

## PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 8 OCTOBER 2008

#### The Mayor – Councillor Pat Nash

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

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allen and M Burton.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Item 10 Councillor John Fox declared a personal interest as a member of the 'Friends of Cuckoo's Hollow'.

#### 3. MINUTES

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 July 2008 were approved as an accurate record.

#### 4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

4.1 The Mayor's engagements for the period 4 July to 28 September 2008 were noted.

#### 5. QUESTIONS ASKED WITH WRITTEN NOTICE

5.1 A question was asked by a member of the public with regard to the lack of any traffic calming measures at the corner of Paston Lane and Mildmay Road.

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

- Numbers of pupils, having been unable to obtain a place at a school of their choice, being transported from the north to the south of the city;
- The likely impact of the credit crunch and the decline in the property market on the Council's Capital Programme;
- The reasons for the Primary Care Trust (PCT) changing its name to 'Peterborough NHS' and the associated cost of the change;
- Factual errors in relation to the exhibition at the Museum entitled 'Opening Doors to Hidden Heritage';
- The likelihood of the current rate of Council Tax (1.4%) being sustained during the next three years;
- Delays in respect of road improvements at the junction of Newborough Road and the A47;

At this point during the meeting the time limit for questions expired and Members were informed that written responses would be sent in respect of outstanding questions.

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

- Levels of air pollution from Stamford Sewage Works affecting residents living in and around the village of Barnack;
- Demolition and redevelopment of the former John Mansfield School site;
- Allocation of funds to Cuckoo's Hollow, Werrington;
- Action to prevent speeding vehicles along the old Lincoln Road, Werrington.

A summary of all questions and answers is attached at **APPENDIX A**.

## 6. PETITIONS

The following petitions were presented to Council:

- (i) Request for removal of traffic islands being installed at Waterloo Road;
- (ii) Request for 'Extreme Sports' recreational centre;
- (iii) Request for guarantee of a post office in the city centre;
- (iv) Objection to Eurocars parking vehicles in Fairfield Road.

## 7. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

Council received and noted a report summarising:

- (i) Decisions made by Cabinet at its meeting of 15 September 2008;
- (ii) The Council's response to petitions presented to Council on 16 July 2008;
- (iii) The Council's 'call in' procedure (which had not been invoked since the last Council meeting);
- (iv) The Council's Special Urgency and Waive of Call-in Provisions (which had not been invoked since the last Council meeting);
- (v) Cabinet Member decisions made during the period 2 July 2008 to 8 September 2008.

The Mayor informed Members of an amendment to the decision outlined on page 28 of this report relating to the appointment of LEA Governors. Members were asked to note that this decision had been taken by the Leader of the Council and **not** Councillor Goldspink, as stated.

Questions were asked about the following decisions:

- **Medium Term Financial Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12:**

Councillor Sandford asked whether the Leader would agree that the most effective policy in respect of Council Tax would be to support its abolition.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that to abolish the Council Tax would not be an effective course of action.

- **Budget Monitoring Report – Period 4 2008/9**

Councillor Holdich asked if the Leader would comment upon the under-funding of schemes such as concessionary transport fares and the resulting overspend within the Environment Services department and requested assurance that this would not impact upon other service areas across the Council.

The Leader replied that government funding for initiatives such as the concessionary fares scheme rarely matched the actual cost. However, he was working with the relevant Cabinet Member and Finance officers to identify ways of resolving the problem of underfunding in respect of the concessionary fares scheme.

- **Charteris Play Centre**

Councillor Miners requested clarification on the future of the Charteris Play Centre.

In response, Councillor Goldspink emphasised that a review was underway in respect of all play services across the authority and that this was currently at the consultation stage. He emphasised that no decisions had been made at this stage.

- **Award of Street Lighting Maintenance Contract 2008/2012**

Councillor Fower asked whether there was a fixed period of time in which faulty street lights should be repaired.

Councillor Scott advised that this particular decision related to the award of a contract. However, she would arrange for Councillor Fower's query to be investigated and a response would be sent to him in due course.

