

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

9 MARCH 2011

Present: Councillors Todd (Chairman), S Day, Burton, Simons,

Co-Opted Member: Ansar Ali – Cambridgeshire Police Authority

Also Present: Kevin Tighe Chief Executive, Vivacity
Shelagh Smith Chairman, Vivacity
Pam Whitbread Head of Finance, Vivacity
Councillor Seaton Cabinet Member for Resources

Officers in Attendance: Paul Phillipson Executive Director - Operations
Adrian Chapman Head of Neighbourhood Services
John Harrison Executive Director, Strategic Resources
Sharon Malia Housing Programmes Manager
Sean Evans Acting Housing Options Team Leader
Sarah Hebblethwaite Acting Housing Prevention Manager
Gary Goose Community Safety Strategic Manager

Karen Kibblewhite Safer Peterborough Manager – Cutting Crime
Paulina Ford Performance Scrutiny and Research Officer
Amy Brown Solicitor

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillor JR Fox and Councillor Goldspink.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2011

The minutes of the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19 January 2011 were approved as a correct record subject to the correction of the job title of David O'Connor Long which should have read Lawyer.

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

There were no requests for Call-in to consider.

4. Vivacity Progress Report and Draft Business Plan

Kevin Tighe, Chief Executive for Vivacity accompanied by Shelagh Smith, Chair of Vivacity and Pam Whitbread, Head of Finance introduced the report and gave a short presentation on the progress that had been made during the first 18 months of operation. Members were

updated on the progress of priorities from the original business plan. Those priorities had been to:

- *Deliver a single "Passport to Culture", one card, many opportunities in sport, libraries, heritage and the arts.* This was reported as on target and to be delivered before Christmas 2011.
- *Seek to reopen and revitalise Flag Fen as a quality visitor attraction.* This was reported as on target.
- *Refresh the Regional Pool with a new gym and changing facilities.* This was reported as completed on time and on budget and was opened to the public on 22 December 2010.
- *Double the number of opportunities for volunteers.* Progress had been reported as good and 80% of the target had been reached.
- *Generate sponsorship of £100,000.* There had been problems generating the targeted sponsorship due to difficult economic times.
- *Start work on a £3,000,000 redevelopment of the Museum.* This was reported as on time and due to be concluded December 2011 / January 2012.
- *Secure improved sports and library facilities at the Bushfield Academy and Orton Longueville School.* Reported as on hold due to a change in Government priorities.
- *Deliver two micro-libraries.* The first micro library had opened at Perkins Engines and the second was to be opened at the pharmacy in Newborough in a week's time.
- *Expand the Festival to include a greater variety of arts events.* An extra investment of £50,000 from the Arts Council had been confirmed for this year's festival.
- *Deliver more holiday activities for young people.* A range of extra holiday activities had been delivered.

Kevin Tighe went through the business plan and highlighted the objectives for the next five years:

- Increase the number and range of people who enjoy Vivacity's services
- Deliver services of greater quality
- Improve the value for money for all customers and for Peterborough City Council as the primary funder
- Bring new financial resources and skills to the city through providing new and improved services supported by regional, national, European and international bodies
- Support and encourage other organisations and charities working in Peterborough who contribute to the sport, arts and heritage life of the city
- Transform the style of working

Members were advised that a single "passport to Culture" card would capture information on the type of customers using Vivacity's services. There would be an investment of £150,000 on software to capture this information. The management information would enable Vivacity to provide proper marketing and business analysis which would be delivered before Christmas 2011.

Members were advised that customer care was very important and a customer care training programme was being designed for Vivacity staff.

