

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD AT THE BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM - TOWN HALL ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2010**

**Present:** Councillors M Dalton (Chairman), S Allen (Vice-Chairman), N Arculus, J Peach and B Saltmarsh

**Also Present:** Councillor M Cereste, Leader of the Council  
Councillor N Sandford, Representing the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group

**Officers Present:** Paul Phillipson, Executive Director of Operations  
Jenny Harris, Lawyer  
Louise Tyers, Scrutiny Manager

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Day and Lane. Councillor Saltmarsh was acting as substitute for Councillor Lane.

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

No declarations of interest were made.

**3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 July 2010**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2010 were accepted 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. Progress on the Delivery of the Growth, Strategic Planning and Economic Development Portfolio**

We welcomed the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Growth, Strategic Planning and Economic Development to the meeting to discuss the progress made in the delivery of his portfolio.

Councillor Cereste advised that a lot of work had happened around the areas of his portfolio, in particular he highlighted the following points:

- The Council had a strategy to go for growth including bring jobs into the city
- The city had a target to build 25,000 new homes by 2026 but this would probably not meet our needs
- It was believed that councils would soon be able to keep all of the business rates collected and had been assured that legislation would be introduced by April 2011 to enable this to happen
- There were currently 6500 people on the housing waiting list with approximately 400 in greatest need
- Regional Development Agencies had been abolished and would be replaced with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP). A proposal had been developed for an LEP with other authorities who had an economic stake in Peterborough

- The Local Transport Plan was out for consultation, the key of which was infrastructure
- Changes had been made in how we delivered growth, including Special Purpose Vehicles (SPV)
- There was huge interest from developers to develop in the city
- A developer was keen to build the North Westgate development and two other areas were also ready for SPV's and had funding available
- A new Skills Academy would be built as part of the Community Stadium
- It was not clear if we would get the government grant to develop the Carbon Challenge site and it may be necessary to look for alternative funding
- Following the change of government, the Station Quarter could now be one of the places where government departments could move to
- The former Guild House building was being refurbished to become a new health campus
- Changes to the senior management structure would happen as the budget was developed leading to savings

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Following the change in Government and the rescinding of a number of targets, when would a full review of the Peterborough Local Plan be undertaken? *Some aspects of the Local Plan were already out for consultation, including the provision for gypsies and travellers. When the regional structures were in place Peterborough had pitched for growth, but the planned growth was the minimum we would likely be able to cope with and the evidence was there that we still needed that growth.*
- Would funding for growth along the Cambridge Growth Corridor continue? *That particular funding stream was not expected to continue but there may be other sources of funding made available. The Leader believed that money would be available for those areas prepared to grow.*
- What was being done about the imposed density of housing targets? *Those targets were being reviewed. A paragraph had been added to the Core Strategy to enable large properties to be built on large plots of land. It was important that we built what was needed for the city and not stick to targets that did not suit our ambitions. We needed to specify in the Site Allocations where we would like to see low density housing.*
- How long did the Leader expect the work to take in bringing forward low density housing? *Some areas had already been identified but we needed to talk to parish councils and other interested groups.*
- Villages were not the only place for executive homes as they were also needed in the urban area. *Most of the residential land had been allocated so we may need to look at development on more sensitive areas such as the flood plain east of the city.*
- If the city was to encourage flexible density then greater amounts of land would be needed for development. *Technology was continually developing to enable building on flood plains, such as building on stilts.*
- The Planning Committee was allowing the building of new properties at existing properties which had large pieces of land including in conservation areas. Planning did not support the Council's other policies for growth.
- Had guidance been issued by the government on Garden Grabbing? *The Leader believed that guidance had been issued but there was an automatic right for people to develop on their own land and the Planning Committee would consider each one on an individual basis.*
- South Kesteven Council prevented infilling through their planning policy. There had been no automatic right to build in gardens since 1948. *The Leader did not agree with that statement and would send councillors a copy of a presentation given by planning officers.*
- What was the current position with the proposed developments at Great Haddon and North Westgate? *Great Haddon was currently on track and would be an ideal site for low density housing. A developer had recently visited the Leader with £1.5 Billion to*

*spend in the city who indicated that they would like to submit plans soon for North Westgate but they had been asked to look further at how it integrated with the existing shopping centre.*

