

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT CAPITAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM - TOWN HALL ON 15 FEBRUARY 2010**

Present: Councillors D Day (Vice-Chairman), R Dobbs, J A Fox, J Wilkinson and N Sandford

Also Present: Councillor S Dalton – Cabinet Advisor for Environment Capital and Culture

Officers Present: Christina Wells, Head of Strategic Improvement & Partnerships
Charlotte Palmer, Climate Change Team Manager
Teresa Wood, Group Manager - Transport & Sustainable Environment
Claire Boyd, Lawyer - Contracts and Procurement
Louise Tyers, Scrutiny Manager

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Burton and North.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

3.1 6 January 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2010 were approved as an accurate record.

Councillor JA Fox requested that it be noted that she did not wish to put her Ward's Community Leadership Fund allocation to the Neighbourhood Councils. Councillor Sandford advised that it was the Liberal Democrats Group's view that the Council would need to take a view at some point as to whether it had the Community Leadership Fund or Neighbourhood Councils.

3.2 14 January 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2010 were approved as an accurate record.

Councillor Sandford advised that the street lighting referred to in the minutes was still out of order and that this was unacceptable.

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

Bus Service Review

A request to call-in the decision made by the Cabinet on the Bus Service Review had been received today.

A special meeting of the Committee would be arranged within 10 working days to consider the request.

5. Refresh of the Local Area Agreement

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) was the delivery strategy for achieving the outcomes set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). It was a three-year agreement negotiated between the partners in Peterborough under the auspices of the Greater Peterborough Partnership (GPP), and regional and national government. It set out the agreed actions and targets which would enable us to deliver our SCS. The report set out the outcomes of the annual refresh of the LAA which had refreshed some of the third year targets.

The current LAA was negotiated in early 2008 and was signed off in April 2008. 2010/11 was the final year of this agreement. The annual refresh process enabled some targets to be negotiated under the following circumstances;

- National or local factors were having a sustained negative effect on performance and could not be mitigated
- Targets that had previously been deferred were now able to be negotiated
- Adjustments to targets required following publication of actual figures rather than estimations (i.e. Place Survey data)

It also enabled corrections to be negotiated where errors had been made in the target setting.

A number of our LAA designated indicators met these criteria:

The Place Survey Indicators

- NI 1 - % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
- NI 4 - % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
- NI 6 - Participation in regular volunteering

These indicators had been refreshed but this had only involved very minor changes to the original targets. This was in direct response to the validated, published data from June 2009 as opposed to the previous draft Place Survey results.

NI 54 - Services for disabled children

This was a designated indicator within the LAA that did not have a third year target. The proposed final year target had been agreed without issue – current performance was very good and the refreshed target provided for further improvement in performance.

NI 112 – Under 18 conception rate

A final year target had not been set for this indicator. The target proposed by central government was a national target which was deemed unachievable at the outset of the LAA by partners. However, central government had agreed to allow all LAA partnerships to remove NI 112 from the Performance Reward calculations at the end of the LAA in 2010/11, should they wish to do so.

There were three options open to Peterborough:

1. To include the third year (2010/11) national target in the LAA and elect to remove it from LAA Reward grant calculations
2. To leave the third year target blank *and* remove it from the reward
3. To include a third year target and keep it in the Reward

The GPP Executive had recommended that Peterborough takes advantage of option 2. The local target proposed by the Director of Children's Services would ensure that the agenda remained a priority. This target would appear in all our local documentation. Planned work would continue to focus on improving our rates of Under 18 conceptions.

The Economic Prosperity Indicators

- NI 151 - Overall Employment rate
- NI 153 - Working age people claiming out of work benefits in worst performing neighbourhoods
- NI 166 - Average earnings of employees in the area
- NI 171 - VAT registration rate

The national guidance for the refresh process had given us the opportunity to renegotiate four economic-based indicators set before the economic down-turn. The proposals for the new targets had been agreed with Government Office (GO). However, when the proposals were discussed at the Growth Board, members expressed concern that setting lower targets would be interpreted as setting lower aspirations. The Growth Board were concerned that we should maintain high targets and not lower aspirations for the city.

On this basis they recommended a recalculation of the proposals to close the gap with regional averages. The data on regional averages reflected the pre-downturn performance not current. In reality, these averages when published would likely be lower.

The options were:

1. Accept proposals for new (lower) targets made by the partnership working group. These were stretching but could be achieved.
2. Accept the Growth Board's recommendation to introduce higher targets but accept that these would not be achieved within the remaining 12 months of the LAA.

NI 150 - Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment

During the course of the refresh, it was raised that the targets set previously for this indicator were subject to errors in the calculations. This had been discussed with and verified by GO and the targets subsequently amended.