The Head of Finance went through the financial aspects of the business plan. The forecast in January had predicted a year end deficit of £102K. However due to an increase in 317 new sports memberships and a good attendance at the Panto the prediction had changed to a forecast of break even for the year end.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- What impact would the opening of the Broadway have on the Key Theatre? *The Broadway was a competitor but did not see it as a threat and it could be a complimentary venue to the Key. The Key was a more bijoux venue and through the better marketing the aim was to attract more people to the venue.*
- Is it possible for the Council to run the restaurant at the Key Theatre? *Vivacity licenced the restaurant out and had cash return on the income from the restaurant. It would be retendered in 2011 and would look to get better value and quality from the space.*
- How are you monitoring the profile of users and volunteers to ensure different sectors of the community are being covered?
- Can people order books from the micro libraries. *Yes.*
- The business plan had mentioned providing transport to Flag Fen by boat during the summer months. What would happen for the 8 months of the year when the boat service was not provided? Are you going to have a travel plan in place and work closely with the bus company so that people can get a bus from Queensgate to Flag Fen? *Members were advised that there was no travel plan in the business plan and this would need to be explored.*
- What is the relationship between the Cathedral and Vivacity? *Members were advised that there was a close working relationship. The Dean of the Cathedral sat on the Board of Vivacity and the events officer at the Cathedral had been keen to work closely with Vivacity. The Heritage festival was an example of their close working relationship.*
- How do you see the relationship with Enterprise and Vivacity working? *Vivacity and Enterprise would work closely together in a partnership relationship. The business plan mentioned re-commission of Woodlands and Enterprise would be the ideal partner for this project as there was a large area of green space.*

ACTION AGREED

That the Chief Executive of Vivacity report back to Scrutiny in March 2012 to provide an update on the progress of the Trust including financial implications.

6. Homelessness Prevention

Sharon Malia, Housing Programmes Manager introduced the report which gave an update on work being undertaken by the Strategic Housing Service in preventing homelessness in Peterborough. The report updated members on the activity around homelessness, rough sleeping, the mortgage repossession scheme and rent deposit scheme. The report focused on the key challenges to housing that the city faced which included:

- Changes to the local housing allowance and general welfare benefit reforms
- The end of the transitional arrangements for the A8 nationals as of the first of May
- The potential demand of university places and the impact on accommodation in the city
- General social housing reforms proposed by central government

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- How many homes are vacant in the City and what is the churn. Do you think there should be more done to improve the situation? *There were approximately 2000 empty properties across the city with approximately 700 long term (vacant for more than six months). A key focus of the new housing reforms would be to bring empty homes back into use.*
- Can you give examples of why properties are empty and for so long? *There were many reasons. An example that was being dealt with at the moment was a home where the owner has died, there was no will, and it was currently going through probate. The solicitors had found a beneficiary but he was a fugitive in America. Some cases could take a long time to resolve.*
- What action is being taken with regard to registration of Private Landlords and ensuring the accommodation is not sub standard. *There was no statutory requirement for*

landlords to register. A lot of work had been done around the city with regard to identifying houses of multiple occupation and measures had been introduced to identify the landlords of these properties. It was hoped that the landlord accreditation scheme would be relaunched and this would help to engage with landlords and identify good landlords. In the Housing Options service there was a tenant's relations officer who worked on behalf of the council where landlords were harassing or exploiting their tenants.

- Councillor Todd congratulated Sarah Hebblethwaite on the excellent work completed with Boarder Control and the homeless.
- From May 2011 the A8 nationals will have the same rights as the rest of the European Union nationals. Have you made any estimates on the impact this will have. *People would still be dealt with on an individual basis and it would be weather they pass the habitual residency test as to weather they are passported through to welfare benefits. Those who had worked continuously for a year while registered on the welfare workers registration scheme would probably be eligible.*

Members congratulated officers on presenting a comprehensive and informative report.

ACTION AGREED

That a further progress report be brought back to Scrutiny in March 2012.

7. Section 75 Pooled Funding Agreement

Karen Kibblewhite introduced the report and advised members that the report was in response to a request from the Committee for more detail about the Section 75 arrangements. Members were advised that a Cabinet Member Decision Notice had been published to extend the existing agreement for 12 months which had been in place for three years. The money encapsulated in the agreement was drug specific funding from the Department of Health and came through the PCT to the Local Authority. This funding would be moved next financial year into public health within the PCT and public health would then be moved into the Local Authority therefore in twelve months time there would not be a need for a Section 75. By pooling the funding it allowed joint commissioning and much better value for money.

