

## **STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2012  
7.00 PM**

**Bourges/Viersen Room - Town Hall**

### **AGENDA**

**Page No**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

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

*At this point Members must declare whether they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, or other interest, in any of the items on the agenda, unless it is already entered in the register of members' interests or is a "pending notification" that has been disclosed to the Solicitor to the Council. Members must also declare if they are subject to their party group whip in relation to any items under consideration.*

**3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 12 September 2012**

**1 - 10**

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

*The decision notice for each decision will bear the date on which it is published and will specify that the decision may then be implemented on the expiry of 3 working days after the publication of the decision (not including the date of publication), unless a request for call-in of the decision is received from any two Members of a Scrutiny Committee or Scrutiny Commissions.. If a request for call-in of a decision is received, implementation of the decision remains suspended for consideration by the relevant Scrutiny Committee or Commission.*

**5. Portfolio Progress Report from Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods**

**11 - 22**

**6. Community Cohesion Strategy and Delivery**

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**7. Empty Homes Strategy 2012 - 2015**

**55 - 106**

**8. Notice of Intention to Take Key Decisions**

**107 - 118**

**9. Work Programme**

**119 - 122**

**10. Date of Next Meeting**

*16 January 2013*



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#### **Committee Members:**

**Councillors: J Peach (Chair), S Day (Vice Chairman), P Kreling, G Nawaz, Johnson, Forbes and J R Fox**

**Substitutes: Councillors: D Over, N Shabbir and B Saltmarsh  
Co-opted Member when acting as Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee:  
Ansar Ali – Police Authority Representative**

Further information about this meeting can be obtained from Paulina Ford on telephone 01733 452508 or by email – [paulina.ford@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:paulina.ford@peterborough.gov.uk)

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD IN THE  
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH  
ON  
12 SEPTEMBER 2012**

**Present:** Councillors Peach (Chairman), Kreling, Nawaz, Johnson, Shabbir and Harrington

<b>Also Present:</b>	Ansar Ali	Police Authority Representative
	Callum Hurley	Youth Council Representative
	Alex Hall	Youth Council Representative
<b>Officers in Attendance:</b>	Gary Goose	Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager
	DCI Melanie Dales	Cambridgeshire Constabulary
	Peter Gell	Regulatory Services Strategic Manager
	Donna Hall	Business Regulation Manager
	Peter Stonely	Principal Trading Standards Officer
	Samantha Olive	Food Safety and Health and Safety Officer
	David Marshall	Senior Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer, South
	Dania Castagliuolo	Governance Officer
	Paul Phillipson	Executive Director of Operations

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Day, Forbes and JR Fox. Councillor Harrington attended as substitute for Councillor Fox and Councillor Shabbir attended as substitute for Councillor Forbes.

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

Ansar Ali declared that he was a candidate in the forthcoming Police and Crime Commissioner election.

**3. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2012**

The minutes of the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 25 July 2012 were approved 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. Reducing Reoffending Through Behaviour Change**

The report allowed the Committee to discharge its function as the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 by scrutinising the approach taken by the Community Safety Partnership to reduce reoffending in the city.

On 1 April 2012 statutory changes to Community Safety Partnerships under the Policing and Crime Act 2009 came in to effect and added the Probation Services to the list of responsible authorities and provided a new duty to formulate and implement a strategy to reduce reoffending by adult and young offenders. It also amended section 17 of the Crime and

Disorder Act to add a duty for certain defined authorities to consider reducing reoffending in the exercise of all their duties. Defined authorities were as follows:

- Peterborough Unitary Authority
- Cambridgeshire Constabulary
- Cambridgeshire Fire Authority
- NHS Peterborough
- Cambridgeshire Police Authority
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Probation Trust

The following points were highlighted:

- 2011 saw significant success in reducing the numbers of victims of crime within the city. At the end of July 2012 the rolling twelve month average showed a reduction in crime of 13.1% representing over 1300 fewer victims of crime.
- The three year Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan (2011 – 2014) was clear that the Partnership would be committed to tackling the underlying causes of crime and offending but equally clear that those who continue to break the law would be targeted with the full weight of the criminal justice system
- The Partnership would continue to support statutory agencies in delivering their own core function but would co-ordinate and lead on the work where it felt it could provide the biggest impact, that of prevention.
- The Police alone could not be responsible for reducing crime and HM Prison and probation services alone could not reduce reoffending rates. A number of issues affected offending and reoffending. Offenders typically had multiple issues within their lifestyle that were drivers for their offending. It had been found that of those adult offenders in prison:
  - 33% had at some point been in care
  - 90% had at some point been excluded from school
  - 54% had an education level of an eleven year old
  - 50% were long-term unemployed
  - 40% had a hard drug issue of more than £100 per day
  - 70% had a closest friendship group with multi-convictions
  - 10% had a diagnosed mental illness
- Some of the issues would be long standing and required investment of time and resource to change behaviour arising from them. Changing such behaviour was not only a socially responsible course of action, it was also cost effective.
- A preventative approach would reduce this burden not only on the police, the fire service, the health service, the probation service and other criminal justice agencies but also upon all of our citizens who pay more for insurance, more for products and more in tax as a result of crime.
- True and Sustainable change comes from within and as such the partnership would continue to support the work of the Council in integrating its approach to neighbourhood management with the community safety agenda by the development of Community Action Plans for each of the seven neighbourhood areas of the city.
- The integration of public health within the local authority would also add an extra important dimension in helping to tackle the long term effects of crime, as well as playing its part in preventing the opportunity for offending behaviour to deteriorate, in particular this would include developing further links with mental health and learning disability professionals in order that the most vulnerable victims and offenders gained the support they needed.

The Committee were asked to scrutinise and endorse the approach taken by the Community Safety Partnership to reduce the number of victims of crime by reducing reoffending levels through behaviour change, suggesting improvements and alternative approaches were appropriate.

Comments and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members queried how many reoffenders suffered from mental conditions. *The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager advised members that national figures suggested that only 10 percent of reoffenders had diagnosed mental health conditions although this did not explain the full picture as daily dealings with antisocial behaviour and all crime types proved that reoffenders all had some form of challenging behaviour. Work was being carried out at present to deal with mental ill health amongst reoffenders. He suggested that it was probable that at least a third of reoffenders had some level of mental health issues.*
- Members queried how nuisance crimes were being dealt with as these types of crime could also be extremely costly to the government and the general public. *The Detective Chief Inspector advised the committee that nuisance crimes were a priority in Peterborough and the figures for these crimes were lower than last year although there had been an increase in criminal damage over the past four to six weeks this had been easy to resource with local Police Officers. It was difficult to specify a trend with nuisance crimes which made it difficult to catch the individuals who committed the crimes. The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager informed the committee that they were developing an approach to antisocial behaviour with dedicated antisocial behaviour officers who were now working at Bayard Place. They were keen to not have the broken window theory in any areas of Peterborough where that crime could make an area deteriorate almost over night. The Police wanted to know about these nuisance crimes as soon as they happened, that way they could be prevented. He wanted to encourage all Councillors to get the message out in their wards that incidents needed to be reported and photos could be taken of any damage.*
- Members asked if there were any measures in place to report achievements made by the Council or its partners regarding reducing crime levels within the city. *The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager informed members that eighteen months ago through the three year statutory plan, the target was to reduce crime by ten percent in three years and this was now being over achieved. Measures were reviewed regularly using a strict monitoring regime.*
- Members commented that they found it ironic that they would still issue alcohol licenses to businesses in areas known for antisocial behaviour and queried why no action was being taken on this matter as there didn't seem to be any regard for section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act. *The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager advised the committee that they were aware of these issues but there were other laws in place regarding licensing premises that had to be considered.*
- Members also expressed their concern and annoyance that the Police had often highlighted that alcohol and licensed premises had been problems in certain areas but had not submitted any objections during licensing hearings. *The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager advised members that every case had to be treated on its own merits. The CanDo operation looked at premises and levels of crime and antisocial behaviour of which alcohol played a part. Each application would be consciously looked at and the reasons of the introduction of CanDo regarding alcohol.*
- Members asked if there were any other ways they could help with this project other than just reporting incidents. *The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager advised members that the biggest support from the committee would be to endorse the work that they were doing as the easy option would be to put offenders in prison. They were doing it the right way by spending money on prevention and they had*

*managed to bring crime levels down by intervention, so endorsement would be the most valuable thing.*

- Members queried whether the police had an early intervention system through schools to stop youths entering in to the criminal system. *The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager informed members that two years ago prevention of youths entering in to the criminal system was failing as reprimands and final warnings were not working. They had now moved to a number of ways of addressing young offenders and it was now a more common sense approach by looking at what caused certain behaviours and what the right intervention was for that behaviour. This had helped discover that for some offenders it was just a temporary blip and they were willing to change their behaviour. The Detective Chief Inspector advised the committee that there were Safer Schools Officers in place working with young people and also a family support project in place.*

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- The Committee recommends that Cambridgeshire Constabulary take a proactive stance to make representations against new alcohol licensing applications where there are reasonable grounds relating to alcohol issues in the area.