Observation and questions were asked around the following areas:

- What would be the impact on the Council of not achieving the reward monies? *To achieve the reward monies we were required to achieve 60% of the designated indicators and this equated to approximately £650,000 which was increased for every % extra achieve. If we do not achieve we risked losing this money.*
- Do you think that the proposed targets are achievable? *If the economic indicators are set at the lower level then they should be achievable. The Growth Board were concerned that if the lower level were set for these targets than the perception could be that we were lowering our aspirations.*
- Would we only get the reward monies if we hit the 60% target? *Some of the targets are weighted and we are currently predicting 54% achievement so there is a lot of work to be done. The changes that had been put forward by the Partnership Working Group made this more achievable.*

RECOMMENDATION

That the Leader of the Council approves the refresh of the Local Area Agreement with the economic prosperity indicators – NI 151, 153, 166 and 177 – set at the level proposed by the Partnership Working Group.

6. Christmas Park and Ride Service

The Council had operated a Christmas Park and Ride service since 1999 and whilst relatively successful, the service had always operated at a cost to the Council. Over recent years additional funding had been provided to either offer an enhanced service (increased number of days, a third site) or to support the £20,000 budget held in Transport and Sustainable Environment. The service had operated free of charge since 2004. The table below gave a comparison of usage for the service from its commencement in 1999:

Year	Number of operating days	Number of cars	Number of passengers	Charge
1999	11	3,203	6,843	£1 per car
2000	11	3,249	7,836	£1 per car
2001	9	2,570	5,435	£1 per adult
2002	10	2,392	4,746	£1 per adult
2003	10	2,452	4,954	£1 per adult
2004	9	3,479	8,598	Free
2005	20	5,095	13,960	Free
2006	19	6,560	16,152	Free
2007	19	6,057	17,321	Free
2008	13	3,780	7,149	Free
2009	12	3,361	6,914	Free

The average number of passengers using the service per day each year fluctuated and this was due to a number of reasons:

- The number of passengers using the service on Sundays was less than Saturdays. The split of operational days had varied year on year.
- In the first 5 years there had been a charge to use the service, but the service had been free since that time.
- The Town Bridge repair work impacted on the ease of access for car users into the city.

Year	Operational Days		Cost of Bus Service Provision	Security and Signage
	Saturdays	Sundays		
2007	14	5	£32,325	£4,859
2008	9	4	£20,660	£2,754
2009	6	6	£18,990	£5,338

The service was retendered in April 2008 and a reduction in the cost per day was achieved. The cost of security increased in 2009 as procurement of the service was provided at short notice with an interim provider. Corporately, security service provision was under review.

It was proposed that there was a provision of £29k to fund a Christmas Park and Ride service for 2010 in the Council's budget. However this was still to be approved by Council on 24 February 2010.

Dependent upon the outcome of the security provision review, it was estimated that 14 operational days could be undertaken during 2010 within the proposed £29k budget, however there would be no budget remaining to market or promote the service. Should the funding provision proposed in this year's budget setting process be withdrawn it would not be possible to deliver a Christmas Park and Ride service from other budgets.

The issue of charging for the Christmas Park and Ride service needed to be addressed for 2010. This required a further piece of work on what would be a reasonable fare for such a service.

Consideration had been given to extending the Christmas Park and Ride service to a year-round Park and Ride service. At present there was insufficient demand or budget to consider this further at this time. The aspiration for a year-round Park and Ride service was set out in the Long Term Transport Strategy which would inform the third Local Transport Plan for Peterborough. A report on a year-round Park and Ride service could be provided in late 2010/early 2011.

Observations and questions were asked around the following areas:

- What did other councils charge for Park and Ride? *It varied across councils, some charged per passenger or per car. Benchmarking information could be provided.*
- What did the security at the sites involved? *It was the cost of security officers on site and issuing tickets to cars entering the car park. As the sites were owned by other companies there were also insurance issues.*
- In 2007 the usage of the service was 7,149, however in September 2009 all councillors received an email saying that due to a drop in usage the service was being withdrawn and then reinstated. If 2008 was seen a failure how can 6,914 be seen as a success? *Regular press releases had been issued comparing like with like usage against previous weeks. The policy in the Local Transport Plan stated that we would provide a Park and Ride service and that was why there was the turnaround over the decision to stop the service.*
- The figures showed that the service needed to run for a significant period to be successful.
- A previous proposal from Full Council was that a charge should be made for the service but that did not happen. *The charging proposal from Full Council was around sponsorship, if we did not get sponsorship it would cost around £16 per person for the service to be cost neutral.*
- A scrutiny review in 2006 also recommended that a charge should be considered for the service as a way of providing additional funds to allow the service to be expanded but this also was not taken on. The scrutiny review found that the majority of people would still continue to use the service if there was a small charge. *There was a charge for the service until 2004 when the charge was removed due to the major works on the Town Bridge. There was now a need to review this.*
- Complaints had been received that people who lived near the sites, but did not use a car, were not allowed to use the service. It was believed that there was an informal understanding that these people could use the service. *The aim of the service was to take cars out of the city centre and not to detract from existing commercially operated services. Most of the complaints received were from people who lived on the main bus corridor in Orton Wistow..*
- How many buses a day ran when the service was operating and did we provide the buses? *The buses were contracted in and ran for the majority of the day. The times of the service were 9am – 5pm on Saturdays and 10am – 4.30pm on Sundays, running every 10 minutes.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Community Development is recommended:

- (i) that to increase public confidence in the Park and Ride service it needs to run for a longer period up to Christmas; and
- (ii) that a small charge is imposed on the Park and Ride service so funds can be used to increase the period the service runs for.

