

## **PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 16 JULY 2008**

#### **The Mayor – Councillor Pat Nash**

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

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allen, Elsey, Gilbert, Goodwin, Lamb, Rush, Scott and Sharp.

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

- Item 5.(iii) Cllr Collins declared that he would leave the Chamber for the questions to the Police Authority as he was an employee of the Police Service.
- Item 10 Cllr Cereste declared a personal and prejudicial interest as Chairman of the PCT and that he would leave the Chamber when the motion was debated.

#### **3. MINUTES**

The minutes of Annual Council meeting held on 19 May 2008 were approved as an accurate record.

#### **4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 4.1 The Mayor's engagements for the period 1 April 2008 to 7 July 2008 were noted.
- 4.2 The Mayor announced that her Mayoress, Trudie Meadows, had stood down due to family reasons and that she would continue as Mayor without the support of a Consort or Mayoress. The Mayor expressed her gratitude for Mrs Meadows' hard work as Deputy Mayoress and Mayoress and sent her best wishes.

#### **5. WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

- 5.1 A question was asked by a member of the public about transport links to Hampton.
- 5.2 Questions were asked of Cabinet Members and the Leader of the Council, about the following subjects:-
- The cost of the marquee on election night
  - The future position of councillors
  - Consideration of 20mph limits on some residential streets
  - Proposals to make savings from the Children's Play Centre budget
  - Litter at the Festival
  - The Citizen's Panel

At this point the time limit expired and members were informed that responses to outstanding questions would be sent in writing.

5.4 Members asked questions of Cabinet Members and Committee Chairmen about issues relevant to their wards as follows:

- Demolition of the ex John Mansfield site
- Bretton paddling pool
- The new taxi rank on Park Road
- Youth worker provision in Werrington

A summary of all questions and answers are attached at **Appendix A** to these minutes.

## 6. PETITIONS

The following petitions were presented to Council:

1. Clearance of rear service lane between Stone Lane and Northfield Road.
2. Save the Charteris Play Centre
3. Thank you for a most enjoyable and wonderful 'Festival Weekend in Central Park' to all city council officers involved.

## 7. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

Council received and noted a report summarising:

- a. Decisions made at the Cabinet meeting held on 7 July 2008
- b. The Council's 'call in' procedure which had not been invoked since the last Council meeting
- c. Special Urgency and Waive of Call-in Provision in relation to the increase in pupil numbers at Arthur Mellows Village College
- d. Cabinet Member decisions made during the period 1 April 2008 to 26 June 2008.

Questions were asked about the following decisions:-

### **Budget Monitoring Report – Final Outturn 2007/2008**

Cllr Sandford if there had been an adverse impact on services due to the imposition of parking charges for the disabled?

Cllrs Peach and Fitzgerald responded that there were proposals to introduce charges for blue badge holders who were provided with parking spaces for ease of access and being treated equally the same because they were not always financially worse off.

### **City Council Response to 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation in the East of England**

Cllr Miners asked if there was any indication where these sites might be located?

Cllr Collins responded that 15 potential pitches were being looked at but no allocation had been made, Council would be informed when decisions had been made.

### **Write Off Requests**

Cllr Trueman asked about the two write off decisions and how this contributed to efficiency when the total write off figure had amounted to £500,000 last year and would there be a review of how the Council recovers this money in the future?

Cllr Peach responded that the decision to write off debts was taken extremely seriously and the utmost effort was made to recover any theft of the public purse. The Auditors had a very good record of recovery and processes were carefully followed and kept under review.

Cllr Sandford asked if the Leader was aware that £500,000 was equivalent to a 1% increase in council tax?

Cllr Peach responded that he took the issue extremely seriously and the council would do anything legally possible to recover the money.

### **Consultation on National Identity Scheme**

Cllr Miners asked if any progress had been made on affiliation to the National ID Organisation.

Cllr Dalton responded that this was still under investigation.

### **Response to the Government's Sub National Review Consultation Paper**

Cllr Sandford asked if the Leader was aware that one of the features was the transfer of strategic planning powers from the regional assembly to the regional development agency and would he endeavour to ensure that maximum powers were given to democratically elected councillors?

Cllrs Peach and Collins responded that they were aware and that the Conservative Group had been making representations for some time and were presenting proposals to form a democratically elected body to replace the regional assembly. Council would be kept informed of progress.

## **8. EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **8.1 Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2008 / 2009 and Health and Safety at Work Law Enforcement Plan 2008 / 2009.**

Cabinet had considered the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2008 / 2009 and Health and Safety at Work Law Enforcement Plan 2008 / 2009 at its meeting on 7 July 2008 and endorsed their submission to Council. Cllr Fitzgerald moved the recommendation for adoption of the plans, this was seconded by Cllr Peach.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (i) to adopt the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2008 / 2009;
- (ii) to adopt the Health and Safety at Work Law Enforcement Service Plan 2008 / 2009

### **8.2 Community Safety Partnership Plan**

Cabinet had considered the Community Safety Partnership Plan at its meeting on 7 July 2008 and endorsed the Plan for submission to Council. Cllr Murphy moved the recommendation for adoption of the plan, this was seconded by Cllr Peach.

**RESOLVED:** to adopt the Community Safety Partnership Plan

## **9. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

There were no recommendations from committees.