The Committee were satisfied with the officer's update on the Section 75 arrangements and extension of the agreement for a further twelve months.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report.

CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ITEM 8 ONLY

8. Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan 2011 – 2014

Gary Goose, Community Safety Strategic Manager introduced the report and went through the details of the Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan for 2011 – 2014. He advised Members that the plan set out the direction of travel for making Peterborough Safer over the next three years. The plan would be flexible and adaptive to the changing political landscape. The most significant change to the plan would be the introduction of the new Policing and Crime Commissioners who would be elected next year and would bring about changes to funding arrangements. The removal of central reporting via the Local Area Agreement and National Indicator set would free the partnership to determine what was important locally and decide on local priorities.

In 2010 there had been a 9% overall reduction in crime and the priority area of serious acquisitive crime had fallen by 26% which had equated to more than 280 fewer offences. This had equated to savings of £5.2M. The three priorities for the coming year would be:

- Reducing Crime which would be delivered by reducing re-offending by the development of Integrated Offender Management.
- Tackling Anti-Social behaviour and Hate Crime which would be delivered by the creation of a single city-wide anti-social behaviour system.
- Building Stronger and more supportive communities which would be delivered by embedding the neighbourhood management process into core Safer Peterborough Partnership work.

Work would take place to embed the 'broken window theory' enabling people to feel confident in reporting problems when they happen and know that action would be taken.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members felt that most people did not feel that crime was being reduced. It was a difficult social issue and this might be because people saw more of the minor crime like graffiti, damage and anti social behaviour. Therefore a focus that tackled those issues would help people to understand that crime was being reduced.
- What have been your key successes and have you done any research on what impact the possible reduction in police officers on the front line would have. *Successes had been a reduction of 26% in crime which in real terms had meant 343 fewer house burglaries. This had equated to nearly £900,000 in economic costs. There had also been a reduction in serious violence and fewer victims of serious violence. The integrated offender management programme had made a positive effect on the reduction in crime. The reductions in police numbers would be mitigated by the restructuring of police forces but would not affect front line policing in Peterborough.*
- How up to date is the data in the report on vulnerable neighbourhoods. The data shows East Ward as a very vulnerable area but it is not. *The data in the report was still relevant but the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment was still being completed and once complete may change the data.*

Adrian Chapman advised the Committee that a workshop would be held for Community Safety Partnership members to update them on the significant changes concerning Community Safety. This would include the role of the new Policing and Crime Commissioner, changes around anti social behaviour powers and the role of public health. He felt that it would be useful for members of the committee to attend and that it would take place early in the new municipal year. The Chair agreed that this would be useful and asked that members be invited once arrangements had been confirmed.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee:

- (i) Endorsed the Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan 2011-14; and
- (ii) Recommended the approval of the Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan to Cabinet.

ACTION AGREED

That the Committee receive an invitation in the new Municipal Year to attend a workshop on the significant changes taking place in Community Safety.

9. Review of the Citizen's Power Programme

Adrian Chapman, the Head of Neighbourhood Services introduced the report and advised members that the report was in response to the recommendation made by the Committee at its meeting on 19th January. The recommendation was:

That following consideration by the Committee of the Citizen's Power Programme it is recommended to the Project Sponsor, Adrian Chapman that the Citizens Power Programme, which is a joint venture between the Royal Society of Arts, Peterborough City Council and the Arts Council, be immediately disbanded.

In preparing the response to the recommendation Adrian Chapman had concluded that an in depth review of the Citizens Power Programme would be required and therefore requested that time be allowed to complete the review. The conclusions of the review would be brought back to the Committee early in the new Municipal Year.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

Members were in agreement with the course of action being taken and agreed that a report containing the findings of the review be brought back to the committee in the new Municipal Year.

ACTIONS AGREED

That the Head of Neighbourhood Services carry out an in-depth review of the Citizens Power Programme in response to the recommendation made at its meeting on 19 January 2011 to disband the Citizens Power Programme. The report to be presented early in the new Municipal year when the review has been completed.

