

**MINUTES OF THE GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT 7PM ON  
WEDNESDAY 5 MARCH 2018  
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

**Committee Members Present:** Councillors Peach (Chairman), K Aitken, R Brown, M Cereste, A Ellis, R Ferris, J A Fox, C Harper, S Nawaz, N Sandford  
Parish Councillor Co-opted Member K Lievesley

**Officers Present:** Simon Machen, Corporate Director, Growth and Regeneration  
Sally House, NPS, Manager - Estates & Valuation  
Charlotte Palmer, Group Manager, Transport and Environment  
Peter Gell, Head of Regulatory Services  
Stuart Keeble, Consultant in Public Health  
Lynden Leadbeater, Principal Regulatory Officer, Environment and Pollution Control  
Chris Stanek, Strategic Planning Officer  
Bridget Slade, Rural Estate Manager  
Annette Joyce, Service Director, Environment and Economy  
Rachel Edwards, Head of Constitutional Services

The Chairman announced that the officer due to present item 8, The Peterborough City Council Investment Acquisition Strategy and Asset Management Plan was unable to attend the meeting. The Corporate Director, Growth and Regeneration had advised that he would be in attendance to present the report and had requested that the item be moved to the first item on the agenda. The Chairman asked members of the Committee if they would agree to the change of order. The Committee unanimously agreed to change the order of the agenda to accommodate this request.

**49. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Parish Councillor Co-opted Member Richard Clarke.

**50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS**

Item 6. MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN – PRELIMINARY DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

Councillor Cereste wished to declare that he had an interest in the waste business but that it was not specifically in relation to the report.

**51. MINUTES OF THE GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND JOINT SCRUTINY OF THE BUDGET MEETING**

The minutes of the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10 January 2018 and the Joint Scrutiny of the Budget meeting held on 20 February 2018 were

agreed as a true and accurate record with the exception of the following amendment and comment:

- Councillor Ferris noted that there were several spellings of Great Kyne and that these should be corrected.
- Parish Councillor Co-opted Member K Lievesley wished it noted that under the item: Peterborough Trees and Woodland Strategy he had mentioned during the debate that he was surprised that hedgerows had not been included in the Trees and Woodland Strategy to better reflect the rural position and that this also should have been linked to the Bio-diversity Strategy on the grounds that wildlife corridors were mentioned, and that hedgerows were an integral part of these.

## **52. CALL IN OF ANY CABINET, CABINET MEMBER OR KEY OFFICER DECISIONS**

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

## **53. PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL INVESTMENT ACQUISITION STRATEGY AND ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Corporate Director, Growth and Regeneration accompanied by the Manager - Estates and Valuation introduced the report. The report was submitted to the Committee following a review of the Council's Investment Acquisition Strategy and Asset Management Plan. The purpose of the report was for the Committee to note and comment on the Asset Management Plan at Appendix 1 of the report and the Investment Acquisition Strategy at Appendix 2 of the report.

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- The Corporate Director advised that there had been some recent Key Decisions regarding investment purchases which had been taken under the Urgency Powers which therefore did not allow for Call-in. The reason for this was that it was a commercial market place and the council had to act quickly when buying commercial investment property due to there being a significant demand for that type of property. This also meant that the purchase price could not be advertised. By using the Urgency Powers the Council could act swiftly.
- Members noted in the report that it was hoped that a 5% return on investment could be achieved after costs. Members sought clarification as to how realistic this would be. Members were informed that the agents were aware that the council would be looking for investment properties with 5% return. When considering a property the council would need to be aware of the covenance, maintenance and current tenancy of the properties to ensure a 5% return.
- The council would need to take a long term view when looking at property purchase and also take advice from chartered surveyors. Consideration would also be given as to what the long term potential use would be of an individual site and not just the yield.
- Members referred to 'Greening' the Portfolio on page 127 of the reports pack and noted that it stated that *"New buildings should be developed to highest sustainability standards available within appropriate budgets"* and that *"It is recognised that progress on this aspiration will be constrained by resources but practical measures should be taken where financially viable"*. Clarification was sought as to how the Committee could be confident that buildings would be bought or developed to the highest sustainability standards. The Corporate Director advised that the reality was that the council had to make a large amount of savings within the budget. Return on investment had to be considered when purchasing

property and wherever possible buildings that were currently owned by the council would be environmentally retrofitted. Any new buildings acquired would also be assessed to ensure they were as environmentally sustainable as possible. If the council limited the acquisition of buildings that were only environmentally outstanding this would significantly dilute the council's ability to acquire property. There were financial restrictions to operate, acquire and build new property.