## 10. NOTICES OF MOTION

10.1 Councillor Swift moved the following motion:

### Membership of Cambridgeshire Police Authority

At the recent joint appointment committee on 19 June 2008, of the 9 councillor seats available, 6 were allocated to Conservatives, 2 to Liberal Democrats and 1 to Labour. The Peterborough Independent Forum had nominated Bella Saltmarsh on the basis that Peterborough has not had a female councillor on the Police Authority for a number of years.

7 of the 9 seats go to the County whilst only 2 go to Peterborough. This is a gross under representation for Peterborough.

Of the 6 Conservative seats allocated, 5 were from Cambridgeshire County Council and only 1 Conservative from Peterborough.

This would appear to be grossly unfair to the Peterborough Conservatives, as there are 43 Conservatives on the County Council and 43 Conservatives on Peterborough City Council.

In view of these concerns relating to the allocation of seats, this Council should seek from the Home Secretary an urgent review of the allocation of seats on Cambridgeshire Police Authority, to give proper effect to the political representation across the 2 authorities that make up the Police Authority.

This was seconded by Councillor John Fox and the motion was AGREED.

10.2 Councillor John Fox moved the following motion:

That a review be undertaken of the basis for making appointments to outside bodies to ensure that Members of the Council who perform the difficult dual role of serving on the Cabinet and representing their constituents are not also appointed to serve on bodies such as the Police Authority and Fire Authority. This would also give other capable Members of the Council greater opportunity to serve the City and Council.

This motion was seconded by Councillor Swift. A vote was taken and the motion was DEFEATED.

10.3 Councillor John Fox proposed the following motion:

I would respectfully suggest that the council requests the Leader to consider giving priority to naming any new roads after those people who are true characters of Peterborough, people who although very well known to many Peterborians, have not been fully recognised for the contribution that they gave to this City.

This was seconded by Councillor Swift. A vote was taken and the motion was AGREED with a caveat that families and close friends are consulted and their wishes respected.

Councillor Cereste left the meeting for the following motion.

10.4 Councillor Dalton proposed the following motion:

The Council expresses its strong opposition to Government plans to railroad through the introduction of polyclinics across England.

It notes that Ministers want to replace local GPs surgeries with impersonal super-surgeries, meaning 1700 family doctor surgeries could be closed down – including 8 in the Peterborough area. This appears to be centralisation for the sake of centralisation and pursuing a “one size fits all” approach, regardless of local circumstances.

It is concerned that in London, which is being used as the test bed for these severe cuts, early geographical analysis indicates that the average distance to a GP will increase from half a mile to 1.5 miles once the 150 polyclinics are introduced.

It further notes that extrapolation of the London figures indicates that within the Peterborough City Council area, the average distance to a GP's surgery will increase from 1.2 to 3.9 miles.

The Council believes that without extra ring-fenced monies to support new primary care facilities, reductions in existing services may be unavoidable, and that the Primary Care Trust has confirmed that no discrete budget has yet been identified to support a local polyclinic from March 2009.

The Council deplores the Government's attempt to impose this fundamental change in healthcare provision in a very short timescale and with minimal consultation.

The Council therefore also believes that any cuts to GP services will impact on more deprived areas, will mean a significant increase in inconvenience for patients and will inevitably lead to the breaking down of the valued link between patients and their family doctor and resolves that the Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Health as soon as is practicable to represent the views of the Council and its opposition to these proposals.

This was seconded by Councillor Holdich.

Councillor Sandford proposed amendments to the motion seconded by Cllr Fower as follows:

Delete the last sentence of paragraph 2: 'This appears to be centralisation for the sake of centralisation and pursuing a "one size fits all" approach, regardless of local circumstances.'

Delete paragraph 5 of the motion:

The council believes that without extra ring-fenced monies to support new primary care facilities, reductions in existing services will be unavoidable; and that the Primary Care Trust has confirmed that no new discrete budget has yet been identified to support a local polyclinic from March 2009'

and insert the following paragraphs:

**Council notes that since 1997 considerable additional funding has been made available to the NHS and GP salaries have increased significantly. However, according to the document Health Outcomes 2008, "in Peterborough the health of people is significantly worse than the England average and people in Peterborough have a shorter life expectancy than the England average".**

**Council urges the Government not to impose "one size fits all" solutions but to work with the Primary Care Trusts and consult with local communities to ensure that everyone in Peterborough has access to GP services which are of high quality and with flexible appointment systems to suit the needs and lifestyles of local people.**

Following debate, Councillor Dalton accepted the amendments with the proviso that the proposed deletions remained. The substantive motion was AGREED as follows:

The Council expresses its strong opposition to Government plans to railroad through the introduction of polyclinics across England.

It notes that Ministers want to replace local GPs surgeries with impersonal super-surgeries, meaning 1700 family doctor surgeries could be closed down – including 8 in the

Peterborough area. This appears to be centralisation for the sake of centralisation and pursuing a “one size fits all” approach, regardless of local circumstances.

It is concerned that in London, which is being used as the test bed for these severe cuts, early geographical analysis indicates that the average distance to a GP will increase from half a mile to 1.5 miles once the 150 polyclinics are introduced.

It further notes that extrapolation of the London figures indicates that within the Peterborough City Council area, the average distance to a GP’s surgery will increase from 1.2 to 3.9 miles.