7. Carbon Management Action Plan

We welcomed Councillor Sam Dalton to the meeting.

The Carbon Management Action Plan (CMAP) was the outcome of a ten month programme of work that the Council had undertaken as part of the Carbon Trust's Local Authority Carbon Management (LACM) programme. Whilst the Council had previously undertaken various one off initiatives which had had a positive effect on the its overall carbon emissions, this programme of work ensured that initiatives would be undertaken in a planned and measured way in order to comply with various schemes the Council had a legal duty to comply with.

The CMAP detailed the Council's carbon management strategy, baseline emissions, reduction target, outline reduction projects, financing options, embedding actions and programme management. It had been produced by the Climate Change Team with support and guidance from the Carbon Trust and the Carbon Management Programme Board which was chaired by the Executive Director of Operations. The CMAP formally committed the Council to achieve a carbon emissions reduction of 35% of 2008/09 levels by 2014 and supported the city's aspiration to become the UK's Environment Capital. In addition, the work created efficiencies within the Council and reduced the long term exposure to risk. Whilst this would require significant commitment and investment this would be achieved through invest to save mechanisms and external funding initiatives where possible.

All of the projects outlined in the CMAP were indicative at this stage and would be subject to the standard project approval within the Council. Projects would be undertaken by the relevant service area, overseen by the Climate Change Team and would be accountable to the Programme Board.

Observations and questions were asked around the following areas:

- Members offered their congratulations on an excellent document.
- Would the Plan be rolled out to other partners across the City? *It was the intention to roll it out. One of the future tasks was to refresh the Climate Change Strategy and as part of that work we would be producing a toolkit for local businesses to use and also look for them to sign a local declaration. This was not an area which the Council could tackle on its own.*
- The 35% target was very ambitious but how could it be achieved when the Council offered perverse incentives such as parking permits for staff and councillors. *Various options are being considered around staff and member travel but the Plan at this stage only looks at business mileage but we may want to consider commuter mileage in the future.*
- This year's revenue budget stated that £100,000 worth of savings would be made this year by removing staff permits but this had not been achieved. *Permits are being reviewed at the moment but it is not as easy as just withdrawing the permits as it affects employees terms and conditions of employment. We are looking to reduce the number of miles travelled during business time but these are separate pieces of work.*

- Did business miles include City Services machinery e.g. grass cutting machines? *Emissions from the fleet are included separately.*
- The proposed savings from reducing the public transport subsidy was proof that we were not examining carbon emissions comprehensively. *The bus service review was a separate issue which looked at effective provision as opposed to running buses without passengers on board. The proposed Call Connect service would be demand based so mileage would be less than running empty buses.*
- In relation to the Crematorium, a number of years ago there was discussions around promoting green burials. Was this still the case? *There was a need to offer people a choice. Fletton is the only cemetery where green burials are offered in the City. Some people will always prefer cremation but we need to offer the choice.*
- Are the proposed savings at the Crematorium realistic? *We are looking at the current energy consumption and new technology. The rules around mercury abatement are the reason for the upgrade at the Crematorium and this will help with emissions.*
- 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. We have been told that it will be a like for like change in relation to carbon.*
- The Plan details a number of expensive ways forward e.g. replacing boilers, are there any quick wins that can happen? *The Plan contains a number of quick wins, including installing automated meter readers throughout the Council's estate as we are using most energy when buildings are not in use. It is estimated that this can save approximately 5% on the energy bill. We are also looking at making a reduction through good housekeeping e.g. making people aware how they drive vehicles.*
- One area we could look at quickly was refreshments at council meetings e.g. use of individual milk cartons as opposed to using a milk jug and use of plastic cups. *The Waste 2020 project is looking at ways we can recycle those types of plastic. It is taking a view as to what is more efficient using the milk pots or potentially wasting milk by disposing of it if it is not used.*
- The target of 80% reduction by 2050 – how achievable is that? *That is the target that is set in the Climate Change Act. We can only go so far locally and there may be a need to lobby for a change in national policy.*
- It is a big challenge for this to be embedded culturally. The Executive was looking at including a section on environmental implications in its reports and decision notices. The Plan is a working document and we will continue to add projects as they continue to be developed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet Member for Environment Capital and Culture is:

- (i) advised that we commend officers and members for the work which has gone into producing the Carbon Management Action Plan;
- (ii) advised that we are aware of a number of areas which are excluded from the Plan at this time, e.g. carbon emissions of employees commuting into work;
- (iii) recommended that work continues on the Plan and over time that it becomes more comprehensive.

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.

9. Work Programme

We considered the Work Programme for 2009/10.

It had been reported that some or all of the trees in Bridge Street and Long Causeway would be removed. Members asked for clarification for this and that someone should come to a future meeting to explain or provide a briefing.

The future of the depot site should be considered as part of the procurement exercise in relation to City Services.

ACTION AGREED

To note the work programme for 2009/10.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 11 March 2010

CHAIRMAN
7.00 - 8.15 pm