- The decision had been taken to keep the Town Hall and Members sought clarification as to what action was being taken to retrofit the building. Members were informed that the single glassed windows were part of its heritage scene. Conservation officers historically had been opposed to replacing the windows and to replace them with purpose built windows would cost a huge amount at approximately £700 to £800 per window.
- Members noted that the asset value of the portfolio was a 'notional value' of £442.0M and questioned whether it would be possible to ascertain the achievable value. Members were informed that the properties were valued on their use. The market value could be obtained for the investment properties. The operational properties would be valued as per the existing use and to obtain the value there would be a cost associated with this due to the number of properties involved. The Corporate Director advised that some information was available but could not be published due to commercial sensitivity.
- The criteria for making future investments was split into three sections which were the operational portfolio (buildings required to operate the functions of the council), the investment portfolio (properties acquired for capital growth) and growth portfolio (properties identified for strategic acquisition, governance strength and regeneration of strategic sites).
- The council would like to have a varied portfolio of properties rather than just offices or industrial properties and would look for a 5% overall rate of return with a broad spectrum of diversification within that spectrum. Spreading the portfolio assists in mitigating the risk.

## **AGREED ACTIONS**

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the report and requested that the Manager - Estates & Valuation provide the Committee with the achievable market value for the current investment portfolio.

## **54. AIR QUALITY MONITORING REPORT**

The Group Manager, Transport and Environment introduced the report which provided the Committee with further information following a briefing paper on Air Quality Monitoring which was provided to the Committee in June 2017. The report provided information on the current processes for monitoring air quality and the activities that influence air quality. The Head of Regulatory Services responsible for the monitoring of air quality and the Consultant for Public Health were also in attendance to answer questions.

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members questioned whether the DEFRA targets were demanding enough.
- Public Health England and DEFRA had produced a joint report where they brought together the evidence of health risks of air pollution.
- There was no evidence within the Peterborough area that there was any exceedance of the required air quality objectives.
- Improving health needed to be focused around areas where there would be the greatest impact. The greatest health benefit would be to increase the amount of active travel and this would then also impact on improving air quality.

- When monitoring air quality, samples and data were collected from public exposure points and measured against the annual mean. The most cost effective approach when looking at monitoring particulate matter was not to look just at hot spots but to look across the board.
- There were a number of locations across Peterborough that were being monitored more closely as they were close to the threshold limit for the required air quality safety levels.
- Members were concerned that the report did not demonstrate a commitment to improving air quality. The Public Health Consultant informed Members that the health risks should be taken in context. The World Health Organisation had a National Health tool called the Global Burden of Disease Study which listed the different causes of risk to health which states for this country that air pollution is tenth or eleventh. Whilst air pollution did contribute to shortening people's lives there were other factors that were of higher priority like inactivity, obesity and heart disease. Public Health did work closely with transport and had produced a Public Health and Transport document which would be used by the Combined Authority to produce the Transport Plan going forward.
- A training model was being developed for officers working in transport and planning to ensure that there was a common understanding regarding air quality and the health implications to ensure the best overall impact for the city when designing a scheme. A lot of highway schemes brought forward for the city aimed to improve congestion which impacted on air quality. Significant funding had also been invested in improving the cycling and pedestrian facilities across the city.
- Travelchoice funding was no longer as forthcoming as it had been in the past and a request had been put forward to the Combined Authority for continued funding towards sustainable travel for the next year.
- The Group Manager, Transport and Environment had recently met with Stagecoach to discuss the use of electric vehicles. The officer was advised that Stagecoach operated one of the most sustainable fleets of vehicles in the area and therefore the difference that could be made by operating more sustainable vehicles would not be substantial enough for them to replace their current fleet. 30% of their current fleet used bio fuel. The discussions with Stagecoach continued to try and understand what the drivers would be to get Stagecoach to change their vehicles.
- Members sought clarification as to how effective the eight electric vehicle charging points had been and wondered whether the further eight planned for the city would be sufficient. The Group Manager, Transport and Environment advised that the data on the electric vehicle charging points could be provided after the meeting. Members were also informed that a recent article had stated that Peterborough was the highest city nationally for an increase in the use of electric vehicles, whilst this alone could not provide evidence that eight further points would be enough all opportunities for further funding to increase the amount of electric charging points across the city was being investigated.
- A Planning Officer in attendance advised the Committee that the new Local Plan had a policy which stated that any new development must make provision for electric charging points.
- Peterborough had one AQMA for emissions of Sulphur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) which related to brickworks located in the Fenland District Council (FDC) area. FDC were considering liaising with DEFRA to revoke the AQMA due to a significant decrease in activity at the brickworks. If the AQMA was revoked the brickworks had a permit that limited the emissions and this would be monitored through modelling which was the best process.
- There had been a reduction in brick manufacturing in the UK as more were being imported, it was therefore unlikely that if the trend continued that pollution would rise from the manufacturing of bricks.
- Members commented that pollution from taxi idling continued to be an issue. It was noted that council officers met regularly with the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Federation representatives and raised the issue of idling of vehicles and wanted to know what

