



Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee  
Held in the Bourges/Viersen Room - Town Hall  
On  
9 September 2010

**Present:** N Arculus (Vice-Chairman), JA Fox, N North, B Rush and N Sandford

**Also Present:** Councillor S Dalton, Cabinet Member for Environment Capital  
Councillor JR Fox, Representing the Leader of the Peterborough  
Independent Forum

**Officers Present:** Paul Phillipson, Executive Director of Operations  
Leonie McCarthy, Neighbourhood Manager - City Wide  
Trevor Gibson, Director of Environment Capital  
Brian Armstrong, Wildlife Officer  
Bob Beaumont, Lawyer  
Paulina Ford, Performance Scrutiny and Research Officer

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Day and Morley.

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

The following declarations of interest were made:

Item 6 – Biodiversity Strategy Progress Report 2009-10

- Councillor Rush declared a personal interest as he was a member of the RSPB.
- Councillor Sandford declared a personal interest as had been a member of the Biodiversity Working Group in 2002.
- Councillor Judy Fox declared a personal interest as she was a member of the Friends of Cuckoo's Hollow group.

Item 8 – Progress on Delivery of the Environment Capital Portfolio and Launch of the Home of Environment Capital Initiative

- Councillor Sandford declared a personal interest as he was a member of PECT.

**3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 July 2010**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2010 were approved as a correct record.

Councillor Sandford advised that despite assurances from officers that the street lights at Gresley Way were repaired this was not the case.

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

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

## **5. Change to order of the Agenda**

With the agreement of the Committee it was agreed that item 7. Norwood Lane and the Paston Travellers Site would be moved to item 5 on the agenda.

## **6. Norwood Lane and the Paston Travellers Site**

The City Wide Neighbourhood Manager introduced the report by advising that the report had been brought to the Committee at the request of the Gunthorpe, Paston, Walton and Werrington Community Committee. The Community Committee had wished the Scrutiny Committee to gain a better understanding of the ongoing challenges with regard to fly tipping at Norwood Lane and the Paston Travellers Site.

A Solution Clinic had taken place on Monday 7 September to address the issues relating to fly tipping at Norwood Lane and the outcome was a 28 point action plan. Some of the actions identified were:

- Set up covert CCTV and work with rural police to start enforcement on people who were fly tipping on the lane with improved results expected within the next 6 months.
- A week of action to be held led by the Neighbourhood Manager and the Safer Peterborough Partnership. This would mean a big clear up of the Lane and travellers site.
- A mobile van to visit the site to engage with the travellers and advise them of the actions being taken.
- Putting a barrier in place at the beginning of the Lane allowing only people living at the site access with a key.
- A recommendation to move the permanent sites at the Oxney Road and Paston Travellers sites into housing within the City Council. Consultations were currently taking place with the Council.
- The need for an overarching strategy for gypsies and travellers.

The project plan for the 28 actions would be overseen by a project manager and the outcomes would be reported to the Cohesion Board.

Members were informed that the Paston site was in a bad state of repair and might have to be demolished therefore the future long term plan was to find other sites across the city but this was proving difficult. There was also a new development at Paston that might impact on Norwood Lane in the future.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Had any covert CCTV operations taken place? Members were advised that there had not been any in the last 12 months as it had proved to be an expensive exercise and not sustainable to maintain. However since that time some CCTV equipment had been identified for use from within the Council and officers to use the equipment had also been identified but they would require training. The cost of installation would be £12,000 but there would be no ongoing cost.
- How would the residents of the Paston traveller's site be involved in delivering the outcomes of the action plan? Members were advised that the community of travellers wanted to help and wanted to live like other residents in Peterborough. There would be a mobile van visiting the site with information on the actions and door to door knocking would ensure that all the travellers were fully aware of what was being proposed. This would also help in gaining an understanding of the community and engaging the travellers in the delivery of the outcomes.
- How can members help to implement the outcomes? Councillor Walsh, Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion, had visited the site and requested regular updates. She was

also a member of the Cohesion Board which would monitor the performance to ensure that improvements were being delivered.

