

PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD 8 APRIL 2009

The Mayor – Councillor Pat Nash

Present:

Councillors, Ash, Benton, C Burton, Cereste, Collins, Croft, M Dalton, S Dalton, C Day, S Day, Dobbs, Eley, Fazal, Fitzgerald, Fletcher, Fower, JA Fox, JR Fox, Goldspink, Goodwin, Harrington, Hiller, Holdich, Hussain, Khan, Kreling, Lamb, Lane, Lee, Lowndes, Miners, Morley, Murphy, Nawaz, North, Over, Peach, Rush, Saltmarsh, Sanders, Sandford, Scott, Seaton, Sharp, Swift, Thacker, Todd, Trueman, Walsh, Wilkinson and Winslade.

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Following prayers a minutes' silence was observed to remember those who had lost their lives in the Italian earthquake. The Mayor announced that an appeal had been launched by members of the local Italian community in order to help those who had been affected by the disaster and urged those present to give generously.

Councillor Cereste added that this matter was close to the hearts of the Italian community in Peterborough, and that it was doing all it could to provide support and assistance to people affected.

Councillor Swift proposed that the Council show its support by making a donation to the fund of £25,000.

The Solicitor to the Council advised Members that legal powers would need to be considered, and the Finance department consulted, before Cabinet could consider the matter. An informal show of hands reflected that the majority of members wished to look into pursuing Councillor Swift's suggestion (47 in favour, 4 abstentions).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allen, M Burton, D Day Gilbert, and Newton.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

- (i) Councillor Cereste declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 5 (b) as Deputy Chairman of EEDA;
- (ii) Councillor Collins declared an interest in agenda item 5 (c) as an employee of Cambridgeshire Constabulary;
- (iii) Councillor Lane declared an interest in agenda item 7 (a) as a member of the board of Cross Keys Homes.

3. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD 25 FEBRUARY 2009

The Minutes of the meeting held 25 February 2009 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as an accurate record.

4. COMMUNICATIONS TIME

4 (a) Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor's engagements for the period 16 February 2009 to 29 March 2009 were noted.

4 (b) Leader's Announcements

Tour of Wards – The Leader announced his intention to meet with representatives of all City Council wards prior to next year's budget setting process to discuss priorities for action within wards during the coming year;

LGC Awards - The Finance Department, having been highly commended in the national LGC awards had been sharing best practice with Thurrock Council in areas such as revenues and benefits services and asset management. The Leader expressed his thanks to the team for their excellent performance;

Corn Exchange – The Leader confirmed that negotiations were continuing with the final tenant of the Corn Exchange building. Officers were hopeful that an amicable agreement would be reached in order to enable the Council to meet its programme for demolition within timescale;

Tour Series Cycle Race – This event, due to be held in the city on 4 June 2009 would feature Olympic and World Championship cyclists and attract up to 10,000 spectators;

Ofsted Inspection – The Leader advised that a recent Ofsted inspection had resulted in four of Peterborough's primary schools receiving top grade ratings. Two secondary schools had been rated as 'outstanding'.

The following questions were raised by Group Leaders:

- (i) Councillor Swift raised concern with regard to the monies being spent on the redevelopment of Cathedral Square.
- (ii) Councillor Sandford asked whether the proposals for the redevelopment of the Cathedral Square area, particularly the water fountains, were finalised. He further enquired if monies spent within wards as a result of the Leader's tour would be in addition to Community Leadership Funding (CLF);
- (iii) Councillor Khan welcomed the Leader's intention to visit the Central Ward which he believed to have been neglected in past years.

In response, the Leader advised that the installation of water features in Cathedral Square were one element of the overall regeneration project and that consultation exercises had proven they would be a welcome addition. With regard to the query relating to ward visits, any extra funding would be in addition to CLF, however the exercise was intended to identify areas where savings could be made or where spending could be more effective.

4 (c) Chief Executive's Announcements

The Chief Executive informed those present that the position of Executive Director – Operations would be advertised shortly and an appointment was expected to be made during June. She added that she would be seeking

Members' views and input with regard to the content of her announcements for future meetings.

5. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TIME

5 (a) Questions with Notice by Members of the Public

A question was asked with regard to the closure of the Post Office/Shop in the village of Helpston.

5 (b) Questions with Notice by Members of the Council relating to Ward Matters and to Committee Chairmen

A question was asked in respect of the following:

- The current status in respect of retention of community facilities on the former John Mansfield School site.

5 (c) Questions with Notice by Members of the Council to representatives of the Police and Fire Authorities

A question was raised in respect of the following:

- Arrangements for insurance for members of the public participating in the speed-watch programme.

A summary of all questions and answers raised within agenda item 5 (a), (b) and (c) is attached at **Appendix A**.

5 (d) Petitions submitted by Members or Residents

The following petition was received:

- Petition against the proposed installation of a youth shelter at Fulbridge Road Recreation Ground.

6. EXECUTIVE BUSINESS TIME

6 (a) Questions with Notice to the Leader and Members of the Executive

Questions were asked of the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members in respect of the following:

- Progress with regard to the yearly 'spring clean' initiative and the volume of waste collected;
- The decision to cancel the contract providing electronic access to minutes, agendas, and reports and the alternative arrangements for provision of the same;
- Installation of retro-fitting identity chips in domestic refuse vehicles;
- Projects financed by funds from the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive scheme.

A summary of all questions and answers raised within agenda item 6 (a) is attached at **Appendix B**.

6 (b) Questions without Notice on the Record of Executive Decisions

Members received and noted a report summarising:

- The Council's call-in mechanism, which had not been invoked since the last meeting;
- Special Urgency and waive of call-in provisions in relation to the proposed acquisition of the Great Northern Hotel;
- Cabinet Member decisions taken during the period 16 February to 25 March 2009.

Questions were asked about the following decisions:

- **Proposed Acquisition of Great Northern Hotel**

Councillor Sandford queried the rationale behind the proposal to purchase the Great Northern Hotel at a time when reductions were being made to staffing levels and expressed concern with regard to the decision to invoke urgency procedures.

In response, the Leader advised that the hotel occupied a strategic site within the City and for sound business reasons, urgent action had been necessary. Budget restraints on allocation of funding meant that the purchase (had it gone ahead) would have had no impact on other areas such as staff resources.

7. COUNCIL BUSINESS TIME

7 (a) Executive Recommendations

- **Peterborough Housing Register and Allocations Policy**

Cabinet, at its meeting of 15 December 2008 had received a report on the proposed additions to the Peterborough Housing Register and Allocations Policy. Councillor Murphy moved the recommendation for adoption of the policy and this was seconded by Councillor Dalton.

Councillor Cereste drew Members' attention to paragraph 5.2 of the policy and queried whether the length of time an applicant had been on the waiting list had any relevance with regard to their priority. He expressed the view that this did not appear to be the case and raised concern in this regard.

Councillor Murphy advised that officers would be made aware of these concerns. He would clarify the current position and advise Councillor Cereste accordingly.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) to adopt the Peterborough Housing Register and Allocations Policy.

- **Cultural Strategy**

On the 19 February 2009, the Cabinet Member for Community Services had proposed the principles of a Cultural Strategy for Peterborough which incorporated a Cultural Vision, Heritage Strategy, Sports Strategy and Library Strategy. Councillor Lee moved the recommendation that the Cultural Strategy be adopted by Council and this was seconded by Councillor Over.

During discussion, the following points were noted:

- The absence within the Strategy of an 'open spaces' strategy
- Measures in place to protect lone workers in particular at libraries;
- The possibility of encouraging schools to open their outdoor facilities (i.e. football pitches) to the public;

A vote was taken (48 in favour, 3 against and 1 abstention) and it was **RESOLVED:**

- (i) To approve the Cultural Strategy for Peterborough.

- **Peterborough Children and Young People's Plan 2009**

Cabinet, at its meeting of 30 March 2009, considered the Peterborough Children and Young People's Plan 2009. Members noted that due to forthcoming changes in legislation, a 'light touch' review had been undertaken for 2009 pending new arrangements from 2011.

Councillor Goldspink moved the recommendation for adoption and this was seconded by Councillor Holdich.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- (i) to adopt the Peterborough Children and Young People's Plan 2009.