progress had been made. Members were informed that the Federation were supportive but could not make their drivers comply. Notices were displayed at the Hackney Carriage parking areas to encourage them to switch off their vehicles whilst waiting. As a trade they were looking at new technologies and electric black cab vehicles.

- Through the Travelchoice initiative and in conjunction with the locally based charity Sustrans work was being done with pupils at one school which involved using air quality monitoring sensors outside the school. A competition had also been launched to design a poster to put up outside the school to encourage people to switch their car engines off whilst waiting. This would be monitored to see if it made a difference and if successful would be rolled out to other schools. Different interventions were being looked at to try and enforce the message about pollution and air quality including setting homework on the subject for students to take home and work on with their parents to try and reinforce the message.
- Taverners Road was being monitored for air quality and so far there had not been any exceedances of the limit.
- Air quality was considered in planning and development control. Air quality impact assessments were conducted on larger developments and assessments by officers were also made on smaller developments if required. The assessments were significantly precautionary as there were no exceedances within Peterborough of air quality levels associated with nitrogen dioxide which had a health impact.
- Members commented that one large city had asked all public transportation services including taxis to look at any new vehicles to be registered as environmentally friendly. This could be a suggestion for Peterborough. Members were informed that the cross partnership officer group could potentially look at this suggestion.
- Electric vehicles did also omit some particulates.
- Defra had recently contacted the council about a nitrogen dioxide exceedance on the A1260 road from Thomas Cook to Hampton which had recently been identified by the National Pollution Control Modelling of trunk roads. Officers clarified that the nearest exposure to public residents was 22 metres away and therefore there were no health impacts as modelled roadside levels would be reduced below the air quality objective at this distance.

## **AGREED ACTIONS**

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the report and requested the following:

1. The Group Manager, Transport and Environment to provide the Committee with the data on the usage of the eight electric vehicle charging points and whether the charging points could be used by any car.
2. That the work of the Cross Partnership Departmental Group should continue. This will be known as the Air Quality Working Group.
3. That officers investigate the possibility of placing 'No idling' signs beyond the city centre and particularly outside schools if the recent project with a local school is proven to be beneficial.
4. That there is greater commitment from officers to implementing the transport user hierarchy in all planning decisions.

## **55. MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN – PRELIMINARY DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION**

The Strategic Planning Officer introduced the report which provided the Committee with a Preliminary Draft of the Cambridge and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan for consideration and comment. The Officer advised that this would be the first of three

consultations. The council already has a set of joint Minerals and Waste Plans with Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) which were adopted by 2012. Rather than update all those individual documents, it was proposed to bring most, if not all of the plans into a single Minerals and Waste Plan. This would be done jointly with CCC.

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members noted that it would be a joint plan with Cambridgeshire County Council, however if there was a disagreement between the two authorities the report stated that it would “*delegate to the Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development authority to make more substantive changes to the Plan as attached, prior to consultation, provided he should see fit to do so, if it would help to address any more substantive suggested amendments arising from the Plan’s consideration by Cambridgeshire County Council’s democratic process*”. Members sought clarification as to whether if there were any serious issues arising if the scrutiny committee would have further sight of the plan to enable them to comment prior to the Cabinet Member being consulted. The officer advised that as this was the first draft it was unlikely that there would be any contentious issues raised and would check with the Head of Sustainable Growth Strategy if there would be a further option for the plan to be presented to the Committee later in the consultation process.

## **AGREED ACTIONS**

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to endorse the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Preliminary Draft of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and requested that the plan be brought back to the Committee for consultation should there be any contentious issues raised.