- Could anyone apply for a permit to take rubbish to the tip? The Executive Director of Operations advised that there were a number of travellers who had permits to carry out legitimate business but he would need to find out what the criteria for obtaining a permit was.
- How much would it cost to install CCTV at Norwood lane? CCTV costs were about £12,000 initially but had no ongoing costs however it would need to be policed as it could be subject to vandalism.
- Members had noted that rubbish was also being dumped on a farmer's land at Norwood Lane and wanted to know how it would be cleared as this was private land. The officer advised that she would have to investigate and report back to the Committee.
- With regard to joint patrols with the local Police Rural Community Action teams how would the proposed reduction in funding affect these? The Officer advised that this was classed as business as usual and part of their daily work so should not impact on this.
- Members commented that it was not always travellers that dumped rubbish in Norwood Lane. If the site was fully cleaned up and policed it should provide a solution. Councillor JR Fox had attended the recent Solution Clinic and felt that the 28 point action plan would bring about some real changes.
- Fly tipping was a criminal offence so why had no one been prosecuted? The Executive Director of Operations advised that there had been covert work undertaken in some areas of the city which had produced a number of prosecutions but covert work was very difficult and very dangerous to deliver. Commercial entities that fly tipped were more difficult to catch.
- Members requested that a copy of the 28 point action plan be circulated to the Committee once it had been signed off.
- Members felt that there needed to be stronger enforcement from the Magistrates and that the Council needed to talk to them to get their support by giving stronger penalties and confiscating vehicles that had been used for fly tipping.. The Neighbourhood Manager agreed to highlight this within the action plan and to contact the Magistrates.
- What did the people who lived at the Paston site feel about having a barrier put in place at Norwood Lane? At the invitation of the Committee a member of the public addressed the Committee and advised that the barrier would be a problem to people visiting the site and felt that they would probably tear it down. Businesses who worked around Peterborough used the site as a tip and came between the hours of 6.00am to 9.00am or late at night. It was accepted that there were also a few people from the site who dumped rubbish there but he believed they would stop if the other people stopped. If the site was cleaned up it would deter people from dumping rubbish but if people saw rubbish there then they were inclined to add more rubbish.
- The Officer advised Members that the barrier would be a deterrent whilst other work on the site was being completed but the residents of the site would be consulted for their views.

## **ACTIONS AGREED**

That the City Wide Neighbourhood Manager:

1. Circulate the 28 Point Action Plan to Members of the Committee once it had been approved by the Cohesion Board. This to be done via the Scrutiny Officer within one week of the meeting.
2. Bring the 28 Point Action Plan back to the Committee to be scrutinised to assess its impact at a future meeting the date of which to be agreed with Officers and Group Representatives.
3. Take into consideration all relevant comments made by the Committee.
4. Investigate how the rubbish left on private land at Norwood Lane would be cleared and report back to the Committee via the Scrutiny Officer.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Neighbourhood Manager includes within the Action Plan an additional action point that the Magistrates are requested to take stronger action and deliver stronger penalties for fly tipping. The Neighbourhood Manager to contact the Magistrates to discuss this action and request their support in backing the Council's actions with regard to enforcement.

### **7. Responses to Recommendations Made by the Committee**

The report informed the Committee of the responses to recommendations that had been made at previous meetings. The Committee were then asked to consider these and agree if the recommendations required further monitoring.

Observations and questions were asked around the following areas:

- Christmas Park and Ride. Members asked for clarification that the £1 charge per person as stated in the response was correct as they felt that this may deter people from using the park and ride service as a family of four would cost £4. The Executive Director of Operations advised that he would seek clarification and report back to Members.
- Tree Pollarding. Members requested that this item continued to be monitored in a year's time to ensure that the recommendation had been listened to and the impact it had made.
- Councillor Sandford requested that all recommendations and responses be included in the feed back report to ensure that all recommendations were monitored in the same way.