- **Delivering Sustainable Development – Southbank Phase 1 Carbon Challenge Site**

Councillor Sandford stated that whilst he supported the principle of the carbon challenge site, in view of the city's aspiration to be the Environment Capital, the Council should be working towards ensuring that all homes were carbon-zero.

Councillor Goldspink replied that the Council had made a good start and was ahead of many other cities in this regard. Work was being undertaken to encourage existing householders to make improvements, including the provision of grants.

- **Request for approval to use the Midlands Works Framework Contract 3 (2008/2010)**

Councillor Trueman asked if road users were likely to experience problems this year in the period leading up to Christmas due to road improvement works.

Councillor Scott advised that this decision related to the award of a contract. Councillor Fitzgerald added that whilst everything possible would be done to reduce inconvenience to road users, road improvements were necessary and an inevitable part of growth.

## **8. EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **8.1 Streets, Squares and Spaces Strategy**

Cabinet, at its meeting of 15 September 2008, had considered the Street, Squares and Spaces Strategy and endorsed its submission to Council. Councillor Murphy moved the recommendation for adoption of the Strategy and this was seconded by Councillor Peach.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- (i) to approve the Streets, Squares and Spaces Strategy as the Authority's overall strategy for improvements to the public realm of Peterborough City Centre; and
- (ii) to agree that the Streets, Squares and Spaces Strategy form part of the Council's Major Policy Framework.

## 8.2 Refreshed Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS)

At its meeting of 15 September 2008, Cabinet had considered the Refreshed Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) and endorsed its submission to Council for adoption. Councillor Fitzgerald moved the recommendation and this was seconded by Councillor Peach.

Councillor Ash expressed concern that the Strategy did not contain sufficient emphasis on proposals to reduce black bin waste.

Councillor Sandford concurred with this view and drew Members' attention to a local authority in Cambridgeshire which had awarded a contract for the pre-treatment of residual waste using a mechanical biological treatment facility which allows an increased proportion of recycling materials to be extracted before the waste is processed. Councillor Sandford suggested that this approach would be an alternative option for Peterborough.

In response, Councillor Fitzgerald informed Members that this option had been considered. However, this approach was not a preferred option for Peterborough and the JMWMS would achieve a 30% reduction in volume. Recycling was high in Peterborough due to policies the City Council had implemented and it was the intention to sustain this. He emphasised that the Strategy was a working document which would be revised to reflect new legislation/changes as appropriate.

A vote was held in respect of the adoption of the refreshed JMWMS and the results were as follows:

48 in favour; 4 against and 2 abstentions.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) to adopt the refreshed Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

## 9. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

There were no recommendations from committees.

## 10. NOTICES OF MOTION

The Mayor asked those present to note that an amendment had been made to the motion to be submitted by Councillor Lane. The word 'instructs' at paragraph 3 of the motion should be replaced by the word 'requests'.

### 10.1 Councillor Lane moved the following motion:

That this Council:

1. records its concern that gas and electricity bills for domestic consumers have risen significantly this year with potentially serious consequences for a great number of households, especially the fuel poor;
2. acknowledges the Government's £910 million energy efficiency drive to assist domestic consumers to reduce their fuel costs, but recognises that the initiative provides a medium to long term solution and does not serve to ensure that vulnerable households will receive the immediate help that they desperately need; and

3. instructs its officers to consider, as a matter of urgency, how financial aid can be made available by the most appropriate method to vulnerable households.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Swift.

Following debate, a vote was taken and the motion was DEFEATED by 14 votes for, 40 against and 1 abstention.

#### 10.2 Councillor Lamb moved the following motion:

That this Council:

1. acknowledges the significant barriers to independent mobility experienced by blind people leaving them isolated and finding it difficult to access services without mobility assistance;
2. recognises that many visually impaired people are supported by the Primary Care Trust in Peterborough, as well as several local voluntary and community organisations;
3. notes that blind people are not entitled to the higher mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), and therefore;
4. requests the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in support of the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) campaign to secure the higher rate mobility component of DLA for blind people.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Goodwin and **CARRIED** unanimously.