The Council believes that without extra ring-fenced monies to support new primary care facilities, reductions in existing services may be unavoidable, and that the Primary Care Trust has confirmed that no discrete budget has yet been identified to support a local polyclinic from March 2009. The Council deplores the Government’s attempt to impose this fundamental change in healthcare provision in a very short timescale and with minimal consultation.

Council notes that since 1997 considerable additional funding has been made available to the NHS and GP salaries have increased significantly. However, according to the document Health Outcomes 2008, “in Peterborough the health of people is significantly worse than the England average and people in Peterborough have a shorter life expectancy than the England average”.

Council urges the Government not to impose “one size fits all” solutions but to work with the Primary Care Trusts and consult with local communities to ensure that everyone in Peterborough has access to GP services which are of high quality and with flexible appointment systems to suit the needs and lifestyles of local people.

The Council therefore also believes that any cuts to GP services will impact on more deprived areas, will mean a significant increase in inconvenience for patients and will inevitably lead to the breaking down of the valued link between patients and their family doctor and resolves that the Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Health as soon as is practicable to represent the views of the Council and its opposition to these proposals.

Cllr Cereste re-joined the meeting.

10.5 Councillor Dalton proposed the following motion:

This Council:

Notes the invaluable service provided by West Town, New England and Woodston post offices to their local communities which rely heavily on their post office branches;

Deplores the Government’s current programme of 2,500 closures across the country, including the proposed closures of the West Town, New England and Woodston branches,

Notes the strength of public opinion in favour of saving the aforementioned post offices;

Recognises the needs of the elderly, disabled and the most disadvantaged in West Town, New England and Woodston who rely on their post office branches most.

Finally, this council resolves to call on the Government to stop its latest round of post office closures including the proposed closures of the West Town, New England and Woodston branches;

This was seconded by Councillor Lee.

Councillor Fower proposed amendments (in bold) to the motion seconded by Cllr Sandford as follows:

Notes the invaluable service provided by West Town, New England and Woodston post offices to their local communities which rely heavily on their post office branches;

Deplores the Government's current programme of 2,500 closures across the country, including the proposed closures of the West Town, New England and Woodston branches, **on top of the previous Conservative governments drastic shutting of 3,500 post offices when they were in office.**

Notes the strength of public opinion in favour of saving the aforementioned post offices; **and the need for clarity in relation to the relocation and support for the city centre post office, by a publicly given date.**

Recognises the needs of the elderly, disabled and the most disadvantaged in West Town, New England and Woodston who rely on their post office branches most.

Finally, this council resolves to formally call on the Government to stop its latest round of post office closures including the proposed closures of the West Town, New England and Woodston branches; **and agrees to act, rather than just talk, by arranging a protest stall (similar to the actions of neighbouring Cambridge City Council), ideally in a unified cross party stance, to be situated in the City Centre aimed at collecting support before the end of the governments consultation period.**

Following debate a vote was taken and the amendment was DEFEATED.

Following debate on the original motion proposed by Cllr Dalton, a recorded vote was requested and taken as follows:

	FOR	AGAINST	NOT VOTING
<del>COUNCILLOR ALLEN</del> (Apologies)			
COUNCILLOR ASH	√		
COUNCILLOR BENTON	√		
COUNCILLOR COLIN BURTON	√		
COUNCILLOR MICHAEL BURTON	√		
COUNCILLOR CERESTE	√		
COUNCILLOR COLLINS	√		
COUNCILLOR CROFT	√		
COUNCILLOR DALTON	√		
COUNCILLOR CHARLES DAY	√		
COUNCILLOR DAVID DAY	√		
COUNCILLOR SUE DAY	√		
COUNCILLOR DOBBS	√		
<del>COUNCILLOR ELSEY</del> (Apologies)		---	
COUNCILLOR FAZAL	√		
COUNCILLOR FITZGERALD	√		
COUNCILLOR FLETCHER	√		
COUNCILLOR FOWER	√		
COUNCILLOR JR FOX	√		
COUNCILLOR JA FOX	√		
<del>COUNCILLOR GILBERT</del> (Apologies)		---	
COUNCILLOR GOLDSPINK	√		
<del>COUNCILLOR GOODWIN</del> (Apologies)		---	
COUNCILLOR HARRINGTON	√		
COUNCILLOR HILLER	√		
COUNCILLOR HOLDICH	√		
COUNCILLOR HUSSAIN			√

COUNCILLOR KHAN			√
COUNCILLOR MRS KRELING	√		
COUNCILLOR LAMB (Apologies)	---		
COUNCILLOR LANE	√		
COUNCILLOR LEE	√		
COUNCILLOR MRS LOWNDES	√		
COUNCILLOR MINERS	√		
COUNCILLOR MORLEY	√		
COUNCILLOR MURPHY	√		
COUNCILLOR NASH			√
COUNCILLOR NAWAZ	√		
COUNCILLOR NEWTON	√		
COUNCILLOR NORTH	√		
COUNCILLOR OVER	√		
COUNCILLOR PEACH	√		
COUNCILLOR RUSH (Apologies)	---		
COUNCILLOR SALT MARSH	√		
COUNCILLOR D SANDERS	√		
COUNCILLOR SANDFORD	√		
COUNCILLOR SCOTT (Apologies)			
COUNCILLOR SEATON	√		
COUNCILLOR K SHARP (Apologies)			
COUNCILLOR SMITH	√		
COUNCILLOR SWIFT			√
COUNCILLOR THACKER	√		
COUNCILLOR TODD	√		
COUNCILLOR TRUEMAN	√		
COUNCILLOR WALSH	√		
COUNCILLOR WILKINSON	√		
COUNCILLOR WINSLADE	√		
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>

The motion was AGREED by 45 votes for with 4 abstentions.