## **ACTIONS AGREED**

1. The Executive Director of Operations clarify the agreed charge for the Christmas Park and Ride service and report back to the Committee via the Scrutiny Officer.
2. A report to come to the Committee in a year to report on the impact of pollarding trees in one or two streets on a less regular basis to see if a longer maintenance regime was reasonable compared to the current two year programme.

### **8. Biodiversity Strategy Progress Report 2009-10**

The Wildlife Officer presented the report on the progress made against the City Councils 2004 Biodiversity Strategy.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- The philosophy of the original Biodiversity strategy was that the best way to improve biodiversity was not to focus on small isolated individual sites but to take a broader approach. There had been some small achievements but there had been a failure to adopt a larger scale landscape approach which needed a change to the management regime of parks and open spaces. The Wildlife Officer informed the Committee that the 2004 Biodiversity Strategy was a work in progress and that effecting a culture change took time. It was a strategy that had to be achieved within existing costs and this was a restricting element on delivering the strategy.
- The Committee accepted that the strategy was moving in the right direction albeit at a slow pace. Members noted that there had been a massive shrub and tree removal campaign and which was not part of the strategy and there needed to be more connection between the policy and practice.
- Members requested that a measure be put in place to assess the impact of the biodiversity strategy. The Wildlife Officer advised that this would be very difficult and an enormous task to measure all the wildlife. However there were certain species that could be measured like barn owls and the four spotted moth.

- Some of the actions in the strategy did not include timeframes and monitoring, was there some way that targets could be included in the current strategy. The Wildlife Officer advised Members that there was an appendix to the report which had come to the previous scrutiny meeting which did contain detail and costs and it would come to the Committee on an annual basis for monitoring. There were a set of indicators that could be included in the strategy but would not always be specific to Council owned land.
- Members wanted assurance that the original vision of the Biodiversity Strategy which was that Biodiversity should become a consideration in the management of all our landscape was embedded. The officer advised Members that this was still the vision of the Strategy and was happening but slowly.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Wildlife Officer includes in the Biodiversity Strategy some specific indicators to provide quantitative data on flora, fauna and endangered species so the impact of the Strategy can be measured.

### **9. Progress on Delivery of the Environment Capital Portfolio and Launch of the Home of Environment Capital Initiative**

The Director of Environment Capital and Cabinet Member for Environment Capital presented the report which advised on the progress being made with regard to the delivery of the Environment Capital portfolio and also informed the Committee about the proposals to launch the “Home of Environment Capital” initiative. The proposals would be considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 29 September.

The Sustainable Community Strategy embedded creating the UK’s Environment Capital and it remained a priority. There had been a number of work strands put in place to develop key elements of the work one of which was to draft a Home of Environment Capital – Major Policy 2010. This was a new policy and would replace the current Environment Policy which had been adopted in 2000. The new policy would link into all of the current strategies and policies which had been developed since the original policy in 2000. A Single Delivery Plan for the Home of Environment Capital was currently being developed and would include outcomes that would be measured. The Forum for the Future Sustainable Cities Index had been used for measurement of performance in the past however the Index was designed for large cities. This Single Delivery Plan would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee. A task and finish team had been set up to lead the development of a marketing and communications strategy to ensure that the new approach enhanced the city’s regional, national and international profile and to get the message out about the Home of Environment Capital.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- The Committee at the last meeting had been concerned that the public were not being fully engaged with the Environment Capital. Had any new work been done to promote this? Members were advised that no new work had been done since then but a key part of the new policy was about getting the message out.
- Why was the phrase ‘Home of Environment Capital’ being used instead of ‘The Environment Capital? Members were informed that the idea behind the phrase ‘Home of Environment Capital’ was based on Peterborough’s environmental reputation and the drawing of resources from within the Council, partners and across the city in a common vision. It was a good way of advertising to people who wanted to relocate to the city. The use of the word capital represented knowledge and expertise which indicated that Peterborough was the home of where it had started.
- In the Forum for the Future indicators there were some indicators which were performing very badly and the Quality of Life index had not been included. The Cabinet Member for Environment Capital advised that at the last meeting the Committee had recommended

that an independent assessment needed to be undertaken and the Forum for the Future Index had therefore been used for this assessment. The categories and indicators which had been chosen were more relevant to the environment.