#### 10.3 Councillor Sandford moved the following motion:

That this Council notes:

1. that Peterborough City Council has signed the Nottingham Declaration on climate change and developed a Climate Change Strategy;
2. two key aspects of the strategy are that the City Council should seek to achieve significant reductions in carbon emissions in all its activities and set an example to the people and communities of Peterborough;
3. it is good for everyone, including Council staff to drink adequate amounts of water so as to promote health and well-being, but there is no significant evidence that bottled water is any healthier than that which is supplied through a tap by Anglian Water;
4. sourcing, packaging, transport and the sale of bottled water is highly carbon intensive, often involving moving it over hundreds of miles and the use of disposable plastic bottles; and
5. Peterborough aspires to become the Environment Capital of the UK and hence, needs to behave in an exemplary way in all aspects of environmental performance;

Therefore, the Council requests the Cabinet to:

1. ensure that as many Council staff as possible have access to water coolers in or near their offices, thus providing them with a good supply of tap water at a pleasant and refreshing temperature for drinking;
2. instructs its officers to cease providing bottled water at any meeting, conference or other event organised by the Council or taking place on Council premises; and

3. where appropriate, promote this as the policy of the Council and seek to influence other local organisations to follow the Council's example.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Fower.

Councillor Fitzgerald moved an amendment to the motion as follows:

That the final three paragraphs of the original Motion be deleted and replaced by the following:

'Therefore the Council requests the Cabinet to:

1. Investigate the costs and the subsequent possibility of installing mains fed water coolers within council offices, having regard to any current legislation that covers water dispensers that may be in force and be bound by the implications and outcomes of any health and safety concerns or issues that may arise;
2. Ensure that where it is technically and practicable to do so that as many Council staff and members have access to mains fed water coolers - if matters at item 1 have been totally satisfied. Further that the cost of providing water coolers in specific locations does not substantially outweigh the cost of providing alternate sources of fresh drinking water, tap or bottled, then the option of installing a mains fed water cooler should be considered first;
3. Where appropriate, promote this as a preferred option of the Council and seek to influence other organisations to follow the Council's example'.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Scott.

Following debate on the amendment, a vote was taken and the proposed amendment was **CARRIED** by 47 for, 0 against and 4 abstention.

10.4 Councillor Sharp moved the following motion:

That this Council:

1. recognises the magnificent achievements of Louis Smith, other Olympians and Para-Olympians from our area at the Olympic Games in Beijing;
2. notes that whilst top athletes attract significant support from lottery funding and other funding streams, others must rely on the provision of facilities locally and such facilities have been removed over the years;
3. states its commitment to providing sporting opportunities for young people within the city to enable them to emulate the successes of our Olympians; and
4. requests that an all-party group be established to investigate ways of funding training facilities to support our budding stars of the future and that the group reports back on its proposals within a period of eighteen months.

The Mayor advised that Councillor Lee had proposed an amendment to this motion and that this had been agreed by Councillor Sharp. Therefore, should the Council agree to the amended motion, the substantive motion would read as follows:

That the Council:

1. recognises the magnificent achievements of Louis Smith, other Olympians and Para-Olympians at the Olympic Games in Beijing;

2. thanks the Mayor for organising and hosting a reception at the Town Hall for Louis Smith, which provided an opportunity for the City to acknowledge and celebrate this outstanding success;
3. notes that whilst top athletes attract significant support from lottery funding and other funding streams, others must rely on the provision of local finance and facilities;
4. notes that there has been some reduction in local sporting provision in the private sector with the closure of facilities like Perkins Sports and Social Club, Hotpoint Sports and Social Club, Molins Sports and Social Club, Phorpress Sports and Social Club and Baker Perkins Sports ground. To balance these losses, it should be noted that there has been a significant number of gains in recent years, including growth in private sector including Bannatynes, Fitness First and Esporta;
5. notes funding secured by the Council from the Lottery New Opportunities Fund saw over £1million pounds invested in developing Stanground College Sports facilities, Orton Longueville School – All Weather Tennis Courts, Arthur Mellows Village College – Gym and dance/aerobic studio and Jack Hunt School – Gymnastics Centre;
6. notes our current medium term financial plan sees the sum of £1.24 million over the next 3 years being spent on refurbishing existing facilities at Sports Centres and Swimming pools;
7. states its commitment to providing sporting opportunities for young people within the City to enable them to emulate the successes of our Olympians; and
8. notes that the Community Development Scrutiny panel has been asked to nominate members to sit on a small working group to develop a pricing strategy for sports services. This group will consider, as part of its remit, our pricing policy for the use of our facilities by young gifted and talented athletes.