## 11. REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PROPER OFFICER AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### 11.1 Constitutional Changes

The Standards Committee had updated its terms of reference in accordance with the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 to delegate its responsibilities to sub committees.

**RESOLVED:** to approve updating of the Constitution with the revised terms of reference for Standards Committee.

The Mayor  
19.00 – 21.28

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR COUNCIL MEETING ON 16 JULY 2008**

The following questions have been received:

**1 Questions by residents to Cabinet Members, the Leader of the Council and Chairman of Scrutiny Committee and Panels**

**(i) Mr Charles Keats asked the Cabinet Member for the Environment:**

Why did the council allow the railway line on the current building site which borders London Road near Fulpress House in Old Fletton to be taken out when it could have been used for a much needed transport link to Hampton serving Woodston :Old Fletton :Hampton : and possibly Yaxley with an extension?

**Cllr Fitzgerald answered:**

The council's sustainable transport agenda is being delivered via the travel choice initiative which has recently been awarded beacon status for accessibility and focus's changing peoples' behaviours as well as promoting walking, cycling, bus travel and car sharing. To this end, and in addition to the various promotions, the council has invested in upgrading the cycle network and the road network along this route making it safer and better for all users. The bus service has also been supported and the bus operators have also invested in their services which has been reflected in the growing numbers of passengers. As a consequence it was not required for transport purposes.'

**Supplementary Question:**

It was only a week before in the Evening Telegraph, that they were saying that we needed a transport link from Hampton because we were getting congestion on the parkway. Within a week that railway line had been taken up, it has bridges which follow through to Yaxley but I just ask the question really why aren't we using that form of transport? It does go all the way down, it is still used that railway line from time to time and it does come down the back of Belsize Avenue etc and would also serve Woodston Industrial from the city which is badly served by buses, as I work there I know there is a lot of people that try to get across town to this part of the world for work and can't get to work on time because they have to get two or three buses, from the city they would be able to take a train or whatever via that link and get to work on time.

**Cllr Fitzgerald answered:**

It is wrong to say there isn't a transport link, there are a number of transport links. What I think you are referring to is a rail link rather than a transport link which is somewhat different and we, as you probably know, don't control the railways. I am happy to take a detailed question from you as a supplementary and ask Officers along with myself to reply in detail to any particular points regarding the railway link, but as I said to you already we have invested heavily in transport links and indeed that whole area there, down to the A1, including the road network is subject to major works that are up and coming in any way as well as the improved cycle and bus links to that area.

2. **Questions by Members to Cabinet Members, the Leader of the Council and Chairman of Scrutiny Committee and Panels**

(i) **Councillor John Fox asked the Leader of the Council:**

How much did it cost the taxpayers of Peterborough to erect the Marquee outside of the Town Hall on election night and what was its purpose?

**Councillor Peach answered:**

There actually was a close dialogue between the Returning Officer and the Police on a range of operational matters leading up to the Local Election Count on 1 May. Which I think we'll all agree, led to the smooth running of the election count. Indeed I understand that Peterborough was the 5<sup>th</sup> fastest Council nationally to announce its results. We consulted the police and on police advice did a risk assessment and also further on police advice it was agreed that we should erect a marquee outside the town hall, because as you may remember in previous years there had been a bit of trouble about the number of people that came in the back of the Town Hall and were on the lower level floor. So it was agreed to provide a marquee as an overflow facility, a shelter audio visual link to the count for the announcements of the results. The costs of providing all these was £4,743.50 the measures adopted ensured that public safety was safeguarded, appropriate security arrangements were put in place so that the ballot boxes could be transferred more quickly and effectively to the count rooms. It is obviously a pity that more people did not use the marquee, perhaps this year unlike other years there was perhaps less interest in the elections, certainly from our point of view it would have been nice to see more people around the back of the town hall and using the marquee particularly as on election night we had so much to gain, so much to celebrate in this Council Chamber, where we gained seats like Councillor Ray Dobbs who gained the Eye and Thorney seat, we welcomed Fran Benton as a new Councillor in Peterborough, also Gavin Elsey is a new Councillor, David Seaton is a new Councillor, we gained a seat in Paston with Councillor David Day and in Walton we gained a seat with Councillor Charles Day and in South Werrington a seat was gained by Councillor Colin Burton and we also welcomed the lovely Samantha Smith in place of Councillor Geoff Ridgeway, so there was an awful lot to celebrate Madam Mayor and it was indeed a pity that more people were not around to see those great victories.

(ii) **Councillor Miners asked the Leader of the Council:**

It is becoming apparent to many that the current thinking at Regional & Central Government level is to take more decision making power away from elected councillors and give it to appointees.

Add this to the massive concentration of financial control in the hands of quangos, over whose appointment we have no control - does the Leader believe the position of a Councillor is in danger of becoming one of social or honorary membership?"