10. Response to Recommendations

The purpose of the report was to inform the Committee of the response from Cabinet to the recommendations made by the Committee at their meeting on 19 January 2011 on Part One of the Neighbourhood Council review.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

Members advised that they would continue to monitor the outcomes of the recommendations made from the Neighbourhood Council review over the next Municipal Year.

ACTION AGREED

That the Committee continue to monitor the progress of the recommendations made from the Neighbourhood Council Review.

11. Neighbourhood Council Review – Part 2

Councillor Burton Chair of the review group introduced the report and thanked the Officers Paulina Ford and Adrian Chapman who had supported the review group for their help in achieving the final report. He also thanked the people who had taken part in various interviews and those people who had contributed to the review with their comments and suggestions. Adrian Chapman advised Members that an in-depth review had been conducted and that the report was the second stage of the review which had covered attendance, delegated powers, logistical arrangements and decision making powers. Extensive consultation had been carried out with approximately 100 key groups and key individuals across the city. Every city councillor had been contacted for their comments and there had been specifically targeted consultation with rural Members. The group had also

interviewed senior officers in the authority and there had been a visit from a colleague at Luton Borough Council who had extensive knowledge regarding Area Committees. The recommendations were set out in the report. There would be an overall implementation plan to include all of the recommendations from part one and part two of the review and the review group would continue to monitor these.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Councillor Sandford highlighted recommendation 17 which was to provide free transport to vulnerable residents. He felt that it should be expanded to include all residents who were unable to attend the meetings. Paul Phillipson acknowledged what was trying to be achieved and felt that it would be better to put the wording in a different way. Suggested wording was:
Officers should explore transport initiatives as and where appropriate for each of the Area Committee meetings to support attendance from residents.
Members agreed to the change in wording.
- Members discussed the lack of attendance at neighbourhood council meetings and felt that this was an ongoing issue which needed to be resolved.
- The Chair of Park Farm Neighbourhood Watch came forward from the public gallery to make a statement about his concerns regarding the proposed joint meetings of the Neighbourhood Police Panels and Neighbourhood Councils and felt that the Neighbourhood Watch should have been consulted. The Chair of the Review Group informed him that a Senior Police Officer had been consulted on the proposal and he had supported the recommendation.

ACTION AGREED

To endorse the recommendations made in the Review of Neighbourhood Councils – Part Two report from the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Task and Finish Group and refer them to Cabinet with the exception of recommendation 17 where the wording would be changed to the following:

Recommendation

Officers should explore transport initiatives as and where appropriate for each of the Area Committee meetings to support attendance from residents.

RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet consider the following recommendations for approval at their meeting on 21 March 2011.

Recommendation 1:

Change the name of Neighbourhood Councils to Area Committees

Recommendation 2:

Adopt the following as the vision statement for Area Committees:

“Area Committees will deliver improvements for the local area by identifying, overseeing, monitoring and driving actions to support all issues relevant to the area, including service delivery, service improvements, and area developments”

Recommendation 3:

Amend the Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution to reflect these recommendations, and to ensure that Area Committees are supported by similar procedures that support other

Council committees (for example, agenda setting meetings with Area Committee members, and provision of full committee reports)

Recommendation 4:

Replace the existing terms of reference for Area Committees with the following:

- (i) Area Committees are established in Peterborough in accordance with the provisions set out in Local Government Act 2000
- (ii) Area Committees will require the proactive support of all elected Councillors, officers, and partner organisations to ensure their full and positive success

Area Committees should:

- (iii) Make decisions within the remit of the terms of reference and the formally delegated responsibilities, or make recommendations to the Executive as appropriate on issues which affect the area
- (iv) Be the committee where members of the Area Committee and members of the community can discuss issues of concern or interest, including those that are not the direct responsibility of the Council as well as those that are
- (v) Set the standards for services to meet local needs which are outside the immediate responsibility or budget of the Area Committee, and seek agreement for any changes from the Executive
- (vi) Be the primary focus for public involvement and consultation within the area, working closely with other public, private and voluntary agencies, and advising and/or making recommendations that arise to the Executive as appropriate on issues which affect the area
- (vii) Develop community action plans, and monitor their implementation, to ensure the promotion of economic, environmental, cultural and social wellbeing of the area, that service delivery improvements are made and that better outcomes are achieved
- (viii) Carry out any non-Executive functions delegated by the council, and any Executive functions delegated by the Leader, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegations set out in Part 3 sections 1 and 3 of the Constitution
- (ix) Be directly responsible for any delegated funding identified by the Council and invest that money in ways that support the priorities identified through the community planning process.