The motion was **CARRIED** unanimously.

## **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 – 21.13

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM COUNCIL MEETING OF 8 OCTOBER 2008**

The following questions have been received:

**1. Questions by Members of the Public to Cabinet Members, the Leader of the Council and Chairmen of Scrutiny Committee/Panels**

**(i) Miss W Forman asked the Cabinet Member for the Environment:**

'Why has the issue of there being no traffic calming measures at the corner of Paston Lane and Mildmay Road not been pursued further since raised by Councillor Sandford (a number of times) over the past ten years? As a family, along with our neighbours, we feel greatly let down by PCC and would like to know what it now intends to do on this matter. I would like it noted that over this time-span we have had three cars written off, have had our cars damaged, and have had vehicles come through the fence into our front garden. On one occasion, a motorbike mounted the pavement, narrowly missing my partner and daughter. Each time these incidents have been reported but nothing has been done'.

**Councillor Fitzgerald answered:**

'An investigation was undertaken back in 2006 and the site in question was assessed in accordance with the Speed Management Strategy but failed to score highly. It is therefore not a priority site for treatment and is unlikely to justify engineering intervention for the foreseeable future. Given the issues raised, I will request that our Traffic Officer raises the issue of enforcement at his next Police Liaison Meeting which I believe would be the most appropriate means to address the issue'.

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

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

'Secondary Schools in the north of the city were oversubscribed for the year 7 intake for September 2008 and some pupils were not able to obtain a place at any of their schools of choice. Can you please advise me how many children from the north of the city are being transported to schools in the south and how much is this costing the Council's education department?'

**Councillor Goldspink answered:**

'I am grateful to Councillor Saltmarsh for raising this question, however this request involves the following activities:

- Deciding on the methodology and data that needs to be collected and presented;
- Gathering GIS information on distances and preferences for **individual** pupils;
- Acquiring information from the Integrated Passenger Transport Team regarding route costs and unit cost of all pupil journeys;
- Tracking individual pupil's theoretical catchment areas and matching these to the schools they attend.

This work cannot be done within three or four working days, but it will be done with the next four working weeks. I will be very happy to present the results of this work to the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel and any subsequent Council meeting.



This request involves a huge amount of work. I would be interested to know why Councillor Saltmarsh wants this information, what benefit she thinks the city will derive from obtaining it and whether it is so important that I have to withdraw staff from providing essential services and dealing with the very real challenges that we face to ensure children this year reach their full potential. I will be asking my staff to tell me exactly how many hours it takes and what tasks are delayed or foregone as a result of producing it'.

**Councillor Saltmarsh asked a supplementary question as follows:**

'Are all secondary schools at maximum intake for 2008 as I believe there may be places available at Jack Hunt and the Academy?'

**Councillor Goldspink responded:**

'There are no spaces at the Academy. However, the Council believes there are places at Jack Hunt but the school disagrees and this matter is due to be put before the adjudicator, as it is affecting other schools across Peterborough'.

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

'Will the Leader of the Council make a statement on the likely impact of the credit crunch and the decline in the property market on the Council's Capital Programme? The Capital Programme over the next three years includes a number of major educational projects and some rather large new waste management facilities, including the Council's proposed waste incinerator. The Programme was to be financed partly by a large programme of asset disposals, the full proceeds of which are now unlikely to be realised due to the deteriorating economic situation. Will the Leader, as a matter of urgency, review the Capital Programme, both its content and how it is to be financed, and will he ensure that the results of this review are reported both to Council and to the Scrutiny Committee?'