## **6. Protecting The Public Through Regulatory Services**

The Business Regulation Manager introduced the report to the Committee highlighting the important work carried out by Trading Standards and the Food Safety and Health and Safety Teams and outlining the proposed approach in supporting business to achieve compliance.

The Committee were asked to consider and review the achievements and future plans of the regulatory teams in fulfilling Peterborough City Council's statutory duties in public protection and public health legislation and to endorse the direction of travel outlined within the report.

The Principal Trading Standards Officer delivered a PowerPoint presentation to the group highlighting the work that the Trading Standards Team had completed in Peterborough so far this year:

- 395 items of fake clothing were seized at a festival
- Goods were seized from a factory and a home where merchandise with fake logos were being printed and sold, this business was making a turnover of £200,000
- Operators of fake Hajj Pilgrims tours were being investigated, Peterborough had recently been involved in an operation in Birmingham where local people had been caught out
- The team had worked with a farmer in Peterborough to improve standards as there had been welfare issues with his cattle
- The Trading Standards Team were working to get counterfeit tobacco off the market.

The Primary Authority Partnerships who were working with Peterborough Trading Standards to audit and agree action plans were as follows:

- AB AGRI
- British Sugar
- Indisit/Hotpoint
- Potter and Moore
- Thomas Cook
- Kiddicare
- Jam on the Hill

The current delivery of the service was enforcement driven primarily through prosecution and inspections and business support primarily through Primary Authority.

Trading Standards would use an intelligence-led approach to:

- Protect Peterborough consumers and legitimate businesses from unfair trading and the supply of unsafe goods
- Promote and support the activities of legitimate businesses in Peterborough
- Educate Peterborough consumers to make informed buying decisions

Enforcement would be to:

- Take appropriate action to disrupt the activities of rogue traders
- Combat doorstep crime
- Targeted regulatory campaigns
- Inspect high risk premises

Businesses would be supported by:

- Primary Authority
- Introducing a new scheme – Buy with confidence where businesses would be issued with a badge which would be a sign of trust for the general public to recognise that it was safe to buy from that particular trader.
- Links with business organisations
- Advice to local businesses – training would be offered to businesses to help them avoid making illegal sales

Consumers would be informed by:

- Media statements
- Targeted education to help combat doorstep crime
- Promotion of Buy with Confidence

Benefits would include:

- Best use of resources
- Interventions would be appropriate and based upon knowledge
- Reflect the national agenda of balanced regulation

Trading Standards asked members to consider the change of direction for trading standards and endorse their move towards a more targeted and preventative approach.

The Food Safety and Health and Safety Officer delivered a presentation to the committee informing the committee that the primary objective was to protect public health. The most serious issues the team had dealt with was E.coli and legionella and the following information was reported to the committee:

## **LEGIONELLA**

- Legionella was a lung infection caused by aerosols from contaminated water
- There had been a number of recent outbreaks in the UK
- Staffordshire had eighteen cases and one death which was linked to a hot tub
- Edinburgh had over one hundred cases and three deaths where no source was identified

- In recent years there had been only a small number of sporadic Legionella cases in the East of England
- Cases were fully investigated by tracing the patients movements fourteen days prior to the illness and any potential known sources were mapped against
- Peterborough was continuing to carry out checks on all cooling Towers to look at management systems and visits were being made to all known sources of spa pools. Officers were now on the lookout for any sources of aerosols during routine work.