Recommendation 5:

For the Municipal Year commencing May 2011, replace the existing Delegations to Neighbourhood Councils with those set out below. Keep this under review during that year, with a view to expanding the delegations from the start of the Municipal Year commencing May 2012:

- (i) The Leader retains responsibility for functions delegated and may exercise those functions in person, regardless of further delegation. Further, the Area Committees must act with due regard to all other Council policies and procedures

- (ii) To promote the Council's role as a community leader in its area, giving a meaningful voice to the community and fostering good and productive working relationships with the Council's partner organisations, including Parish Councils, Police, Fire, Probation, criminal justice agencies, health and social care agencies, education agencies, young peoples' services, community associations, residents associations and voluntary sector agencies
- (iii) To take a leading role in promoting the economic, environmental, cultural and social wellbeing of the area, and develop community action plans to achieve this that improve service delivery and achieve better outcomes
- (iv) To set the standards for all former City Services operations now contracted to Enterprise to ensure effective delivery of all services, including making decisions on the maximum amount of any delegated budgets allowable within the terms of the contract to be deployed on local priorities (*to be confirmed subject to details of the contract*)
- (v) To agree the annual programme of works contained within the Highways Capital Programme for 2012/13 onwards
- (vi) To act as consultees on all major or significant Executive and Council proposals that affect the area, including those affecting both capital and revenue spend
- (vii) To act as consultees in respect of Major Planning applications relevant to the area, and report views to the relevant Committee
- (viii) To carry out any actions that the Executive authorises in addition to those set out above, until such time as that authorisation is revoked

Recommendation 6:

Create a job description for the roles of Chair and Vice Chair of the Area Committee that reflects the changes of emphasis and focus set out in these recommendations, and the role these posts will play in support of the broader neighbourhood management structure referred to in section B below

Recommendation 7:

Deliver the recommendations set out in the report from the sub-group of the Neighbourhood Council Task and Finish Group which has focussed on rural/parish issues, specifically:

- (i) create a new committee to replace the Rural North Neighbourhood Council, that comprises rural Ward Councillors and one co-opted representative from each of the 23 rural Parish Councils
- (ii) appoint a rural Ward Councillor as the Chair of this committee
- (iii) hold all meetings at a rural location within any of the 23 rural Parish Council areas
- (iv) decisions relating to non-financial matters or those that are not formally delegated responsibilities will be debated by all members of the committee, with all members having a single vote each
- (v) matters relating to financial or delegated responsibilities will be decided solely by elected City Councillors

Recommendation 8:

Create a lead officer role within the Neighbourhoods division to co-ordinate and facilitate the entire Neighbourhood Management meeting and engagement structure, including:

- Developing, co-ordinating and monitoring delivery of action plans at Area Committee, Neighbourhood Panel, Ward Forums, and locality tour levels, holding Members, officers and partners to account as necessary
- Liaising with key PCC departments, notably Democratic Services and Communications, to ensure all required actions are delivered
- Arranging agenda setting and planning meetings for Area Committees in accordance with the Constitution
- All logistical arrangements for Area Committees, Neighbourhood Panels, Ward Forums, Neighbourhood Management Delivery Team meetings and any other related forums, including venues, refreshments, access, transport etc
- Liaising with Council departments and partners regarding information to be made available at each meeting (e.g. literature or a staffed information stand)
- Managing the agenda plan for each Area Committee containing items for future discussion
- Developing, managing and co-ordinating a full contacts database of residents, community groups, officers and partners to ensure maximum awareness of all relevant meetings and opportunities for engagement