**The Leader of the Council answered:**

'Peterborough is like any area within the Country and is feeling the impact of the 'Credit Crunch'. Land values are falling and this of course will have an impact on the Capital Receipts that were anticipated to support Council objectives. It should be noted that not all of the Capital Programme was funded by Capital receipts - a proportion will be funded through borrowing.

Having said the above we have already recognised the challenge that the 'Credit Crunch' poses. Work has already started across the Council to identify the actions that we will take to ensure that we are able to meet our key objectives whilst remaining within the strict financial constraints that we have set ourselves in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. We anticipate this piece of work being completed this autumn.

**Councillor Sandford asked a supplementary question as follows:**

'Is the Leader aware that he appears to be saying that the Council can borrow if there is a shortfall in Capital Receipts? The borrowing requirement in 2010 will already be almost £15 million – what would be the impact of continuing to finance?'

**The Leader of the Council responded:**

Any Changes to the Capital Programme and thereby the funding regime will be included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy which will be reported to Council and also considered by the Scrutiny Committee'.

**(iii) Councillor Murphy asked the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care Services:**

'In 2005, the Primary Care Trust (PCT) was known as the GPPCT and soon afterwards, when Peterborough won unitary status over our Health Authority, it became the PPCT. Due to the significant change in name there was a clear need to change stationery, letterheads, business cards and so on. I understand that the PCT is now known as Peterborough NHS. Could the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care Services justify why this name change was brought about without any consultation locally, considering this Council provides a lot of money to the PCT, and secondly, could she also advise what was the cost of this change, as I understand a percentage of this would have been picked up by the local authority. Finally, is she able to justify this cost and change to local taxpayers?'

**Councillor Lamb answered:**

'From July 2008 Peterborough Primary Care Trust took on a new identity – 'NHS Peterborough'.

This change is part of a nationwide move to create a clearer identity for the role that PCTs play – so that stakeholders, local populations, NHS staff and others can better understand their function as the front line for the NHS and the local leader of the NHS. The main problem PCTs faced is that the public had no understanding of what a PCT is or what it does. Even the words primary care trust no longer describe what the organisation does. This makes it harder for the PCT to engage with stakeholders and for stakeholders to hold the PCT to account. 'NHS Peterborough' makes it clearer that it is the lead organisation and is accountable to its stakeholders, i.e. those taxpayers who ultimately fund the services.

Costs are being kept to a minimum. Signage at key sites has been replaced at a cost of £983 and this has been funded from NHS monies not from Local Authority monies. The money provided to NHS Peterborough by Peterborough City Council as part of the Section 75 Agreement is for specific purposes around the provision and commissioning of adult social care services. All other signs and leaflets will not be rebadged as NHS Peterborough until they become due for updating or reordering.

The NHS Peterborough Board approved the rebranding for the reasons I have outlined. Consultation was not necessary given the decision was solely a name change with no service implications and minimal cost as I have described. A press release and a letter to partners announced the change and explained the reasons'.

**(iv) Councillor Judy Fox asked the Cabinet Member for Community Services:**

'The Peterborough Heritage display in the Museum depicts various buildings that are part of Peterborough's heritage. I believe an external consultant or researchers were engaged to undertake the research for the display and I have noticed that there are errors in some of the content. Are we employing external consultants or researchers to do a job that could have been done more effectively by someone locally?'

**Councillor Lee answered:**

'The Art Gallery in the Museum is currently running an exhibition entitled 'Opening Doors to Hidden Heritage', which is a photographic display of local sites and historic buildings in and around Peterborough.

Factual errors have been identified in the display material and immediate steps have been taken to put this to rights: Firstly, a notice has been posted alongside the exhibition introductory panel apologising for the errors and informing visitors of the correct details. Secondly, in the light of this production error we have added further quality assurance measures to our exhibition planning process to ensure that all content displayed is in future double checked.

External consultants were not used on this project. In this instance the exhibition was an externally funded project requiring delivery over a short period and to a constrained timescale. The project was undertaken by staff employed by the Council as researchers on short term contracts who have since left, along with freelance researchers/photographers where necessary. These researchers consulted local historical records, heritage professionals and experts in the field in compiling the exhibition content, but regrettably errors were produced.