### **E.Coli 0157**

- E.Coli 0157 lived in the gut of animals and was highly infectious
- Only a few organisms could cause serious illness
- It could be fatal and leave people with kidney or brain damage
- Children and elderly people were most vulnerable
- There was a Scottish outbreak of E.Coli 0157 in 1996 which caused 18 deaths. In total there were 496 cases. The source was cooked meat from a butchers
- There was a Welsh outbreak in 2005 which caused the death of a five year old boy. In total there were 157 cases. This was caused by cooked meats in a school and meat supplied by a catering butcher
- The national picture showed that there had been two public enquiries in to E.Coli 0157
- There was new E.Coli guidance that had been released from the Food Standards Agency (FSA)
- Recent outbreaks in the UK was associated with soil on vegetables and animal petting farms
- Enforcement work actioned last year included
  - ❖ 130 legal notices served
  - ❖ 1 emergency closure
  - ❖ 1 formal seizure
  - ❖ 2 Successful prosecutions
  - ❖ 4 voluntary closures
- Enforcement work actioned this year so far:
  - ❖ 45 Notices served
  - ❖ 2 successful prosecutions
  - ❖ 1 emergency closure
  - ❖ 2 Health and Safety prohibitions

Food Safety and Health and Safety asked Members to endorse a continuing proactive approach to food safety and health and safety which took in to account local priorities.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members queried whether partner agencies were liaised with to share information. *The Food Safety and Health and Safety Officer advised members that they always consulted with partner agencies and they did a lot of work with the Health and Safety Executive, the Fire Service, HMRC, the Police and the Money Lending Team.*
- Members queried whether new businesses had to apply for a change of use or submit a planning application. *The Food Safety and Health and Safety Officer advised the Committee that new businesses selling food had to register as a food business twenty eight days prior to opening. There was a data base in place which stores information of all food businesses but sometimes food businesses were only discovered after a complaint had been made.*
- Members suggested that the regulatory team worked with planning to discover the food businesses that had not registered as it was quite distressing to think that these businesses could be operating and members of the public could come to serious harm. People choosing to open businesses in Peterborough who came from different



countries needed to be made well aware of the rules and regulations. Rewards should be given, such as charter marks, to promote good businesses. *The Principal Trading Standards Officer commented that it was important for Trading Standards to link with businesses and make them feel confident that they could approach Trading Standards for help and advice.*

- Members were concerned whether spa pools were being checked regularly in fitness clubs as these are widely used by the general public. *The Food Safety and Health and Safety Officer advised members that this was not a requirement by the Health and Safety Executive although the Regulation Team would respond to keep Peterborough residents safe.*
- The Executive Director of Operations advised the committee that the changes in legislation regarding control of the spa pools was a national change. The Health and Safety Executive were driven by the government to make changes and relax the controls of goods such as spa pools.
- Members queried why some shops had been closed by the Regulatory Team then reopened within a few days selling exactly the same goods. *The Food Safety and Health and Safety Officer informed members that the law stated that in order to close a business they needed to be satisfied that there was a health risk condition. The business would be given a schedule to remove the health risk condition. A court case would take place within three days and once all of the requirements had been met the establishment could return to business.*
- Members commented that doorstep charity collecting was a big issue and queried what the rules and regulations were regarding this. *The Regulatory Services Strategic Manager advised members that registered charities did not need permission to collect from doorsteps although something could be done about people falsely collecting on behalf of charities by liaising with the police and advising people not to buy from doorstep sellers.*

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee endorsed the report

### **7. Responsible Dog Ownership**

The report informed the Committee that the issue of dog control was a national issue at present and that a number of consultations had taken place nationally to consider amendments to the current legislation to control dogs. With this in mind and to very much complement any changes in the law, officers had been developing a programme to raise awareness with pet owners on how they could do more to ensure they and their animal behave appropriately when in public and at home.

The Committee were asked to support a programme that promoted responsible dog ownership, including hosting and/or facilitating events with partner agencies initially over a pilot twelve month period. Further that the committee supported officers to continue to work with the Police as new powers were introduced that enabled better controls of dangerous dogs in order to maximise the impacts of both organisations.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members expressed concern with potentially dangerous dogs being left alone in the daytime roaming around in blocks of flats.
- Members supported the Paws in the Park event that had taken place for dog owners to go along and seek advice on dog behaviour and training.
- Members were concerned that some people had certain dogs as a status symbol which were not ideal for the premises they lived and where dogs were often locked in all day barking. *The Senior Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer advised the*

*committee that in cases like these the enforcement team should be contacted who would then liaise with the police to try and resolve the issue.*

- Members asked if the Enforcement Team worked with social landlords to establish whether properties were sufficient for keeping dogs. *The Regulatory Services Strategic Manager advised the committee that they did not presently work with Social Landlords although this was a good point to consider.*
- A youth Council Representative queried how dog fouling was dealt with. *The Senior Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer advised the Committee that enforcement officers would issue a penalty notice to owners of dogs who were caught fouling and even if they went back to clear it up they would still receive a fine. If witnesses come forward to report incidents of dog fouling the Council could still issue a fixed penalty notice therefore the Council did promote that witnesses could come forward.*
- Members suggested that the Council could have an awards scheme for dog owners who were willing to send their dogs to obedience training which they could display in public to show that they were responsible owners.