- **Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan**

Cabinet had considered the Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan at its meeting of 30 March 2009. Councillor Murphy moved the recommendation that Council adopt the Plan and this was seconded by Councillor Holdich.

Councillor Miners drew Members' attention to paragraph 2.4 of the Plan which related to Regeneration of existing neighbourhoods. He requested assurance that the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Economic Development would seek to ensure that progress was made with regard to the John Mansfield Centre.

Councillor Murphy referred to the response he had given to the question raised at agenda item 5 (b) in this regard.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- (i) to adopt the Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan.

7 (b) Committee Recommendations

There were no recommendations from Committees.

7 (c) Notices of Motion

- **Councillor Dalton moved the following Motion:**

That this Council:

1. Welcomes the proposals set out in the recent Conservative Party Green Paper on localism entitled 'Control Shift – Returning Power to Local Communities', including:
 - (i) Abolishing all regional planning and housing powers in the hands of regional government, returning powers and discretion to local authorities;
 - (ii) Creating 'bottom-up' incentives for house building by allowing Peterborough City Council to benefit from the increase in Council Tax revenues from new homes;
 - (iii) Allowing councils to establish their own local enterprise partnerships to take over the economic development functions and funding of the East of England Development Agency;
 - (iv) Giving a real incentive for councils to promote local economic growth, by allowing them to keep the uplift in business rate revenues from businesses growing in size;
 - (v) Granting Peterborough City Council a new discretionary power to give discounts on business rates, allowing the Council to help local shops and services, or even create new local enterprise zones, and

Further, that this Council:

- vi) Mandates the Leader of the Council to write to the Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition urging him to instigate the changes to national policy represented above as soon as practicable within the first term of a new Conservative Government.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Collins.

Following debate, a vote was taken and the Motion was **CARRIED** by 39 votes in favour, 8 against and 5 abstentions.

- **Councillor Fox moved the following Motion:**

That this Council:

1. Supports the upgrading of the disabled toilets in St. Peter's Arcade to a suitable standard that complies with the objectives of the Changing Places Consortium (which works to support the rights of people with profound learning disabilities to access their communities);
2. Requests the appropriate Cabinet Member to investigate the availability of funding to implement the above works to save parents with severely

disabled children or young adults the humiliating task of changing their sons or daughters on the floor of a toilet.

Councillor Fox addressed the meeting and advised that he wished to withdraw this Motion as he had subsequently been advised that the matter was to be resolved. He thanked Councillor Lamb and Councillor Thacker for their support and assistance in this regard.

- **Councillor Fower moved the following Motion:**

That this Council:

1. Requests that the Leader of the Council write to both the Government and all councils across the country, demanding action for legislation to make St. George's Day a bank holiday, thus enabling people the opportunity to take pride in the country's heritage and history.

This was seconded by Councillor Trueman.

Councillor Peach moved an amendment to the Motion as follows:

Delete the wording of the Motion and replace with the following:

That this Council:

1. *Requests that the Leader of the Council write to the Government requesting action for legislation to make St. George's Day a bank holiday, in place of the May Day Bank Holiday, thus enabling people the opportunity to take pride in the country's heritage and history.*

This proposal was seconded by Councillor Lamb.

A debate on the proposals followed. A vote was taken on the amendment which was **CARRIED** by 35 votes for, 11 against, 6 abstentions.

- **Councillor Sandford moved the following Motion:**

That this Council:

1. Notes that on Monday 30 March 2009 the Department of Communities and Local Government announced a consultation on proposals to amend the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2003) so as to require all local authorities to disclose full details of the remuneration paid to senior members of staff, including temporary senior appointments and covering salary, bonuses, pensions, perks and compensation pay-offs;
2. Fully supports this Government initiative and acknowledges that there is now no longer any legitimate excuse for the Cabinet to refuse to disclose the remuneration paid to any senior officer of this Council on whatever contractual basis they are engaged; and
3. Demands that the Cabinet disclose in full, the remuneration paid to the Deputy Chief Executive and calls upon the Leader of the Council to make an immediate statement supplying the required information.