**Councillor Peach answered:**

Thank you very much. It's difficult to know really why Councillor Miners, has asked me this question, I can't speak for all other Councillors, but speaking for myself, I don't regard the position of being elected a Councillor an honorary position and I believe it is an honour to be elected as a Councillor, I don't believe really that the vast number of Councillors regard it as sort of a social membership as if you are a member of some sort of social club or entertainment society, I think most of the work that we do as Councillors you would hardly regard as social in fact you might regard some of the things we have to do as probably fairly anti-social when you are rung in the middle of the night about someone's drain pipe leaking or something like that, but on the more substantive issue, it is true that perhaps over the last number of years central government have taken more powers away from locally elected authorities and I know that perhaps very belatedly in the day the government is having a re-think on this and I hope that Councillor Miners will support me as I know that the next Conservative Government does want to genuinely put more power and more budget

making decisions in the hand of democratically elected local Councillors rather than quangos, so I would suggest that Councillor Miners when we come to the first Thursday in May 2010, which is likely to be General Election Day, he does the same as I do and that's go into the ballot box and support the Conservative Party.

**Supplementary Question:**

I thank the leader for the answer and I actually tend to agree with some of it, there is talk in government circles and in political circles about making all Councillors full time, each of us receiving a national average yearly wage. Does the leader believe this is a positive or negative development? He can give his own personal view, not a party view.

**Councillor Peach answered:**

Personally I don't think it is a good idea to have full time Councillors, I think that you do have to provide perhaps incentives to get the right quality of people, and people with experience in particular aspects of the services the Council runs. Perhaps to stand as candidates and obviously to make life easy once they are elected on the Council, as we indeed do on this Council, to have different types of meetings at different times of the day so that people who are perhaps working all day can come to things in the evening and people that are perhaps either free either in the morning or an afternoon or retired, we have some of our business conducted in the day, so I think you've just got to have a variety of things, but I don't really think that in the interests of democracy you get the right people standing for local government positions if the only incentive you offer them is that of money.

(iii) **Councillor Miners asked the Cabinet Member for the Environment:**

Thousands of people are killed or maimed each year as they try to negotiate crossing roads. Following the introduction of 20mph zones, recent studies have highlighted a reduction of 50%+ in the number of pedestrians killed or seriously injured, when crossing in such zones. Is it not time for the City Council to give serious consideration to introducing 20mph limits on some selective local residential streets, throughout all areas of the local authority.

These streets to be chosen by their reported & factual history of problems, so we can measure more accurately the impact on local and pedestrian road safety?"

**Councillor Fitzgerald answered:**

I have actually discussed the matter in detail with our Highways Officers and basically I can give you the answer as follows. It is perhaps not what you want but it does actually make a lot of sense. The reduction of road traffic casualties is best addressed through an appropriate combination of education, engineering, publicity and enforcement. To achieve a zone and I'll give you an example of say 20 streets which are self-enforcing in terms of speed, would require a costly and it's in the region of half a million pounds per area, in engineering intervention in the form of traffic calming and a notable increase in speed limit signage. This guidance is issued by the Department of Transport and it states that introducing lower speed limits in the absence of accompanying engineering measures will not achieve a reduction in vehicle speeds. Furthermore such signing would be visually intrusive and also conflict with the desire to reduce street clutter.

For information, the average number of pedestrians involved in serious RTA's on all Peterborough's roads over the last three calendar years is 24, we would all agree it's 24 too many but these have been distributed throughout the highway network across the city. It would therefore very difficult to identify a specific location where such a measure would lower the risk of accidents or that could be attributed to the introduction of a 20mph speed limit. I guess in closing, if we ever could identify such an area where it warranted it, we would certainly consider it.

(iv) **Councillor Saltmarsh asked the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services:**

Once again the Conservative Administration is making a proposal which will affect the more vulnerable families in the city who live in some of our most deprived areas. The Children's Play Centres throughout the city are very popular with 90,000 admissions a year and 4.500 children currently on the play centre records. How is it proposed to make £350,000 savings from the Children's Play Centre budget without reducing the service provided to hundreds of families?

**Councillor Goldspink answered:**

I know that concerns are running high after news of work being done on the Children's Services Budgets was misinterpreted by some officers and was then mischievously leaked (accepting that this is what happens in times of uncertainty).

Firstly, I take issue with the way your question is phrased. "Once again" implies that we have targeted vulnerable families before in a pre-meditated way. I have already asked you Councillor Saltmarsh, because I answered this question a week ago, if you could let me have some evidence to support your implication, and from what I've seen there isn't very much. I know that other authorities are looking jealously at the way we provide services.

We do not generally charge more than anyone else, or charge for more services than anyone else, and yet we have levied very low Council tax rises when other authorities have been both cutting services and raising Council Tax by more than the rate of inflation. And that's why we've got a queue of local authorities coming to Peterborough to learn from us. I am intrigued as to how you know that "more vulnerable families" will be affected if any changes are made to play services, as I am not aware that there is any family financial or deprivation information held by the service, nor a clear view of where the attendees come from, nor how many families send children along. It would appear then that the phrasing of the first sentence of your question is not based in fact and could be regarded by someone less charitable than me as scaremongering for political ends, although I am absolutely sure that was not your intention, and I mean that most sincerely, I know you care about the service, especially in your Ward.