### **ACTION AGREED**

The Committee agreed for the Enforcement team to come back to a future meeting to give an update on the work that had been undertaken.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The Committee recommends that the council be more proactive when dealing with reported cases of noise nuisance due to dogs being left alone all day.
- The Committee recommends that the Council be more proactive in following up reported cases to the police regarding dangerous dogs.

## **8. Forward Plan**

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.

## **9. Work Programme**

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2012/13 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

### **ACTION AGREED**

To confirm the work programme for 2012/13.

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

20 November 2012

*The meeting began at 7.00 and ended at 8.00 pm*

CHAIRMAN

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<b>STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 5</b>
<b>20<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2012</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## **Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Planning**

**Contact Officer – Adrian Chapman**

**Contact Details – 863887**

### **PORTFOLIO PROGRESS REPORT**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To provide Members with a progress report from the Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Planning in relation to matters relevant to this Committee.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Members are asked to scrutinise the progress made on the Cabinet Member's Portfolio by providing challenge where necessary and to suggest ideas and initiatives to support improvements in performance.

#### **3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The ambition of the Sustainable Community Strategy is to deliver a bigger and better Peterborough, taking advantage of the inherent opportunities we have and at the same time tackling the challenges we face in order to deliver a better quality of life for all. The priorities and actions from this Portfolio directly contribute to this ambition.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Planning is responsible for the following:
- a) Planning (Development Control), Highways and Transport, including car parking
  - b) Building Act 1984
  - c) Environmental Protection and Trading Standards, including functions undertaken as the Weights and Measures authority
  - d) Landscape Management and Grounds Maintenance (this applies to policy, administration and service standards)
  - e) Homelessness and Housing Options
  - f) Special Government directed Housing Schemes
  - g) Traveller sites
  - h) Supporting People programme
  - i) Flood risk management and planning
  - j) Approval of the Food Law Enforcement Plan and the Health and Safety Law Enforcement Plan
  - k) Close liaison with:
    - (i) Planning and Environmental Protection Committee
    - (ii) Licensing Committee
    - (iii) Scrutiny Committees
 to review changes to policy and strategy within these service areas.

- 4.2 In addition, the Cabinet Member is responsible for overseeing the neighbourhood management approach and for most aspects of the work of the social inclusion manager.
- 4.3 The cross-cutting nature of this Portfolio requires the Cabinet Member to work closely with a wide range of other Cabinet Members and with senior officers to maximise opportunities for adding value and achieving efficiencies.

## **5. KEY ISSUES**

- 5.1 The following section sets out examples of the breadth and depth of delivery during this Municipal Year that the Cabinet Member has overseen.

### **5.1.1 Neighbourhood Management**

(i) The Cabinet Member has driven the neighbourhood management approach forward with great success. Local teams, under the co-ordinating role of the neighbourhood managers, are responsible for identifying priorities and acting on them, or ensuring that responses to calls for service from councillors and communities are positive.

(i) Of particular note is the creation and launch of the Operation Can-Do initiative, focussing on tackling entrenched issues in the Central ward, Millfield and New England areas. This is a multiple agency response to a series of complex and rapidly changing dynamics in the area associated with crime, ASB, prevalence of alcohol licensed premises, overcrowding, traffic issues, poor quality housing and community tension. Partners have made a 10-year commitment to working differently together in this area to bring about sustainable change, and this approach is seen as a pilot which could be replicable in other areas.

### **5.1.2 Housing and Homelessness Prevention**

(i) The council's Strategic Housing service is responsible for preventing homelessness and for striving to ensure everybody has somewhere safe, warm and affordable to live. Some examples of delivery from this service area include:

(ii) A comprehensive review of the existing social housing allocations policy, resulting in a full redraft based on new guidance made available to us by Government. The new allocations policy is currently open to public consultation (until 30/12/12), and, when the final version is adopted, will enable the council to ensure those most in need are provided with affordable social or privately rented housing.