Councillor Sandford informed Members that, subject to a satisfactory response from the Leader with regard to a previous request to release details of the remuneration paid to the Deputy Chief Executive, he would withdraw the Motion.

The Deputy Leader of the Council addressed the meeting and advised that the Deputy Chief Executive had authorised him to reveal details of his remuneration, which fell between the remuneration levels of the Chief Executive and other Directors at a figure of £145,000.

The Motion was duly withdrawn.

7 (d) Reports and Recommendations

Proposed Calendar of Meetings for 2009/10 and Draft Calendar for 2010/11

Members considered a report outlining proposals to combine Mayor Making and the Annual Council Meeting for 2009 and 2010 and noted the proposed calendar of meetings for the forthcoming municipal year and proposed dates for the following year. Councillor Peach moved the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Lee.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) To agree that Mayor Making and the Annual Meeting of Council be combined for the municipal years 2009/10 and 2010/11. Both meetings, which would be held on Monday 18 May 2009 and Monday 17 May 2010 respectively; would commence at 6.30 p.m.; and
- (ii) To adopt the calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2009/10 and approve, in principle, the draft calendar for the municipal year 2010/11.

Meeting closed at 9.50 p.m.

SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS RAISED UNDER AGENDA ITEM 5 – COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TIME

1. Questions with Notice by Members of the Public

(i) Mrs Claire Spooner, a resident of Helpston, asked the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Economic Development:

The local shop and post office in Helpston has recently closed and is awaiting resale. This has left families isolated and elderly residents vulnerable. The Council's Rural Vision and Strategy states the Council's priorities in supporting services for rural communities and local businesses. Would the City Council consider purchasing the business as a potential asset and community-run service as has happened in other forward focussing and proactive Councils like Essex County Council?

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Economic Development responded:

We remain interested in the approach taken by Essex County Council, but the model has not yet been fully tested. Of the 15 post office closures in Essex, only 2 have been purchased by the County Council with resources far greater than those available to Peterborough. There also remains in Essex a series of complex and difficult issues relating to, for example, State Aid, location issues, and costings.

We also need to determine whether or not the full Post Office closure programme is concluded before making any decisions of this kind. It is therefore not viable for the Council to purchase buildings such as this at this time. Instead we are carefully and rapidly reviewing our approach to supporting economic development in Peterborough in these challenging times to ensure the risks and impacts of the economic downturn are mitigated.

On a more general note, the Council is indeed committed to supporting all of our citizens and communities, and we are in the process of implementing a Neighbourhood Management model which will ensure appropriate service delivery for all parts of Peterborough.

A supplementary question was asked as follows:

What financial support will the Council offer to residents who, if left with no other option, try to buy the shop and post office as a village asset?

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Economic Development responded:

The Council does not have the resources to provide assistance, but will consider ways in which it might support the community should other suggestions come forward.

2. Questions with Notice by Members of the Council relating to Ward Matters and to Committee Chairmen

(i) Councillor Miners asked the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Economic Development:

In light of the recent decision by EEDA not to release the £1.3m it had earlier approved to support the John Mansfield Centre:

- Why, almost two years after Cabinet resolved to support the retention of community facilities on the former school site, are we still unable to confirm that the facilities will be retained?
- Would the Cabinet Member agree that the only viable solution, based on the high level of community and political support for this project, is for the Council to underwrite the costs needed to see this project through to completion?
- What will the Council do in future to ensure that projects such as this are delivered effectively in order to benefit residents who are most in need?

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Economic Development responded:

The Council remains supportive, subject to receiving appropriate funding, of this important development. The Council has already identified a significant sum of money for reinvestment in this project following closure of the John Mansfield School, and we have sought to match that commitment with funding from the East of England Development Agency. If the funding application to EEDA is ultimately unsuccessful, the Council will be unable to invest any other funding into this project.

Councillor Miners raised the following supplementary question:

Given the importance of the John Mansfield Centre, both locally and city-wide, what support can the Council give to 'Innova' and campaigns to prevent bodies such as EEDA having the power to take local decisions that could potentially destroy local communities and community well-being. Could the Cabinet Member explain how it is possible for the Council to bid for projects such as the acquisition of the Great Northern Hotel, yet state that it is not possible to rescue the John Mansfield Centre?