The result is that the Opening Doors exhibition, whilst for the most part is a fine and informative exhibition, does not meet the usually high and exacting standards of the Art and Museum programme. This is the sort of situation that we strive to avoid and I can assure you that steps were taken at the earliest opportunity to address this uncharacteristic lapse in standards, lessons have been learned and you can be assured of a high quality exhibitions programme going forward.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Councillor Judy Fox for her interest and continuing support of the Museum’.

**(v) Councillor John Fox asked the Leader:**

‘During the financial instability that is taking place worldwide, can the Leader of the Council please reassure the taxpayers of Peterborough that he will not renege on his promise of keeping the Council Tax down to 1.4% for the next three years, and can he also reassure me that this promise will be honoured by any future Leader over the next three years?’

**The Leader of the Council answered:**

‘A very difficult question. Our aim is to keep to a 1.4% rise in Council Tax for each of the next three years – that is our target. We will have regard to all financing issues as part of the development of the medium term financial strategy and take the advice of the Chief Finance Officer in preparing the budget submission to Council. The second part of the question is not for me to answer’.

**Councillor Fox asked a supplementary question as follows:**

‘I am concerned about the impact on employment’.

**The Leader of the Council responded:**

‘The Council’s Business Transformation Programme is investing in services and IT to ensure our service is better and more efficient, over the long term. This may mean that less people work for the Council, whether they will be made redundant or we will lose people through natural wastage remains to be seen.

**(vi) Councillor John Fox will ask the Cabinet Member for the Environment:**

‘Can the Cabinet Member for the Environment ascertain why it is taking so long to do the road improvements of the new A1073 by-pass at the junction with Newborough Road and the A47. The work on this junction seems to have come to a bit of a standstill and is causing a vast amount of inconvenience to the residents of Newborough who use this road as their main thoroughfare in to the city’.

**Councillor Fitzgerald answered:**

‘The A1073 Eye to Spalding improvement scheme is one of the largest local authority highway schemes under construction in the country. The scheme is due to open to traffic in autumn 2010. The A47 section of the A1073 scheme has been subject to some delays. The Highways Agency has taken considerably longer to give full approval for the A47 Trunk Road section than was originally envisaged and this has affected progress at this end of the overall

scheme. Approval for protection works to an existing gas main crossing the proposed roundabout location at Welland Road is also causing concurrent delays. Construction of the earthworks has progressed on the west bound carriageway of the new dual carriageway section of the A47 and this area is undergoing the specified settlement period prior to roadworks construction recommencing. While these issues are resulting in delays to the A47 works, it is intended that these works will be completed within the 72 week scheme construction period'.

**Councillor John Fox asked a supplementary question as follows:**

'Has the Cabinet Member visited the site in question? Work has come to a standstill and people are having to travel through Eye in order to get into the city'.

**Councillor Fitzgerald responded:**

'Work is progressing in other areas further along this stretch of road which is part of the same road improvement scheme. A period of settlement is also necessary. The intention remains that the work will be completed within the original 72 week period'.

***The following questions within this category were not addressed during the meeting as to have dealt with them would have resulted in exceeding the time allowed under the Council's Standing Orders (Rules of Procedure). It was advised that written responses would therefore be forwarded to the relevant Members.***

**(vii) Councillor Lane would have asked the Leader of the Council:**

'I was heartened to hear the Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government speaking in Birmingham on 1 October announcing that under a Conservative Government, weekly bin collections will be back and recycling will go up. I was equally heartened to see the Leader of Peterborough City Council in the audience applauding the speaker. Does his reaction give encouragement to Peterborough that its 'lesser spotted wheelie bin' now faces extinction?'

**The Leader of the Council would have answered:**

'I am delighted to hear that Councillor Lane seeks the highest quality daytime viewing and despite all his efforts to appear as an Independent, is quite clearly a closet Tory who enjoys all of our values apart from the party whip.