(iii) The continued delivery of, and service improvements within, the Housing Needs service (formerly known as Housing Options). The service manages the allocation of social housing for all the social landlords in Peterborough, and prevents homelessness by providing quality housing advice and through the use of other options (e.g. the Mortgage Rescue Scheme or a project to support young single people). Some of the key service statistics are as follows, all since April 2012:

- Number of clients dealt with by Housing Needs = 11,420
- Number of households presenting as homeless to Housing Needs = 551
- Number of properties let through Housing Needs = 658
- Number of rent deposits given to secure tenancies for families in housing need = 187
- Number of mortgage rescue cases progressed = 58
- Number of requests for tenancy relations advice including illegal evictions = 153

(iv) A new and significant focus on bringing empty homes back into use. Our dedicated Empty Homes Officer provides monthly reports to the Cabinet Member highlighting key points, progress and potential blockages. This is subject to a separate agenda item at this committee meeting.

The Empty Homes Partnership between the council and Cross Keys Homes has been launched, which aims to bring upwards of 100 empty properties back into use over the next 2 and a half years. The project is funded through the Homes and Communities Agency and the partnership was successful in bidding for and receiving over £1m. The project identifies properties that have been empty for more than 6 months. Repairs are carried out through loan funding and the property is leased to Cross Keys Homes to house families on the housing register for up to 20 years. The landlord receives rent once the loan amount is repaid. The successful bid also included Huntingdonshire District Council, so Peterborough's Empty Homes Officer has been contracted to deliver this initiative within the Huntingdonshire District Council area too.

(v) An externally funded project to support those people who are most vulnerable to cold weather. The 'Warm Homes, Healthy People' project saw us partner with the Salvation Army and Age UK Peterborough to provide grants to the most vulnerable for the provision of new boilers, insulation and other interventions to maintain a warm and healthy home.

(vi) The continued delivery of the Care and Repair Home Improvement Agency service across Peterborough. The Care and Repair service delivers a wide range of interventions to enable people to retain independent living, including aids and adaptations, and minor and major changes to housing including the installation of level access showers, home extensions, and stairlifts. The key delivery statistics for the 2011/12 financial year are shown in table 1 below:

Peterborough Care and Repair Surveyors are currently providing surveying and project management services to Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Home Improvement Agency in delivering 100+ disabled Facility Grants on their behalf.

**Table 1**

<b>Type of work</b>	<b>Number of cases</b>	<b>Expenditure £000</b>
Minor Aids & Adaptations completed (<£1,000)	1354	£137
Assisted Technology jobs	29	inc in above
Handyperson Jobs	3010	£100
Major disabled adaptations (> £1,000 & average cost £5,000)	310	£1,700
Major Repairs & Heating (> £1,000 & average cost £5,000)	132	£900
Alternative funding cases & privately funded disabled adaptations	68	£112
Decent Homes work for Cross Keys	8	£8
Criteria visits	75	£0
Feasibility studies for Housing Programmes	32	£0
Preliminary Eligibility Tests	28	£0
Housing Health & Safety Rating System Surveys	82	£0
External Wall insulation installations	25	£177
Boiler & Gas Fire Services & Repairs re Winter warmth Project.	263	£40
Other works: Sanctuary scheme, WID, Surveyor charges, children's A&A	37	£32
<b>total</b>	<b>5453</b>	<b>£3,206</b>

(vii) The creation of Peterborough's first Foodbank which will support people who are in crisis to access food for themselves and their family. Whilst this is a cross-cutting initiative, it has been driven forward by the Housing teams because of its direct role in preventing homelessness and in supporting people to remain living in their own homes.

### 5.1.3 Regulatory Services

The Regulatory Services team delivers a range of statutory functions to support businesses and protect the public from harm. These functions include Environmental Health (food safety and health and safety), Licensing and Trading Standards. Recent examples of service delivery include:

#### ***Environmental Health***

(i) The key focus for the Food Safety and Health and Safety teams over recent months has been preventative work to ensure that businesses do not present E.coli and Legionella risks. The team support businesses through advice and guidance to obtain compliance with food and health and safety standards, but do take enforcement action, including closing premises and putting matters before the courts in serious cases.