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Economic Development responded:

Funding for initiatives such as the proposed acquisition of the Great Northern Hotel comes from a completely different funding stream. The Council has match funded the John Mansfield Centre project and there is no funding to further resource this. However, I would be happy to work with anyone who could help to raise funds from other sources.

3. **Questions from Members to Representatives of the Police / Fire Authorities**

Having previously declared an interest in this item, Councillor Collins left the Chamber.

(i) **Councillor Fox asked the Council's Representative on the Police Authority:**

Could the Council's representative of the Police Authority please inform the Council if those members of the public who participate in the 'speed-watch' programme are fully insured for public liability when carrying out their duties on behalf of Cambridgeshire Constabulary? If these individuals are expected to have their own insurance, is this explained to them before they commence their duties and if so, what checks are carried out to ensure that they have the relevant insurance to cover public liability?

Councillor Sanders responded:

During the pilot of the Speedwatch scheme all liabilities and equipment were insured under the Constabulary's policies. However, since the completion of the pilot stage and now the scheme is run by volunteers without a Police presence, this is no longer the case.

Speedwatch is a multi-agency partnership operation, not a police operation, although the police are the lead agency, own the equipment and have carried out relevant risk assessment and training of the volunteers.

In terms of legal liabilities incurred in the running of the scheme, if a claim is made against the Chief Constable in respect of property damage or injury (caused by or sustained by the volunteers), the Constabulary's public liability policy would respond. This would cover the cost of defending such a claim, or paying the claim if it is considered the Police are liable.

The cars used by the volunteers are their own, they are not Police fleet vehicle or vehicles hired by the Police. Therefore the Police will not insure these vehicles and each volunteer will need to speak to their own private insurer to confirm that this activity is acceptable to them and noted. All volunteers are made aware of and are required to sign the Operational plan which clearly states;

Cambridgeshire Constabulary, and the other Agencies which comprise the Neighbourhood Panel, take no responsibility or carry any insurance for Speedwatch Team members or their property (including vehicles). It may be advisable for Team members to verify that their participation in Speedwatch Operations does not contravene their personal, property or vehicle insurance. The signing of the Operational plan acts as confirmation from the volunteer that they have the necessary insurance cover.

The advice from the Force Insurance Manager is that it would be prudent for each individual to approach their own private insurer to confirm the activity is acceptable to them, and that the personal liability section of the policy will cover them for this. They are not required to purchase any additional insurance, just to check that their existing policies cover them.

**SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS RAISED UNDER AGENDA ITEM
6 (a) - COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TIME**

1. Questions with Notice from Members to the Leader and Members of the Executive

(i) Councillor Sue Day asked the Leader of the Council:

‘Now that the regular yearly spring clean is well underway, could the Leader tell me how it is progressing and what volume of waste has been collected so far in comparison with previous years? Has the extra money invested by the Council over the past few years for improved frequency of street cleaning made a difference to the public perception of how tidy Peterborough is?’

The Leader responded:

The Spring Clean is now in its third year and has been integrated into the ‘My Street’ campaign which increased the frequency of street cleansing across the city. This improved cleansing regime has significantly reduced the litter and fly-tipped waste across the city. This is exemplified by the fact that in the first week of the Spring Clean last year Street Cleansing crews removed 16.6 tonnes of waste material whereas this year the figure was 8.4 tonnes, almost half of the previous levels of rubbish. I had the pleasure of working with the Street Cleansing crews in the Paston area during the first week of the clean-up and was both pleased by the general improvements I noticed in levels of litter, but also surprised by a number of items that were found that had been dumped and left for the Council to clear away. As Members will know, the Council offers a free bulky waste collection to each household every year and has its Household Waste Recycling Centre at Dogsthorpe to assist residents in disposing of any unwanted items. Surveys undertaken by the Council and in particular those on the bulky waste collection forms which allow residents to comment on a range of environmental services do show that Council tax payers recognise the improvements to the cleansing of their neighbourhoods. We cannot rest on these improvements and will continue to raise the environmental standards of our city and also continue to reinforce the message that litter is not a naturally occurring phenomenon and that residents can help play their part by taking their waste home and disposing of it or recycling it properly.

