

Opportunity Peterborough Annual Review - 2016/17

1. Overview

2016/17 was a positive and productive year not just for Opportunity Peterborough (OP) but for the whole of the city and its businesses. Claimant count figures continued to fall over the year, meaning more people were in work contributing to the local economic activity. Peterborough now consistently outperforms national figures and is close to the regional levels, whereas that was once certainly not the case.

Increase in employment is driven by growth in local businesses and by new businesses coming to the area. OP supports investment locally by providing a one-stop shop for advice and signposting, with economic intelligence proving an invaluable tool to many companies looking to grow. OP also targets particular sectors, and demonstrates the success of existing clusters in the city, to entice new companies. Attracting investment, both indigenous and new, requires a number of people to work together; OP team, PCC colleagues and private sector partners, agents and developers. If companies can see the team approach, they will know they can get the help they need, when they need it.

One of the recent successes of Peterborough's approach to economic growth has been the OP's Skills Service. This provides invaluable brokerage support bringing together businesses, schools, young people, to ensure that the work force for the city is work ready, and that young people can understand what routes are open to them to have successful futures. This service now supports a much wider area, from South Kesteven and South Holland in the north, to Huntingdonshire and East Cambs, Rutland to Kings Lynn, and in that area, with Peterborough at its heart. Over 20,000 young people have engaged in meetings and events with businesses.

In the past, many people would say 'where's Peterborough'? Now, the name of Peterborough, through our Smart & Future City work is being heard from Belfast to Taipei, Barcelona to Amarati in India. This work puts Peterborough at the forefront of international thinking in circular cities, citizen-centric smart cities and generates an international profile that would have formerly been considered unlikely at best.

All of the above activity drives confidence, and confidence is the main fuel of economic growth. Businesses will always face challenges, and sometimes those will be purely internal operation issues: what OP, along with its partners, can do is help create the right environment for businesses. So that those challenges can be overcome more easily and businesses feel able, and confident, to invest and grow.

Below are some headline on the 2016-17 financial year, with some facts and figures, to indicate the level of confidence in the local economy.

2. Supporting Business

2.1 Bondholder Network

The bondholder network is an opportunity for businesses to gain information about the city, share their business success and generate new commercial opportunities. It has proved hugely popular, and continues to grow.

- 252 active members compared to a target of 200.
- A total of five Bondholder Breakfasts were held during 2016/17, averaging well over 100 attendees at each with guest speakers including the Bank of England, the founder of Enterprise Nation, the GCGP LEP and Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy.
- Monthly Bondholder Newsletters – 40% open rates maintained throughout the year in spite of an increase in the number of subscribers.
- **TBondholder Dinner** at Peterborough Cathedral – achieved a sell-out event with total attendance at 462.



- Bondholder and non-bondholder members now have the opportunity to advertise on the OP website and Bondholder Portal.

2.2 Marketing and Communications

Peterborough needs to celebrate its success and economic confidence, and there are a number of routes by which these messages are put out. OP's approach is to tell the stories that demonstrate this confidence through the success of the city and its businesses, rather than OP itself.

- Increased press coverage - 75 mentions in Regional newspapers, 5 TV interviews and 7 radio interviews. International coverage for the city – Taipei Times, Times of India (Feb 2017), Dutch Financial times (they visited, interested in Share Peterborough and circular).
- Events or awards - PT Business Awards 2017, Cambridgeshire Digital Awards, East of England Agricultural Show (November 2016), B2B Exhibition (October 2016), STEM festival (October 2016).
- Steve speaking engagement - Keynote at Cambs Digital Awards, World Smart City Expo, and the Taipei Smart City conference.
- Web traffic - Invest in Peterborough website (Jan to Mar 2017) –1,139 unique visitors up from 957 on same period in previous year. OP website, for the same period, received 8,035 visitors up from 6,666 on previous year.
- A major success in 2016/17 was the launch of the Business Spotlight book. This captures just a fraction of the stories of business success in Peterborough: the global players; the innovators and entrepreneurs; the companies that make you say “I didn't know they did that in the city”. Hard copies of this book are available, or it can be downloaded from www.opportunitypeterborough.co.uk/how-we-can-help/business-spotlight/



2.3 LEADER Programme

OP secured around £1.2 million pounds from EU funding to support businesses and communities in the rural areas of Peterborough, and Rutland. Any business, community, or organisation can apply for funding to support initiatives ranging from farm diversification and productivity, to village hall enhancements, tourism and forestry. It is anticipated that the scheme will run out in March 2019 so it is important to access these funds now: but 2016/17 saw some great applications awarded.