- Members were concerned that the Environment Policy document adopted in 2000 had been a substantial document and was now being replaced by a one and half page document which had no targets or action plan. Members were advised that supporting the new policy were a range of existing policies that had been put in place since the original Environment Policy had been adopted e.g. carbon management action plan, climate change, and biodiversity policy. The new policy would link into those documents therefore reducing the size of the new policy. The action plan would be the Single Delivery Plan which was currently being developed and would sit behind the policy with outcomes and more detailed targets. It should be noted that the National Indicators had now been abolished and the process of putting some new measures in place was currently being undertaken.
- Members felt that not many people knew about the Environment Capital and that there was a need to promote it more widely. Members were advised that the message had gone out nationally and there had been a lot of press releases but agreed that more work needed to be done. The Single Delivery Plan would provide a better vehicle to communicate the message and a marketing strategy was being developed.
- Members asked how people would get to know about the Home of Environment Capital. Members were advised that a marketing strategy was being developed and there would be a campaign to launch it. There would also be targeted messages and briefings to schools, communities and businesses.
- Members wanted to know if the policy would include the measures and targets when presented to full council. Members were advised that this would not be the case as all the key outcomes, measures and targets would be in the Single Delivery Plan which was currently being developed. The Committee would have an opportunity to scrutinise the Single Delivery Plan once it had been completed.
- How does Peterborough compare with Tyneside who were also claiming the same title of Environment Capital? Officers would investigate further.
- Earlier this month the Council had been mentioned in a press release from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) which stated that we had entered into a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) called the Greater Peterborough and Greater Cambridgeshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Councillors had not been consulted on this and wanted to know who had authorised the application. Had the application included any consideration of the aspirations of Peterborough being an Environment Capital and could more information be given? The Director of Environment Capital and Cabinet Member stated that they did not know who had authorised the submission or what the content of the submission was. The Executive Director of Operations advised that he had read the document and confirmed that there was environmental content within it however the partnership was aimed more around economic development and regeneration than environmental issues. The LEP would be considered through the remit of the Sustainable Growth Scrutiny Committee when more information was available.
- At the invitation of the Committee, Wayne Stimson of the ECO Arts Project addressed the Committee. He felt that the phrase the Home of Environment Capital was very vague and needed to be redefined.
- At the invitation of the Committee, Richard Olive, a Member of GPP Environment Capital Committee addressed the Committee. He read a statement which contained information on other cities who aspired to achieve green capital status and highlighted areas where Peterborough was failing in environmental performance. He also commented that the new Home of Capital Environment Policy was weak and vague. As the statement included various facts and figures on environmental issues Mr Olive was asked that he submit his statement in writing to the Committee as it was very detailed.
- At the invitation of the Committee, Sally Plummer and environmentalist addressed the Committee. She stated that she was concerned that different Committee Members

seemed to have different interpretations on what the term Environment meant and wanted to see a more unified approach to the meaning.

### **ACTIONS AGREED**

That the Director of Environment Capital brings to a future meeting the Single Delivery Plan when completed.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Cabinet Member for Environment Capital is recommended to:

- (i) ensure that the Home of Environment Capital Policy makes reference to all of the other related policies and strategies; and
- (ii) rewrite the opening paragraph of the Policy to make clearer the intent of the Policy, including that details of the related policies and strategies that are yet to be included.

## **10. 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.

Members noted that there was no mention in the Forward Plan with regard to the Local Enterprise Plan and Members requested further information on who had authorised this decision.

### **ACTION AGREED**

The Committee noted the Forward Plan and agreed that there were no items to bring to the Committee.

## **11. Work Programme**

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2010/11 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

### **ACTION AGREED**

To confirm the work programme for 2010/11. Councillor Sandford requested that the item Criteria for Resurfacing Footpaths be scheduled into the work programme in March.

## **12. Date of Next Meeting**

CHAIRMAN  
7.00 - 10.06 pm