## **56. PETERBOROUGH RURAL (FARMS) ESTATE ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

The Rural Estate Manager introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update on progress to date, following the approval of the Strategy for the Management of the Farms Estate approved by Cabinet in July 2015 (the Agreed Management Strategy).

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members felt it was a positive report and wanted to know what progress had been made with regard to using part of the estate for educational purposes. Members were advised that meetings had been held with City College and the manager of the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). Representatives from both establishments had been given a tour of possible sites for use by both establishments for which they would pay rent. The PRU had since pulled out but the Rural Estate Manager was continuing discussions with them to try and encourage them to reconsider. The City College were preparing a business plan to submit for consideration.
- Members were pleased to note that the Tenants had worked together with the police in order to contain the issue of hare coursing.
- It was noted that under the section ‘*Environmental*’ the report stated “*The farms estate’s priority shall be food production but there is scope for improving wildlife habitat as well as landscape without compromising the agricultural output of the estate*”. Members commented that this appeared to be in conflict with recent changes in central government policy. The Secretary of State who was responsible for the environment had talked about

having a green Brexit, which had been defined as substantially changing the regime of agricultural subsidies so that it looked at environmental benefit being the predominant criteria. Members were advised that the Rural Estate priority was agriculture and environmental went along side this. It was not possible to have an estate which was wholly concerned with the environment because it would not generate any income. The council was arm's length to the tenant subsidies so whether they wanted to claim subsidies or not had very little to do with the council. As far as possible the council push an environmental agenda with the tenants. Tenants currently have to conform to 'greening' and have to grow more than three crops, have ecological focus areas and work towards their 'Good Agricultural Environmental Conditions' (GAECs).

## **AGREED ACTIONS**

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the progress that had been made on the Peterborough Farm Estate Action Plan.
2. Agree to receive an annual update in September 2018.
3. Note the name change from Farms Estate to Rural Estate.

## **57. MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which provided the Committee with a record of recommendations made at the previous meeting and the outcome of those recommendations to consider if further monitoring was required.

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members referred to the response from the Head of Culture and Leisure to the recommendation made at the 1 November 2017 meeting of the Committee which recommended that the Council reconsider building an Olympic pool in the city. The response advised that the recommendation had been considered by the Active Lifestyles Steering Group and the evidence and advice from Sport England and concluded that there was not enough evidence for a 50 meter pool in the city. The Committee were not satisfied with the response and reasoning for their decision and requested that they be provided with the evidence and detail on which they had based their decision. The Committee unanimously agreed that their original recommendation should be pursued.
- A Member of the Committee commented that they had prepared a strong business case in favour of having an Olympic size swimming pool and had sent it to the Active Lifestyles Steering Group but had not received a response.
- The Lido was a fantastic resource in its own right but an Olympic size pool would be of additional benefit to the city and bring in additional income and publicity for the city.

## **ACTIONS AGREED**

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to consider the response from Cabinet Members and Officers to the recommendations made at the previous meeting, as attached in Appendix 1 of the report.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee were not satisfied with the response to the recommendation made to the Leader of the Council regarding the request for the Leader to look into providing an Olympic pool in the city and therefore wish to present the recommendation again and urge the Leader of the Council to reconsider the recommendation which was:

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RECOMMEND** that the Leader of the Council and Member of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority look at providing the city of Peterborough with a 50m Olympic size swimming pool.

The Committee feel that with the new University being built it would be an appropriate time to reconsider building an Olympic size pool. An Olympic pool would attract more participation in the sport and inward investment through galas and events and attract more interest in Peterborough through advertising and marketing of the facility. A possible location to consider would be behind the existing Lido which would provide economies of scale with regard to staffing and management costs and would be a central location for use by the public, local schools and a future University. Consideration could also be given to providing heat and power from the nearby Councils Energy from Waste facility.

2. The Committee also request to be provided with the evidence referred to in the response which was stated as the basis for the Active Lifestyles Steering Groups reasoning for not agreeing to the recommendation.

## **58. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Executive Decisions containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the forthcoming month. Members were invited to comment on the Plan and where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme.

It was noted that the Approval of the Transport Programme of Capital Works would be sent round to all Committee members as soon as it was available.

### **AGREED ACTIONS**

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the latest version of the Forward Plan.

CHAIRMAN  
7.00pm – 8.32 pm