I am not sure where you got your figures from, because the admissions figure I had was 74,000 and I got that from the service. We haven't made any decisions yet on how much money needs to be saved from the children's play centre budgets but I have made it clear with officers that the approach must be taken to any areas that we are looking at is as follows:

I can say that no decisions have yet been made on how much money needs to be saved from the Children's Play Centre Budget, but I have made it clear to officers that the approach that must be taken to any areas where we feel that there is good reason to view service provision is as follows:

1. We need to look at how the particular service contributes to our corporate objectives and the goal of reaching a three star Children's service. If it does not, then why are we providing it?
2. We need to understand the effects that any changes in the service have on our customers.
3. We need to see if the backdrop for the service has changed. In the case of play, we provide elements of this from other directorates, and the growth of school clubs and the development of children's' centres is a significant change to the landscape that needs to be considered.
4. We need to see if there are better ways of providing the same benefits that are currently delivered through a service, or maybe even include more children for lower cost. Many authorities have rejected the style of provision that we currently used, heavily dependant upon buildings, in favour of a "play ranger" approach. I'm not saying that is what we will do, merely that we should consider it. Certainly this administration

does not believe in the phrase “is has always been done like that”, as a defence for anything that we do.

5. We then need to ask the question, what is the best way to achieve the objectives set for this service? And I am quite sure if we were setting up a play service today to meet corporate and departmental objectives, it would not look like the one we have run for the last 20 years in an unchanged format.
6. Finally, where we perceive the service to be “sensitive”, we need to let Members see the results of the research and the proposals that come from it, before proceeding, even though there is clearly delegated authority only to spend at the level in the budget and not to have to keep consulting when working to that budget.

So I am advocating an approach from a budgetary perspective because we did spend £3m more than we should of done last year in children’s services, but the main focus is on understanding what we do, why we do it and whether we can do it better for a lower cost. Perhaps we can’t, but I think we probably can.

Finally, I reject the notion that there is always a link between the amount a Council (or Government) spends and the quality of service provided. Time and again we have shown that we can provide the same, or better, services at a lower cost. I am disappointed that some of our colleagues from across the chamber have steadfastly stuck to the view that increasing or maintaining spending means better services and cutting spending means worse services. This is just not true, as anyone looking at the health service today will testify. We’ve paid the significant extra national taxes – where is the significant improvement in the national services? The link isn’t there.

I have given an undertaking to your colleague Councillor Miners that I will be open and honest about the review, and have already recalled some letters sent out incorrectly and prematurely because there was an incorrect focus on cost alone and I had not agreed the approach. And I stand by my undertaking.

There are other services that are subject to review as well, we’re prepared to look at services in a radical way.

#### **Supplementary Question:**

Thank you for your answer Councillor Goldspink, I think we all want to see an improvement in Children’s services but don’t you consider that closing down play centres before replacement facilities are operational may lead to an increase in crime and anti-social behaviour on our streets?

#### **Councillor Goldspink answered:**

One of the things I’m very keen to focus on is examining the effects of any changes that we will make, and that’s something I will be focusing on quite heavily, I don’t expect to see officers saying to me that if we make a certain change there will be a change in an increase in anti-social behaviour, or children hanging around on streets or anything like that, and I will work hard to make sure that’s not the case.

#### **(v) Councillor Saltmarsh asked the Cabinet Member for Community Services:**

I would like to congratulate the Cabinet Member for Community Services on the success of this years Festival, however once again the organisation of some important details and coordination between departments was lacking.

Most obvious was the amount of litter left at the Festival venues, the lack of litter pickers and the absence of any extra litter bins. The area round the Key Theatre on Saturday morning was disgusting and with a big event planned at 12 noon no attempt had been made to clear the litter from the Embankment.

Did City Services not know there was a Festival going on or realise that some extra staff would be needed over the weekend?

**Councillor Lee answered:**

Thank you for your kind remarks Councillor Saltmarsh – this year’s Festival had some real highlights. 83 events were enjoyed by, in total, around 37,000 people. My own particular favourite was the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra not only was it a feast of high quality music but a fantastic light show enjoyed by over 5,000 people. However there were also some elements that I would wish to improve, indeed it is my goal that the Festival is improved year by year. The point you raise about litter is one such example of where we need to get better. The number of people attending on Friday evening far exceeded our predicted levels – we were expecting around 400 people and in excess of 3,000 people turned up so in a way we were victims of our own success. I’d like to thank Cllr Sanders’ City Services team for reacting to our requests for extra help once we realised that our existing plans would not meet demand - in short I would like to again invite Councillors this year to a review you will be receiving invitations shortly, and where we will look at the future of the festival.

(vi) **Councillor John Fox asked the Cabinet Member for Customer Focus and Communications:**

I recently received a letter from PCC inviting me to be a member of the Citizens Panel. How much has the Citizen’s Panel cost the taxpayer and what is its main purpose?

**Councillor Dalton answered:**

The Citizens Panel allows Peterborough’s residents to contribute to the Council’s decision making process. The Panel ensures that we listen to the public and gives us a better understanding of the issues that are important to them. The Panel also helps us measure our Service delivery and whether we are meeting new performance indicators via up to 4 postal surveys a year. In addition, the Citizens Panel provides us with the opportunity to run focus groups on specific issues throughout the year. Recently they have been involved in development of the new look “Your Peterborough”; consultation on sports, leisure and cultural facilities; decision making; and involving young people in the Council.

The Panel is made up of 1,686 members, selected via postal address and a third of members are refreshed every year to ensure they do not become too overly familiar with Council practices which could potentially skew their responses

The Panel is an excellent way for people to contribute to making improvements in the delivery of Council services and I hope that Cllr Fox will accept his invitation and help us ensure that the Council is “doing its job”.