(ii) In April the 'Scores on the Doors' scheme, which measured the quality of food premises, was replaced with the Food Standards Agency and Peterborough City Council joint scheme called the 'Food Hygiene Rating Scheme' (FHRS). Food businesses are now awarded a FHRS rating of between 0 (where urgent improvement is necessary) and 5 (rated very good) following a routine food hygiene inspection. The food business operator has the 'right to appeal' the rating awarded, the right to request a re-inspection for rescoring and a 'right to reply' on the website to show what actions have been taken since the inspection to rectify the issues raised at the inspection. Ratings will be uploaded to the FHRS website and a certificate and sticker is provided for the business to display. More information can be found at the Food Standards Agency website at [www.food.gov.uk/ratings](http://www.food.gov.uk/ratings)

(iii) Environmental Health Officers and our internal Health and Safety team worked jointly to ensure that all of the City's water parks and fountains are fit for use and public health is protected after the Norovirus incident at Bretton Waterpark.

#### ***Licensing***

(i) The main focus of this team has been on issues associated with Alcohol licensing and Taxi licensing. The Licensing Team have been quick to utilise new measures resulting from changes to the Licensing Act by making representations against alcohol-associated premises licence applications where they are not in the best interest of the local community. There have been a number of examples of this in the Operation Can-Do area.

(ii) The current taxi licensing provisions on the whole have been in place for many years now, as a consequence a complete review and overhaul is being undertaken and proposed changes will be consulted upon shortly. The team have continued to undertake enforcement operations to ensure drivers are, in legal terms, considered fit and proper to hold a licence, and vehicles meet the relevant standards.

(iii) The Service has both refused and revoked a number of taxi driver licences where the driver has received criminal convictions.

(iv) Regular joint operations with the Police which targeted private hire drivers unlawfully plying for hire have resulted in licence revocations. Other enforcement action against both private hire vehicles and hackney carriages has resulted from road safety checks, some vehicles being taken off the road.



## ***Trading Standards***

(i) A key focus for this service is working with businesses, both small and large, to ensure they meet essential legal public protection requirements while also simplifying and reducing the regulatory burden for them. There will always be a minority of businesses that are rogues, these often focusing their activity on the most vulnerable in our society. In relation to these the service will continue to take robust action to protect the public.

(ii) The launch of a new multi-agency partnership, aimed at cutting smoking death rates and clearing the streets of illegal tobacco, which is also a significant source of crime. As part of this initiative an illegal cigarettes and tobacco campaign was launched in a move to raise awareness of the dangers of illegal tobacco in our area – which comes in the form of smuggled or counterfeit cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco. It is sold at around half the price of legal tobacco and can have devastating effects on our communities.

(iii) In anticipation of the Olympics officers advised businesses on the use of Olympic symbols and their legal responsibilities as well as sharing intelligence with other authorities in relation to counterfeiting activities relating to Olympics merchandise

### **5.1.4 Enforcement**

The Neighbourhoods Enforcement teams deliver a range of enforcement activity to protect the public from harm and to ensure those that flout the law are identified and appropriately dealt with. Their work includes housing enforcement, pollution control, civil (parking) enforcement, and enforcement against environmental crime (flytipping, littering, graffiti etc).

#### ***Housing Enforcement***

(i) Continuing to challenge our Housing Enforcement officers to ensure they bring forward relevant enforcement cases for action. In doing so, this ensures that the issues associated with problematic landlords, overcrowding, unlicensed houses in multiple occupation and life threatening hazards are brought to the public's attention and dealt with through the courts.

(ii) Some examples of housing related enforcement activity in recent months include:

- The launch of the Operation Can-do housing survey, which will provide robust data on housing conditions, occupancy, environmental efficiency and attitudes to anti social behaviour, environmental issues and housing in the area
- The use of powers under the Law of Property Act 1925 for the first time to enforce the sale of a derelict property on Fletton Avenue. The Enforced Sale procedure is now being developed to enable officers to recover debt accrued by the council
- A private landlord was successfully prosecuted and fined £15,000 for operating an unlicensed HMO

#### ***Pollution Control***

(i) The very varied work of this team has resulted in valuable technical submissions to support a wide range of planning applications, including green energy solutions for the city. Officers have checked and licensed a range of manufacturing processes to ensure they meet the required standards to prevent pollution, and have resolved multiple statutory noise and odour complaints.