- *Would the Great Haddon and Hospital sites include affordable housing? The Council was indicating that we would like to see 25% social housing and the city had a great need for affordable housing.*
- *Why were the proposals for the Peterborough District Hospital site approved with nothing included about low density housing? The Hospital Trust had to get a certain return on the land to meet the payments for the new Hospital.*
- *There was concern that the hospital site did not mention education provision? The developer of the site would have to make a big contribution towards education but the site would not be big enough for them to be asked to provide education provision directly.*
- *Had any government departments given an indication that they would consider moving to Peterborough as developers would not build office accommodation if they had not been pre-let? Very positive discussions had been held with the government.*
- *How much would the Leader listen to local councils, councillors and people who did not want growth in their area? The Leader confirmed that he fully believed in consultation and would always take notice of the views of local people and meet their aspirations if he was able to.*
- *Who authorised the bid for the LEP and would further consultation be undertaken? Why were we joining up with Cambridge when we may have more in common with areas such as Northamptonshire? When we knew more about the process we would talk to everybody. The LEP had to tick certain boxes including the number of first tier authorities involved, the population and economic size. The proposed LEP included Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Rutland and included working relationships with Kings Lynn and West Norfolk.*
- *Why did we have to have targets for affordable housing? It should be looked at on a site by site basis. The policy was for 25% affordable housing. It was for the developers to demonstrate that this figure would not be viable and negotiations would start from there. Developers could provide a contribution but the target was there so we could get a contribution from the developer. If there was no target we would not be able to get affordable housing. The target was also there so landowners knew how much of their land would be used for affordable housing.*
- *How was the Council encouraging villages to develop Local Housing Trusts? Trusts had been looked at but no detailed work had been done yet. The Trusts needed to be economically viable and we needed to see if they were what villages wanted. If they did then land needed to be allocated as Trusts worked when the land was allocated to them rather than them having to buy it. We would develop a strategy and then go out to consultation with local parishes and councillors.*

We thanked the Leader for attending.

## **ACTION AGREED**

To note the progress made on the delivery of the Growth, Strategic Planning and Economic Development portfolio.

## **6. Census 2011**

The Executive Director of Operations gave a presentation on the preparations for the Census 2011.

Every 10 years the Office for National Statistics (ONS) carried out a census to find out more about the people who lived in England and Wales and about the make up of local neighbourhoods. The Census asked about work, health, national identity, citizenship, ethnic background, education, second homes, language, religion, marital status etc.

The next Census would take place on Sunday 27 March 2011 and its aim would be to ensure an accurate count of the people who lived in the city.

The following key points were made:

- Census forms would be sent out to households during mid/late February 2011 and the forms would also link into an online process
- Households would have a ten day window in which to complete the forms
- The forms had been translated into 58 different languages
- There would be 350-400 jobs available for working on the census in Peterborough
- Engagement Plans were being developed, including in Polish
- Each person identified through the Census meant £600 on the area based grant
- In 2001 there had been a 95% return rate and this was also the target for 2011
- It was important the Census was accurate
- Councillors were asked to support the process with their local knowledge

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- How did we know that there had been a 95% return in 2001? *As it was based on the number of households we knew how many forms should have been returned.*
- Given the importance of the Census, should we not be aiming for more than 95%? *We would be very pleased to get 95% as trials in the migrant areas of the city had proved low. We would be looking at using innovative engagement methods.*
- Was there a way of identifying what languages people needed their Census form to be in? *We would be doing a lot of work at grass roots level with local communities including myth busting to try and stop the distrust the Census may have in certain communities. We got our data on languages from Language Line and we currently had over 100 languages spoken in the city.*
- A number of councillors published ward newsletters which could be used as a way of getting the message out. *We would be happy to provide text for newsletters. Mike Lennox in the Communications Team was leading on the communications and he would be using all of the opportunities available.*
- How many people had been prosecuted for not completing their Census form? *The Executive Director would find out and report back to the Committee.*
- Was the Census the most accurate way to measure the population? *The government would be looking at other possible ways of measuring but at the moment officers had not seen a better way.*
- How did you ensure that the information completed was accurate? *It was believed that most forms would be accurate and a percentage would also be checked.*

#### **ACTION AGREED**

To note the presentation on the Census 2011.

#### **7. 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.

## **8. Work Programme**

We considered the Work Programme for 2010/11.

It was agreed to add the following to the work programme:

- Local Enterprise Partnership (date to be confirmed)
- Update on the Local Plan and Site Allocations Document (March 2011)
- Managed ICT Service (move to February 2011)

### **ACTION AGREED**

To confirm the work programme for 2010/11.

## **9. Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 9 November 2010 at 7pm

CHAIRMAN  
7.00 - 9.06 pm

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