The costs of the Panel for 2008 are £10,565 plus vat, which includes the refresh of a third of the Panel. This is a very competitive rate which compares favourably with Panels run by other authorities.

**Supplementary Question:**

So what your basically saying is it’s going to be used as a communications and consultation tool, but are you going to listen to what the public say, if 90% of the public say they are for whatever, are you going to listen to what they actually want?

**Councillor Dalton answered:**

We always listen to the public, so yes Councillor Fox.

The following questions and answers were distributed to all members after the meeting as the time limit for this category of questions had expired.

**(vii) Councillor Ash would have asked the Cabinet Member for City Services**

I have noted that there have been a number of news items reporting a growth in the demand for allotments. Many see this as a not only a worthwhile method of staying fit but also combating the rising cost of fruit and vegetables. The opportunity can be taken to supply friends and family with a high quality locally grown product. My interpretation from a recent report to the environment committee is that the council needs to be proactive in promoting existing allotment sites, and investigating new opportunities.

Does the cabinet member agree with me that the lead in the GDP (greater Dogsthorpe Partnership) is a model for other parts of the City and is he able to advise of the steps the council will be taking to ensure that is seen to be willing to promote increased use of allotments throughout the city thereby consolidating our leading role as an environmental City

**Councillor Sanders would have answered:**

We have been actively promoting the take-up of allotments among community groups and individuals across the city and have had great success, apart from in one or two isolated areas where there is very limited local demand. One of these areas was Dogsthorpe and following a request from the Greater Dogsthorpe Partnership, half of the allotment site is being turned over into a community garden rather than leave it as vacant allotment sites. There are a small number of other sites that have low demand and we are working to try to encourage greater usage. However, it is sometimes apparent that the allotments are in the wrong location for local use. Allotments need to be accessible to their users and plot holders do not generally wish to travel significant distances to cultivate their land because of the cost of travel and environmental unsustainability.

Our allotments are now reporting waiting lists in many areas and we are working with housing developers to ensure that when new developments are delivered, that there is an allotment provision sufficient for anticipated local demand.

**(viii) CIr Sandford would have asked the Cabinet Member for the Environment:**

Could the Cabinet Member for Environment explain why in Peterborough we are able to recycle only a small proportion of plastic materials. Local people get confused and frustrated when they find that plastic items which are marked as recyclable cannot be put in their green wheelie bins for recycling.

Surely with recent dramatic increases in oil prices and plastic being an oil based product, the economics of plastic recycling must have improved quite significantly.

Peterborough has a good record on recycling but we need to improve it still further if we are to avoid using more environmentally damaging forms of waste disposal. Will the cabinet member ensure that increased plastic recycling is investigated as soon as possible ?

**Councillor Fitzgerald would have answered:**

Councillor Sandford should note that the May meeting of the Members Waste and Recycling Working Group (MWRWG), of which he is a member, discussed a range of issues to become the priority areas for further investigation over the following year.

Item 3 of the minutes show clearly that both Kitchen waste and currently non recyclable plastics are the priority items for inclusion in future improvements to collection schemes, where appropriate, contributing to the aim of 65% plus recycling and composting.

As Cabinet member for Environment I look forward to receiving the MWRWG's recommendation on this and other waste and recycling issues. I can send Cllr Sandford a copy of said minutes for reference.

**3. Questions by Members to the Representatives of the Police and Fire Authorities**

**(i) Councillor John Fox would have asked the Representative of the Police Authority:**

Is it true that the Cambridgeshire Constabulary are employing private investigators at a considerable cost to the tax payer, to assist the depleted number of CID officers, per ratio of our population growth within our force area?

**Councillor Sanders would have answered:**

I have been advised by the Police Authority Trust that it is employing a number of civilian investigators and statement takers to support our CID department. These are funded from the shortfall in officers across the force, therefore the same money is used in a different way. Could we fill these roles with detectives? No, we cannot recruit sufficiently quickly to backfill at this time so are therefore making the most efficient and effective use of the funds. The investigators and statement takers are considerably cheaper than constables.

**(ii) Councillor Judy Fox would have asked the Representative of the Police Authority:**

What cover is there in Peterborough for the investigation in to Missing from Homes during the weekend period?

**Councillor Sanders would have answered:**

I have been advised by the Police Authority Trust that 'Missing from Homes' are investigated by response staff who work 24/7.

The following questions were asked and answered at the meeting:

**4. Questions by Members to Cabinet Members or Committee Chairman about issues relevant to their ward**

**(i) Councillor Miners asked the Cabinet Member for Efficiency and Business Improvement:**

Could the Cabinet Member please inform the local Dogsthorpe community when the partial demolition of the ex-John Mansfield School Site, Western Avenue will finally commence and be completed.

**Councillor Goldspink answered on behalf of Councillor Scott (who had submitted apologies for absence):**

The demolition of the old John Mansfield School is not as straight forward as you would have thought due to issues surrounding the future use of the remaining buildings for the neighbouring Centre.

However a planning notification has been submitted and are we are anticipating a response W/C 21<sup>st</sup> July. When we are in receipt of this we can give the necessary notices to proceed. Key to this will be an instruction to the various statutory undertakers to realign and divert the various services to meet the future use of the site. This will take between 2 and 3 months. To large extent this timescale will be dictated by the programme of work that these organisations have. This is outside our control.

