

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT CAPITAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD AT THE BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM - TOWN HALL ON 11 MARCH 2010**

**Present:** Councillors D Day (Vice-Chairman), J A Fox, J Peach and N Sandford

**Officers Present:** Trevor Gibson, Director of Environment Capital  
Kim Sawyer, Head of Legal  
Louise Tyers, Scrutiny Manager

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Arculus, Burton, North and Wilkinson. Councillor Peach was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Burton.

Apologies were also received from Councillor Lee, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment Capital & Culture and Councillor S Dalton, Cabinet Advisor for Environment Capital & Culture.

**2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes**

**3.1 15 February 2010**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2010 were approved as an accurate record, subject to:

**Item 7 – Carbon Management Action Plan**

Amended bullet point 9 to read “The policy of City Services is rather than prune bushes is to remove them completely. This has an impact in carbon terms as it takes away the capacity of plants to sequester carbon. *The draft Plan had been submitted to the Carbon Trust before the budget meetings had started and before the decision had been made to swap to grass. City Services had advised that replacing shrubs with grass would be a like for like change in relation to carbon.*”

**3.2 23 February 2010**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2010 were approved as an accurate record.

**4. Call In of any Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Key Officer Decisions**

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

## 5. Response to Recommendations

The Committee considered the responses made by the Executive to recommendations made at previous meetings.

The recommendations related to:

- Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2014
- Bus Service Review

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- The issue of street lighting at Gresley Way had been raised at the meeting on 14 January and Councillor Sandford had raised the issue directly with the Executive Director of Operations who advised that the lights would be repaired in a couple of weeks, however they are still not working which is unacceptable.
- A number of recommendations were made at the last meeting about the Christmas Park and Ride service, had these been put forward? *The recommendations had been put forward but a response had not yet been received.*
- The Committee were advised at one of the budget meetings that the impact of the budget proposals on the staffing structure were still to be worked on, what stage was the work at?

### **ACTION AGREED**

The Scrutiny Manager to clarify the position with the Gresley Way street lighting and the impact on the staffing structure of the budget.

## 6. Progress on the Environment Capital Portfolio

Councillor Sandford asked for it to be minuted that he was disappointed that the Cabinet Member for Environment Capital was not in attendance and had chosen to attend another meeting.

The Director of Environment Capital presented the progress on the delivery of the Environment Capital portfolio.

Strong progress continued to be made in relation to the Environment Capital priority despite declining performance against the LAA targets. A number of highlights were:

### **City Visualisation Project**

The City Council, Opportunity Peterborough, IBM, Royal Haskoning and Green Ventures were engaged in a new collaboration to support Peterborough's ambition of being one of the leading sustainable cities in the UK. The companies were working on an exciting City Visualisation project which would display Peterborough's environmental performance in real-time and be a key tool in helping the city's systems to become smarter and more efficient. These changes aimed to cement Peterborough's place as Environment Capital and directly impacted the quality of life for people living and working in Peterborough for future generations.

The first phase of the project was to use the latest technologies to build a new online platform which could visualise on a city scale an integrated view of the energy, water, transport and waste systems. Gathering and displaying this key data in an understandable form would enable the city to understand both its current environmental performance and enable it to make informed decisions and strategies to maximise sustainability. The aim was

to accelerate the pace of change by engaging the public and professionals in understanding the whole city system. The Peterborough Model platform would allow people living in Peterborough to view the overall performance of the city and provide feedback on areas to improve. Utilities, government agencies and businesses in the local area would have a visual platform that would help them to co-ordinate their plans to make Peterborough more sustainable. The Peterborough Model would enable partners to identify the areas where improvement could be made and where collaboration could achieve sustainability targets while saving money.

### **Carbon Reduction Strategy**

The City Council had now adopted its Carbon Reduction Strategy which set out how it intended to reduce its carbon footprint through a range of costed, practical measures within its property portfolio and vehicle fleet.

### **The Core Strategy**

The draft Core Strategy had been adopted by Council and contained a unique policy which would require all new developments in the city to contribute positively to Environment Capital. The Strategy would now go through its final consultation and examination in public prior to adoption in late 2010. Work had commenced on the Special Planning Document which would translate the overarching policy into practical measures to improve the sustainability of buildings as the city grows.

### **Future Jobs Fund**

There had been a successful bid to the Future Jobs Fund which would shortly see a group of trained advisors working with households across the city to support changes in behaviour in areas such as travel and energy and water use.

### **Environment Capital Steering Group**

The Cabinet Member for Environment Capital had established a new Environment Capital Steering Group to drive forward the Environment Capital agenda across the Council and partnership.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- In the City Visualisation Project, what was meant by 'real-time'? *The first stage would be energy and water and it would be able to show the energy usage during the last month and also future usage. It would also be able to show the energy usage in different wards. There would be an ability to plug in to it real time information, for example, how much energy was coming into the city at any given time. It would also look at how many transport journeys were happening in and out of the city.*
- How could Anglian Water break down their usage to a ward level? *It was possible and some energy was easier to break down to a ward level. The best data available was around Glinton as the village had undergone a number of thorough surveys and could be used as a good example. Individual households would be able to look at their impact on climate change. This would be a unique project globally.*
- Who were the members of the Environment Capital Steering Group and how were they chosen? *The membership was Councillors Lee, S Dalton, Trevor Gibson, Paul Phillipson, Hugh Cripps, Ken Mackay, Richard Pearn and Richard Astle. The group linked into the Environment Capital Partnership and they were chosen to represent a wide cross section of partners.*
- At the Environment Masterclass, Jonathan Porritt said that if Peterborough was genuine in its attempts to become the Environment Capital then it should not only be used as a PR exercise. Were plans being developed to ensure there was an

objective assessment of our claim to be the Environment Capital? *We were working around a shared vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy and had developed a draft set of values that would have to be achieved, for example, that all decisions could demonstrate how they impacted on the environment. A basket of measures was being developed, based on those used by the Forum for the Future, and a number of those would have to be green with no red. It would need external verification but at the moment there were no criteria for cities of our size.*