(ii) Councillor Fower asked the Cabinet Member for Customer Focus and Communications:

A Freedom of Information disclosure shows that this Council was invoiced £4,320 (excluding VAT) per annum for the services of www.minutes.org.uk each year, a contract that was introduced in 2002. A decision has now been sanctioned to cancel this contract. Could the Cabinet Member tell me why this money was spent on a service that was not used by all Council departments and was not overly well publicised? What alternative service can we look forward to being introduced in order to ensure that members of the public have on-line access to minutes, agendas, motions and reports?

The Cabinet Member for Customer Focus and Communications responded:

We entered into a contract for the minute retrieval service 7 years ago when web technology was still in its infancy. Since then, there have been significant improvements made regarding the evolution of software systems and in that context, it is only right that we seek to review the performance of our current system.

Councillor Fower can be assured that a sound business decision has been taken which achieves a more cost effective solution for the Council. We are replacing the minutes system and replacing Members' web pages. We are also improving the technology that is used to support our governance arrangements whilst at the same time we have managed to introduce a smaller staffing structure within the Governance Team. If Councillor Fower would care to talk to the staff in that team, he will appreciate the benefits that the new system will bring in helping team members perform their day to day duties whilst also providing better access to Council decision-making via the internet. On this final point, I would emphasise that I am currently looking at ways in which we can better publicise information about elected Members and the democratic process via our website so that we achieve the best possible return from the investment that we have made.

Councillor Fower asked the following supplementary question:

What arrangements are in place to ensure people without access to the internet are able to obtain copies of these documents?

The Cabinet Member for Customer Focus and Communications responded:

The Council would not wish to preclude people without access to the internet from obtaining copies of its agendas, reports and minutes. The Customer Services department and indeed other officers will provide copies of such documents upon request and copies are available in libraries.

(iii) Councillor Fower asked the Cabinet Member for Environment:

In 2003, the Council received some 40,000 residential bins which had RFID chips fitted. Can the Cabinet Member advise me whether or not the Council now has any domestic collection vehicles fitted with RFID readers and if so, what information is generated and how is this information used by the authority? If not, what was the cost to local taxpayers of this scheme and is it likely to be introduced?

The Cabinet Member for the Environment responded:

In 2002 the City Council received grant funding from the Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to extend and improve the Council's recycling collection services and move to wheelie bins from the previously used open green boxes. The DEFRA paid for 44,000 240 litre green wheelie bins and the Council purchased a further 16,000. At that time DEFRA were considering introducing charges for waste collection to separate it from the Council tax regime and they supported the view that some type of recording system be

fitted to bins. Accordingly chips were fitted to all bins that were acquired at a cost of approximately £1 each. The Council therefore paid £16,000 in the purchase cost of the bins it funded. This decision was made on the basis that if a scheme was to be introduced, retro-fitting identity chips would cost approximately £4-£5 per bin. DEFRA and the Government Department subsequently responsible for waste have currently moved away from their previous thinking on waste charging and at this time no domestic refuse collection vehicles are fitted with readers to take information from these bins. The chips themselves store no information other than an identity which is similar to having an individual bar code and have been applied to trade and business waste which is paid for separately from the business rates. At this time there are no plans to record waste outputs from individual properties. However, if in the future there is a change of national policy which requires local authorities to measure individual property outputs, then the Council is able to do this on its green bins.

(iv) Councillor Lane asked the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Economic Development:

The Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme (LABGI) was introduced in 2005 and payments made to Peterborough City Council since that time amount to over £6 million. The scheme was intended to make a real difference to local communities through business growth. That growth is needed in today's times as it would provide help for people to stay in the homes and their jobs. Can the Cabinet Member inform the Chamber of any specific projects that have been financed by the LABGI scheme to help this aim?

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Economic Development responded:

None. This funding is used to support the Council's expenditure across all services.

Councillor Lane asked the following supplementary question:

The Local Government Minister has stated that this scheme is intended to help meet the needs of communities. Other Councils publish details of how they have spent the LABGI allocation: why can this Council not do the same?

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Economic Development responded:

I refer to my previous response and have nothing further to add.