In 2016-17, LEADER awarded £122,000 across 3 projects, and signs are positive for 2017-18. Projects include:



- Renovation and expansion plans at the **White Hart in Ufford** have been given a boost with over £49,000 of grant funding to supported the renovation of a building to create two additional bedrooms, along with a covered entrance for the existing function rooms.
- Grant of £30,000 for Construction work to extend **Northborough Village Hall**.

3. Inward Investment

Peterborough is seen as a great place to do business: good infrastructure; ease of moving services, products and people around; good IT connectivity; excellent recruitment opportunities. OP's job is to help investment into the city, and help those companies then settle and thrive.

The year 2016/17 has seen continued success in developing a diverse pipeline of Inward Investment enquiries through a variety of channels. Success has come in building relationships and networking with individuals and organisations, in Peterborough and nationally/ internationally, unearthing new and interesting opportunities to showcase the city and generate further enquiries.

Intervention	Measure	2016/2017 Target	2016/2017 Actual
Jobs	Net job announcements	1,500	2,685
Inward Investment	Enquiries	32	44
	Successes	8	14
	Jobs created/safeguarded	1,100	1,903

Some notable inward investment successes:

- The arrival of Success for All, Addison Lee, Dun-bri Group and Advanced Handling will create over 310 jobs in the city ranging from advanced engineering to operations managers to call centre advisors and team leaders.
- Visit from a Canadian trade delegation that represent the 'living lab' eco city of Summerside on Prince Edward Island – including showcasing Peterborough's Smart City offering and delivering local innovative Peterborough companies to present their technology to the delegation, which could lead to further trade and investment.



4. Strategic Input

It is equally important that OP not only delivers impacts on the ground, but also plays a part in wider strategic initiatives and direction. These can be varied, but if it influences or helps the local economy, OP will try to help.

Some of the projects undertaken across 2016/17.

- OP represented Peterborough on National Rail's East Coast Main Line Route Study Regional Group, taking part in discussions regarding the work programme to 2043 and submitting an economic narrative for the city in order to support investment plans impacting on services to the city.
- OP supported a £5m DWP bid for a pilot skills programme as part of the area's Devolution Deal by undertaking a Cost Benefit Analysis, to HMG Green Book standards.
- In 2016 OP took on the role of Chair of the Employment and Labour Market Mobility Group, a sub-group of the city's Post-16 Skills Strategy, which is co-chaired by PCC-OP. The group is tasked with taking a sector-based approach to long term skills provision in the city and, focusing on manufacturing initially, has established great engagement with local manufacturing companies; providing insights into skills requirements in the sector to inform strategic approaches by the city and its skills providers.
- OP has engaged strongly with the Local Enterprise Partnership and the London Stansted Cambridge Consortium, as well as other government departments and agencies – featuring in panel and roundtable discussions.

5. Skills



The availability of skills to Peterborough's businesses is a vital component for their success and growth. The Skills Service is a pioneering initiative that brings young people face-to-face with business people so that they can not only understand what is expected of them (in CV writing, interviews, workplace practise) but also what they can aim for in terms of future careers, training and other opportunities. The programme is funded by the GCGP LEP, and other funders such as the Careers Enterprise Company and National Careers Service.

The Skills Service continues to deliver its range of events and initiatives, with positive feedback from teachers, students and business people. Key achievements for the Skills Service are as follows (please note these figures have been captured for the wider Peterborough economic sub-region):

- 535 individual businesses supported our events
- 23,127 young people took part in work-related learning activities (target was 19,000)
- As part of our new contract with the LEP, we started supporting schools to develop strategic plans for CEIAG and business engagement using the Careers & Enterprise Company toolkit (23 audits completed, another 15 started)
- Delivered 165 business led events with schools
- Organised the 4th Annual Careers Show in Peterborough
- Stand Out which showcases live vacancies for young people including apprenticeships.