- A robust policy framework was needed to support the Environment Capital. At a recent Neighbourhood Council meeting a member of the public had raised an issue around open space and asked whether the Council had a policy on it. Also, the Trees and Woodlands Policy was seen in draft a couple of years ago but had not yet come back to be considered. *The Director of Environment Capital would get a progress report on both strategies.*
- What was the Covenant of Mayors and how would it benefit Peterborough? *It was a commitment that the City Council had given to tackle climate change alongside approximately 1300 cities across Europe. It would be an opportunity to learn from others and we may be able to access funding. Putting our name forward showed a commitment to climate change and we were the only city in the East of England to do so.*
- In Greater Manchester, they had established the Red Rose Community Forest which was a Green Streets Initiative supported by the Forestry Commission. This initiative put alternative shrubs in place and encouraged tree and flower planting. This was an excellent example of how the Council should be working with communities.

## **ACTION AGREED**

To note the progress made on the delivery of the Environment Capital portfolio.

### **7. Progress on the Delivery of the Local Area Agreement Priority**

The Committee received an update on the performance as at December 2009 of the Environment Capital outcomes contained within the Local Area Agreement (LAA).

Peterborough's LAA contained four priorities: Creating Strong and Supportive Communities; Creating the UK's Environment Capital; Creating Opportunities, Tackling Inequalities; Substantial and Truly Sustainable Growth. Each of those priorities had four specific outcomes, beneath which sat a diverse range of actions and interventions to deliver lasting positive change for Peterborough.

The Environment Capital priority was measured by four specific outcomes: Overall Consumption of Natural Resources, Increasing the Use of Sustainable Transport, Growing our Environment Business Sector and Making Peterborough Cleaner and Greener. A Red/Amber/Green flagging system was used to indicate overall performance against each of the outcomes – red indicated that the outcome was significantly behind target, amber indicated that the outcome was experiencing difficulties, and green indicated that the outcome was on target or had achieved its objectives.

Overall, 7 of the priority's 13 indicators were currently on track against their targets, with 4 off track. This was an improvement from the previous quarter where only 4 of the indicators were on track.

Amongst the positive aspects, street inspections had shown that Peterborough's streets were clean, with low levels of litter, detritus and graffiti, the city's environmental goods and services sector continued to grow and the environmental awareness of Peterborough's citizens was high thanks to effective education and promotion of the sustainability agenda.

A number of areas were in need of improvement. The number of people using the city's buses had reduced over the first half of 2009/10 and reports of fly tipping had increased compared to last year. Peterborough was currently missing its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction targets and levels of recycling and waste were below their quarterly targets.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- There was concern that there was a downward decline in performance, were officers aware of what that decline was down to? *We did not know the full cause of the drop. The natural resources outcome showing red was primarily due to the city's carbon footprint and because DEFRA had refined the baseline figure. The baseline had been reduced so there was now a bigger gap against our targets which could not be altered as we had no control over the calculation.*
- The issues around waste recycling were not unique to Peterborough. Companies were starting to package goods differently and people were purchasing less so the rate was falling back. However compared to the rest of Cambridgeshire we were considerably better.
- The issues around the fall in the number of bus journeys needed further investigation as to why it was dropping, up until that point we had had one of the largest increases in patronage. It could be down to a number of reasons including less employment and there being less money available.
- Who were the members of the working group which was reviewing the service around enforcement of flytipping? *Officers would find out the membership and let the Committee know.*
- The Council had made a lot of investments over the years, including Sustainable Travel Town and widening the type of recyclables accepted, what could or should we be doing to improve the performance return on our investment? *With recycling there was a huge amount of education work going on. There was a trial of taking contaminated waste to another facility to produce fuel derived from waste and we were also looking at other schemes. With bus services, we were looking at introducing flexible ways of ticketing and travelling.*
- There was currently an issue with the logistics of the bus service in Peterborough as often buses got caught up in traffic and then were delayed, meaning sometimes three buses turned up at the same time. The Local Transport Plan (LTP) stated that traffic signal priority would be to buses and often illegally parked cars also got in the way. The Council should support bus operators by dealing with the congestion and traffic signals etc as there could be a danger that Stagecoach could withdraw services. *The next LTP and Longer Term Transport Strategy were being development and the Committee may want to review them and challenge what was being proposed.*
- The Waste Recycling Action Programme guidance says that authorities should have a series of small containers for recycling so it could be sorted at source. Some funding should be given to initiatives such as recycling textiles and plastics to encourage recycling rates.
- The new charges for the bulky waste collection service could lead to more incidents of flytipping. *There was no evidence to say that the changes may increase the incidents of flytipping but this would need to be monitored.*

## **ACTION AGREED**

To write to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment Capital advising of our concerns at the changes to the bulky waste collection service and request that a report is brought back to the Committee in November 2010 on the impact of the changes.

## **8. Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

The latest version of the Forward Plan, showing details of the key decisions that the Leader of the Council believed the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would be making over the next four months, was received.

### **ACTION AGREED**

To note the latest version of the Forward Plan.

CHAIRMAN  
7.00 - 8.00 pm