Recommendation 9:

Create a single, seamless approach to neighbourhood engagement by creating a structure which enables the following to be delivered in each Area Committee area during the same session:

- Ward Forum: a ward-specific informal forum where ward councillors can engage with their constituents and discuss informal issues or issues which may require escalation to the Area Committee. During these forums, key officer representation should also be available, including from the Neighbourhood Management team, Trading Standards, Community Safety, Police, and Enterprise
- Neighbourhood Panel: formally Police-led but now partner-wide meetings during which three local priorities are identified for resolution
- Area Committee: re-launched former Neighbourhood Council meetings, focussing on more strategic or impactful issues affecting the area

For example, the Ward Forums may run from 6pm until 6.50pm, and the Area Committee meeting may run from 7pm until 9.00pm with the first 30 minutes given over to the business of the Neighbourhood Panel

Recommendation 10:

Alongside formal minutes from the Area Committee, comprehensive action plans should be created from (i) every Ward Forum and (ii) every Area Committee meeting, setting out clearly what actions have been agreed, and naming a lead officer (with the consent of the officer named) and a lead councillor jointly responsible for ensuring the action is achieved

Recommendation 11:

Ensure the broader neighbourhood management framework shown at appendix 6 is in place and is able to respond to the opportunities provided in the Localism Bill and other relevant emerging legislation. Further, ensure that monthly Neighbourhood Management Delivery

Team meetings are in place for all Area Committee areas, that there is full commitment from all councillors, and that the role of community partnership organisations is firmly established

Recommendation 12:

Formalise the seating arrangements at Area Committee meetings so that all Members sit at the front of the audience in a horseshoe arrangement, making it clear who has voting rights, how those rights are used, and who is not in attendance

Recommendation 13:

Identify a different member of the Corporate Management Team to act as champion and advocate for each of the seven Area Committees, and to ensure that the principles of Area Committees are given the appropriate status amongst all officers

Recommendation 14:

Organise a minimum of two Area Committee locality 'tours' per annum, during which ALL members of the Committee, the nominated CMT member, key PCC officers, key officers from partner organisations, key community leaders/representatives and the local media explore the area in more depth focussing on particular problems, hotspots and successes

Recommendation 15:

- (a) Develop a single media and communications strategy, supported by an action plan, which proactively promotes Area Committees and Ward Forums and their achievements in a timely manner
- (b) To help achieve this assign an officer within the Communications team to have responsibility for coordinating publicity and marketing for Area Committees and Ward Forums

Produce a publicity 'pack' of template materials and formats that promote Area Committees, including 'soft' formats (via the use of the web, social networking etc) and 'hard' formats (posters, leaflets etc)

Recommendation 16:

Be creative and flexible with the logistical arrangements for neighbourhood engagement activities set out in recommendation 9, providing they follow the Access to Information rules. For example, vary the start and end times of the meetings to ensure engagement with different residents, and ensure venues have enough space and capacity to cope with the requirements of both formal and informal forums during the same session

Recommendation 17:

Officers should explore transport initiatives as and where appropriate for each of the Area Committee meetings to support attendance from residents

Recommendation 18 (already agreed):

That the recommendations, when agreed, form part of an overall implementation plan for Neighbourhood Councils alongside the recommendations that emerge from stage one of the review. This implementation plan should be overseen by the cross-party working group formed from the task and finish group, and become a standing item at all Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee meetings, with regular updates also provided to Cabinet and Group Representatives

Recommendation 19:

Re-brand and have a major re-launch of Neighbourhood Councils as Area Committees. This should include raising awareness to all councillors, PCC officers, external partners, and residents to actively promote their purpose including the vision set out in recommendation 2 along with the new delegations and terms of reference

12. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan, containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the following four months. Members were invited to comment on the Plan and, where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's work programme.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the Forward Plan and agreed that there were no items for further consideration.

The meeting began at 7.00 and ended at 9.00pm

CHAIRMAN