Councillor Lane's question is one that perplexed me. I was unaware that there were some sub-species of wheelie-bin resident in the Werrington area as opposed to the normal black, green and brown varieties, although as an area blessed with the Great Crested Newt I should not be surprised at any aspect of the city's bio-diversity and I would hope that all species could continue to flourish.

If however, Councillor Lane is trying to ask will, under a Conservative Government, the Council return to a weekly collection programme, then I am sure that once there is a change in Westminster for the better I feel certain that the new Prime Minister will live up to his promises and increase the Council's resources. This could allow us to introduce weekly collection of waste, albeit we may have to consider the size of receptacle used to ensure that our residents continue to assist us in delivering our target of 65% of waste recycled.

This Council is committed to environmental excellence and will take every opportunity to reinforce its position as Environment Capital and I am delighted that Councillor Lane recognises that the way to do this is to vote Conservative.'

**(viii) Councillor Fower would have asked the Leader of the Council:**

'How much money has Peterborough City Council spent on the employment and use of consultants (including external) to undertake/support or initiate work that comes under the

remit of the City Council, for each of the last three years and who decides on which companies should be used?’

**The Leader of the Council would have answered:**

‘The answer to this question is currently being researched and a written response will be supplied once the information is available’.

**(ix) Councillor Fower would have asked the Cabinet Member for the Environment:**

*‘Peterborough cannot meet its landfill targets through recycling alone’ - (source:PCC). ‘ Aside from the introduction of the three bin scheme, which was originally a policy of the Peterborough Liberal Democrats, what contemporary or unique initiatives have Peterborough City Council introduced in the last five years to help reduce waste in this city?’*

**Councillor Fitzgerald would have answered**

‘The answer to this question is very lengthy. I would therefore refer Councillor Fower to my written response to this question, sent earlier this week and all Members have a copy of this document before them this evening’.

**(x) Councillor Harrington would have asked the Leader of the Council:**

‘I refer to the recently enforced closure of Café Limon which had allegedly accumulated rent arrears of £85K and an undisclosed amount of business rates. Can the Leader explain how this was allowed to happen, what steps are being taken to recover the debt, and how this Council will ensure that in future, other tenants of this authority are not allowed to accrue such debts before appropriate action is taken?’

**The Leader would have answered:**

I think that the first point to be made is that we as a Council take no pleasure in closing a business down. It is not to our benefit when a business closes as it will leave a void that will be difficult to fill in the current economic climate and leave the Council with financial liabilities. Given this, we actively manage our tenants and seek to agree repayment plans that will allow them to pay their arrears whilst remaining in business. This proactive approach ensures that the closure of a business because of outstanding debts is the last resort. Many businesses survive because of the approach we take and the benefits far outweigh the costs. We quite simply give businesses the opportunity to recover a situation. This of course leads to benefits to the local economy, including employment, services for people, etc.

I will now move on to Limon in particular. We became aware of some of the problems some eighteen months ago. We entered into dialogue with the tenant and indeed payments were received. There is a detailed history of proactive engagement with the tenant, which it is not appropriate to disclose in this public forum. There came a point when we reluctantly decided to take legal action to terminate the lease. There then followed a lengthy court process leading to us closing the premises down on the 17 September.

We are now in the process of legal redress to recover the outstanding sums, again of course, I cannot give details, other than to say we will do all we can to recover the outstanding amount. It is of little amusement to any of us that a key unit on Bridge Street is now empty and I trust the member will accept that these are judgements that are not easy to make, although easy for some to criticise’.

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

No questions were received.

**4. Questions from Members to Cabinet Members or Committee Chairmen about issues relevant to their ward**

**(i) Councillor Over asked the Cabinet Member for the Environment**

'Why, after at least seven years, has Anglian Water not been required to prevent unacceptable levels of air pollution from Stamford Sewage Works (which is within Peterborough Unitary Authority) causing economic loss, health concerns and a public nuisance to people living in and around the village of Barnack?'

**Councillor Fitzgerald answered:**

'The answer to this question is very lengthy. I would therefore refer Councillor Over to my written response to this question, sent earlier this week, and all Members have a copy of this document before them this evening'.

