet's approval to adopt the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) good practice protocol for council tax collection.

Councillor Seaton introduced the report and moved the recommendation that Council agree that the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2014/15 should be the same as for the current year, keeping the reduction in benefit for working age claimants at 30%. Councillor Seaton further highlighted that due to the council being given less funding for council tax support, the estimated funding gap was around £2.4m across Peterborough. It was therefore a choice of implementing a local scheme to meet the shortfall or cuts were to be made in services elsewhere.

For 2013/14, the Council had implemented a scheme which reduced benefit by 30%, with pensioners not being affected by the change. The impact of the scheme had been closely monitored and reviewed, with any recovery measures being carefully considered and proportionate. The impact on households had also been monitored and this would continue going forward, especially in light of wider changes to welfare benefits.

A number of organisations had been written to, as part of the consultation, who regularly came into contact with affected households to seek their views. Subsequently a response had been received from the Citizen's Advice Bureau, which highlighted the 'Good Practice Protocol on Council Tax Recovery', which had been drawn up with the Local Government Association. The protocol covered many areas of practice followed by the Council, and Cabinet approved its adoption.

In summarised, Councillor Seaton stated that financial challenges faced by the Council remained the same, and it would not be possible to make reductions in funding elsewhere. It was therefore recommended that the existing scheme continue. This was seconded by Councillor Cereste, who reserved his right to speak.

Members debated the recommendation and in summary raised points including:

- There were concerns around the burden which had been put on to low income families;

- Around 5000 people had been to the Peterborough Magistrates Court because they had not paid or could not pay. Had the burden of payments increased for these people due to having to go to court?
- It was difficult to accept the recommendation and more work had to be done around the impact that the scheme was having;
- Concern was expressed around the process of consultation, it would have been appropriate for all Councillors to have been involved;
- 45% of those summoned to court were in receipt of council tax support;
- Out of the 5266 summons CTS, how many of the households were due to pay council tax for the first time?
- Had consideration been given as to why reminders were being ignored, for example could it be down to language barriers?
- Had the idea of the adoption of the CAB protocol been dropped?
- It was a difficult situation, however this was the first year of the scheme and on future occasions it would be beneficial for more information to be provided in order to adequately review the impacts;
- The scheme needed to continue for the forthcoming year; and
- An alternative scheme would need to be identified should the current scheme be voted against.

Councillor Cereste exercised his right to speak and advised that if the scheme was not implemented, it would mean a 6% increase in council tax.

Councillor Seaton summed up as mover of the recommendation, and responded to issues raised by Members. It was advised that a response to the question raised in relation to how many of the 5266 summons were paying council tax for the first time would be provided in writing. In relation as to why people had not responded to reminders, it was advised that numerous letters had been sent out and individuals had also been texted where mobile numbers were available, this had led to an increase in the numbers of people coming to the Council and attending court and lastly, the CAB protocol had been adopted, and work had also been undertaken closely with CAB to ensure they were kept advised of relevant issues.

Council was asked to agree the recommendation, as it would not be possible to subsidise funding for council tax support without having a far greater impact on services elsewhere.

A vote was taken (38 for, 11 against, 2 abstentions) and it was **RESOLVED** that:

Council agree that the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2014/15 should be the same as for the current year, keeping the reduction in benefit for working age claimants at 30%.

## **COUNCIL BUSINESS TIME**

### **14. Reports and Recommendations**

#### **a) Governance Issues - Variation to Standing Orders**

Council received a report requesting that a number of Standing Orders be varied and adopted and that the Constitution Working Group consider those revisions made following six months of operation and report back to the Council as necessary.

The Mayor advised that the report had been presented at the previous meeting where debate on the recommendations had been postponed.

The Mayor further advised that subsequently, agreement had been reached by the

Group Leaders to defer the item to allow for further discussions to be held. The Mayor therefore moved that the item be deferred. This was seconded by Councillor Seaton.

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

Defer the item to allow for further discussions to be held.

The Mayor  
7.00pm – 9.55pm

This page is intentionally left blank