Following this we will start the demolition works which will involve a soft strip and removal of asbestos. This will take approximately 8 weeks. Demolition of the main structure together with any restoration works will follow. This taking another 8 weeks.

If we assume a start on the overall programme in August then we are looking for completion of all of these works in Feb 09'.

**Supplementary Question:**

May I thank the Cabinet Member and the Cabinet, for their support and interests in the development of the John Mansfield Centre, could the Cabinet member please ensure that all local Dogsthorpe Councillors are fully briefed and consulted about all developments at this local development site. Thank you very much.

**Councillor Goldspink answered:**

I am sure Councillor Scott will do her best to keep you informed Councillor Miners.

**(ii) Cllr John Fox asked the Cabinet Member for City Services:**

Yet another year goes by when there are threats of closing down Bretton Paddling Pool due to a few mindless individuals, can the cabinet member tell me the latest update on the situation and what steps both the PCC or the Police have taken to catch the culprits

**Cllr Sanders answered:**

The answer would be given in writing.

The Paddling Pool at Bretton has had a troubled history over the past few years. Last year, after preparing the pool and arranging for attendants, it had to be closed because the supervising employees were threatened and abused by local youths on a number of occasions and there were continual problems with glass being thrown into the pool. The location of the facility is far from ideal and its isolation tends to mean that overnight damage has almost become inevitable. There are significant risks to young children even following the most rigorous daily cleaning that shards of glass will remain in the pool which would result in foot and other injuries. For this reason, and following consultation with the ward members and the parish council, we have reluctantly concluded that the paddling pool will not be opened for the coming summer season.

However, local ward members are determined that there should be some type of facility within the Bretton area and are currently investigating options for a water play feature to be acquired and located within the ward. This facility will be funded through the Community Reinvestment Guarantee Fund. Officers and members have visited Luton where a similar facility exists and are working on plans for a similar facility in Bretton. This will provide a water play area which will be far more easily controlled with lower risk than the current open outdoor paddling area but will provide for a far more exciting type of water play than the current paddle only facility.

**(iii) Cllr Hussain asked the Cabinet Member for the Environment:**

Would you please advise when work will commence on the agreed new Taxi Rank on Park Road and when is it likely to finish?

**Cllr Fitzgerald answered:**

I am happy to advise you as follows. The taxi rank on Park Road is closely linked to the proposed installation of the rising bollards on Fitzwilliam Street. The project is now progressing quite quickly with the preparation of the quotation documents for pricing and the drafting of the legal orders required. Unfortunately I can't give you a definitive date for the proposed commencement of the works, as there are a number of issues including formal objections to the traffic regulation orders to take account of, they're beyond our direct control, that could result in some delays to the project, and whilst we are aiming to minimise such the likelihood of such eventualities, the best I can estimate, and I can

provide this at the time, and I conveyed this myself to the taxi forum at the last meeting, is sometime in the latter part of September or early October.

**Supplementary Question:**

My question is, when is it likely to start and when is it likely to finish? And I haven't had the answer to any of those questions.

**Councillor Fitzgerald answered:**

With respect I did answer that question, I think that I can tell you that I can't give you a definitive date but it's estimated that it's September or October and as for a schedule of works, dependent on the weather and everything else permitting I understand it is about a six week schedule from when it commences.

**(iv) Councillor Fox asked the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services:**

Can the Cabinet Member for Children's Services reassure me that there will be no reduction in the youth provision within Werrington, that is currently being provided by a highly commendable and enthusiastic Youth Worker. Can he also reassure me that his hours will not be reduced and that he will not be taken away from the area he has done so much good work in already.

**Cllr Goldspink answered:**

If the Councillor is asking "Can I reassure him that there will be no reduction in the youth provision within Werrington and can I also reassure him that his hours will not be reduced and that he will not be taken away from the area" **EVER**, then the answer is clearly no. Youth provision, services and facilities inevitably change over time and I cannot assure him that they will never, ever change, either by increase or decrease. If he has a different timescale in mind, then I will make enquiries. However, I can confirm that the youth service is undergoing the same type of review applicable to play services and several other services, the detailed factors of and reasons for which were included in my answer to Cllr Saltmarsh.

**Supplementary Question:**

So you have actually given me no guarantee then, which is very sad because the youth of Werrington are actually coming out of their shells now and doing a lot of good work as well thanks to this youth leader and the rumour is that his hours maybe reduced which is very sad.

**Councillor Goldspink answered:**

If you had a bit more information and detail I could have answered that, but what I can say is that whatever changes we make in the provisions of service one of the key things will be the effects of those changes and I certainly wouldn't want to see a good provision that's hitting our key drivers taken away nor would I want to see a provision taken away if it was likely to affect adversely anti-social behaviour and crime in the area and I can give reassurance it is a very real thing that we need to look at. However, we do not have a situation where we can leave everything un-changed forever, and we will not be bound by the mantra that it has always been done that way, so yes we may have changes to make, I hope they won't have the sorts of effects that Councillor Fox is talking about. No decisions have been taken, it may be that provisions do change and I have had several other enquiries from members on my own side, so it is not just Councillor Fox whose questioning this, and who's giving me a hard time, I can assure him that I am getting a hard time from my own side as well. But I will do my best to keep you informed and when I've got some information I will of course give it to you.