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

'I would like to ask the following questions in respect of the redevelopment of the former John Mansfield School site:

- a) When will demolition works commence on the site and when will such work be completed?
- b) The former art block on this site is in urgent need of refurbishment. Given that this building is to be retained as part of a Section 106 agreement, when will funds be released to undertake this work? A letter from the Chief Executive to the Dogsthorpe and Welland Community Development Group dated 12 August 2008, confirms that funding can be released and repaid from sale proceeds thus allowing works such as the art block refurbishment, to commence. What is the reason for the delay and what are the timescales for the work to commence and conclude?
- c) When will work commence to re-route the utilities on this site and what is the expected timescale for completion?'

**Councillor Scott answered:**

- a) Subject to finalising the configuration of the retained buildings, quotations for this work is in progress, aiming for a start in January 2009 with a twelve week programme;
- b) The Section 106 obligation of £150K connected with Sports England requirement for replacing facilities in the school disposal programme will be used to reimburse the funds that can be taken from the Community Reinvestment Grant budget to renovate the arts building. Work (value circa. £22K) to renew the roof will begin within the next few weeks;
- c) Re-routing of the services is dependent on final configuration of the retained building. This work can start when this is decided and subject to the utilities' own work programmes, but will be completed before the demolition is finished so ensuring that tenants can continue to operate.

**Councillor Miners asked a supplementary question as follows:**

'I would like details of the total cost and timescale to renovate the whole former art block, not just the roof. Can the Cabinet Member advise why this work cannot be done all at the same time if the money is available?'

**Councillor Scott responded:**

'Unfortunately I cannot answer this immediately. However, you will receive a written answer within a week'.

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

'Could the Cabinet Member for the Environment inform me how the £10K allocated to Cuckoo's Hollow in Werrington will be spent this year and if there will be any consultation with the ward councillor for Werrington and the Friends of Cuckoo Hollow on how best to spend this money? I would also like to invite the Cabinet Member to come along for a walk around the lake, with the Friends of Cuckoo's Hollow, to see for himself just what can be achieved when there is a will to achieve it, and to remind him that there is still a lot of productive work to be done'.

**Councillor Fitzgerald answered:**

'The Council has set a provision of £10K in this year's capital programme for works to the water course through Cuckoo's Hollow. This is a similar figure to the amount that was made available last year, when we were able to significantly improve the flow of water through the pond area and help increase oxygen levels. We anticipate that this year work will be undertaken to trim back some of the reed beds and undertake some maintenance of the island. However, we will be consulting with residents and the Friends of Cuckoo's Hollow prior to commencing work. It would have been inappropriate to undertake this work in the summer months due to the risk of disturbing breeding habitats for birds and other aquatic species'.

**(iv) Councillor Fower asked the Cabinet Member for the Environment:**

'What do people living in and around the old Lincoln Road have to do in order for the current administration to take action on preventing vehicles speeding along the said stretch of road?'

**Councillor Fitzgerald answered:**

'The section of Lincoln Road (from the Cock Inn to Davids Lane) comprises a wide, relatively straight carriageway with properties being set well back from the edge of the highway and therefore presents a wide and clear aspect to motorists. Following identification of the speeding issue (85% vehicle speeds over 40mph, despite the limit being 30mph), it was one of the four sites treated as part of the pilot scheme to use vehicle activated signs (VAS) and also had speed limit roundels marked on the carriageway at the northern end. Whilst the VAS achieved a small reduction in speeds for a short duration there was no lasting effect.

Any engineering solution to achieve a permanent reduction in speeds would be expensive and not justified on the lack of accidents that have occurred (only three accidents in the past three years). Furthermore, such measures would need to reflect the regular bus usage and thus may prove less effective in addressing the speeding issue.

I will request that our Traffic Officer raises the issue of enforcement at his next Police Liaison Meeting which I believe would be the most appropriate means to address the issue'.

**Councillor Fower asked a supplementary question as follows:**

'Would the Cabinet Member like to visit the area and join him in a 'door-to-door' walkabout to speak with residents?'

**Councillor Fitzgerald responded:**

'I would be happy to do this if you have real concerns that you feel are not being addressed'.