6. Future Peterborough

'Future Peterborough' is the name we have given to the programme which is also known as 'smart cities'. Effectively, the agenda is to provide better outcomes for the city by bringing together people, places and digital solutions. OP helped the city win £3m in 2013 and, with the city council, has ensured that citizens and businesses are the heart of the programme, rather than technology for technology's sake. This approach has now been adopted by the wider Smart City community.

Successes for the year include the launch of Peterborough's Circular City initiative: ensuring that resources are maximised for business and environmental efficiency. As part of this the platform www.sharepeterborough.com was developed to enable businesses to exchange products, property facilities and even skills and people, just for the sake of them not being wasted.

A number of digital and data solutions have also been developed during the year, providing invaluable information resources internally within the council, and engaging with wider digital stakeholders. This will be an important element to exploit in the future to build off existing work and connections.

Peterborough has also consolidated its national and international profile for Future Cities. Representatives led sessions at Conferences (see below), as well as participating at the Government's APPG on Smart Cities and the Cities Standards Institute. OP also chairs the National Smart and Sustainable Cities Committee of the British Standards Institute.

Peterborough featured strongly at the Smart City Expo in Barcelona in November 2016 – showcasing some of the initiatives underway in the city, being delivered by both PCC and OP.



In February, we participated in the Smart City Mayors Summit and Expo in Taipei. The visit led to a number of possible joint economic development opportunities, as well as an ongoing collaboration with Taipei Smart City with regular Skype calls to share insights and best practice.

The first of two Smart City Leadership Programmes has been delivered in Amaravati, India during February 2017 as part of an FCO funded programme to support Smart City development in India, and to promote Peterborough.

7. Supporting Others

7.1 Fenland District Council

Just as PCC is providing support services to other local authorities, OP is also doing so around economic development. The collaboration around this has been very strong, and has seen real growth in business engagement on the ground in Fenland.

Over the course of the first year, 2016/17, the following outputs were achieved:

- FDC website refreshed and relaunched providing an attractive portal and landing page for businesses and potential investors.
- Regular monthly newsletter established and distributed to c.650 recipients across the district
- No. of Twitter followers has increased by 21% from 421 to 508 in the year, demonstrating the appetite for engagement
- 70 business meetings held, 4 referrals to the Skills Service and 7 inward investor enquiries handled
- Delivering networking events at both the Boathouse, Wisbech and South Fens Business Centre in Chatteris - 30 attendees on both occasions and receiving local media coverage.



7.2 Strategic Funding

OP has provided insights and support around potential funding opportunities. These have been provided to a range of partners including PCC, Peterborough Cathedral and other organisations.

- Support to City College on its DWP bid.
- Research on potential funding routes for businesses, and Peterborough Cathedral.

7.3 Eco Innovation Centre Management

OP manages the Eco-Innovation Centre on behalf of PCC. This is serviced office space for smaller businesses, and virtual tenants.

During the 2016/2017 financial year services were improve and enhancements to the facility undertaken. Tenants reported positive feedback on the Centre and its support services from the team there. Reconfigurations in the Centre also resulted in increasing rentable area, which will generate more revenue to PCC.

- **Finance**
Strong control over the finances lead to reduced number of bad debt compared to previous years and invoices being paid on time.
- **Tenants**
At the end of 2016/17 the EIC had 16 physical and 48 virtual tenants. Three office spaces were extended and a new office created to provide more space to rent.

8. Looking Ahead

There is a huge difference between confidence and complacency. OP's approach has always been to take a comprehensive approach to growing the city's economy – something that was recognised by central government in autumn 2016 when it was 'highly commended' in the national Enterprising Britain awards. Fundamentally, businesses grow the economy, and all that OP or anyone can do is just make the environment as positive as it can be for businesses. The more successful businesses are, the more jobs that are created and the greater the

cycle of economic activity. However, it is vital to maintain that confidence and continuously look to growth within the economy and its businesses.

OP will continue this approach into the future. There are priorities for the city's economy: skills must be one of them; maintaining good infrastructure and availability of land/property are also crucial. Crucially, however, the momentum of confidence must be maintained: that will inspire consistent economic growth.

Opportunity Peterborough

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