(ii) A successful outcome has been achieved in relation to a significant rat problem in Eye. The service received a complaint from a resident whose neighbour was regularly feeding a high population of rats from his garden shed, which resulted in the number of rat sightings in the area increasing significantly. Officers served a notice under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act and arrangements have now been made to remove the rats. Officers have re-visited the area and have seen a great improvement.

(iii) Officers helped to ensure the Willow Festival was a success by investing a significant amount of resource into advising festival organisers on how to measure and ensure that the noise emitted from the event did not exceed acceptable levels. As a result the festival was a success and did not cause a nuisance to people living in the surrounding areas or present a hazard to those who attended the event.

### ***Civil Enforcement***

(i) The effectiveness and flexibility of this service has increased in 2012 under the guidance of the Cabinet Member, due to both the new CCTV enforcement vehicle and the addition of two additional Civil Enforcement Officers. The Service is further being enhanced with the replacement of the handheld technology used by the officers, and replacement vehicles.

(ii) Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers are now fully operational in Civil (Parking) Enforcement in addition to their other duties

### ***Enforcement against Environmental Crime***

(i) The team deal with a varied array of environmental crimes issues, the main areas of focus being fly-tipping, accumulations of business waste, fly-posting and littering. Impacts are maximised through a flexible approach, undertaking enforcement operations at the times crimes occur rather than working 9 to 5, and by concentrating on evidenced hot spots areas.

Increasingly the team is also supporting the movement of unauthorised Traveller encampments through pre-eviction site checks and managing evictions.

(ii) Land owners were made to take responsibility of an accumulation hot spot in Eaglesthorpe after a 6 month investigation. The area of land, measuring 56m<sup>2</sup>, was being used as a communal dumping ground for many years. After various land searches three land owners were identified, each of whom were contacted and informed of their responsibilities to have the land cleared under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949. None of the owners cleared the waste, so a Notice was issued to each owner. The land was cleared by Enterprise and all three owners have now accepted responsibility for the land and are going to turn it around by laying turf, keeping the area open for communal access.

(iii) 'Peterborough Paws In The Park' responsible dog ownership event was held in Central Park in August and was a great success. Comments from the public regarding the event were positive, as the event offered something for dog owners to improve their pets' behaviour and become more informed on the issues that impact upon them legally.

(iv) Officers rapidly ensured the removal of a semi-submerged barge from the embankment before hundreds of people gathered for the Willow Festival. The barge raised serious safety concerns so officers worked tirelessly and at short notice to identify the barge's owner and instruct its removal before the start of the festival. The owner was cooperative and the barge was successfully removed at no cost to the authority or the tax payer.

### **5.1.5 Social Inclusion**

(i) The Social Inclusion function is responsible for identifying and mitigating those aspects of public service policy and delivery that impacts negatively on a person's ability to engage fully in society. The current workload includes a focus on tackling financial inclusion, tackling poverty, working with and building the capacity of the voluntary sector, working with Gypsies and Travellers, and leading on the council's equalities and diversity work (reporting in for this aspect through the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Safety).

(ii) Some recent examples of delivery under the guidance and leadership of the Cabinet Member include:

- The creation and implementation of the Family Poverty Strategy, with a particular focus on tackling financial exclusion (this Strategy is overseen by the Creating Opportunities/ Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee)
- Co-ordinating the development of new, more robust unauthorised Traveller procedures that make full use of the available legislation to remove encampments as swiftly as possible
- Supporting the cross-party advisory group on Traveller emergency stopping places
- Negotiating new grant arrangements with the voluntary sector with the aim of ensuring that voluntary sector partners help us to identify funding needs and priorities
- Strategic and operational management of the St George's Community Hydrotherapy Pool

#### 5.1.6 Strategic Planning

(i) In order to facilitate and deliver growth, the city council needs a sound, up-to-date and proactive policy and strategy in place to steer and encourage sustainable growth. The Cabinet Member has overseen excellent progress in this regard over the past 12 months.

(ii) First, the city council has a statutory duty to prepare a 'local plan' (which comprises a collection of documents) to support and encourage growth. Following successful adoption of a Core Strategy in early 2011, the council has had four further planning policy documents found 'sound' by a government appointed Inspector, which is possibly a national record for a single district (i.e. to have had five government approved 'sound' plans within 18 months). The full list are:

- Core Strategy (Adopted 2011)
- Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (Adopted 2011)
- Site Allocation Document (Adopted 2012)
- Minerals and Waste Site Allocations and Policies Document (Adopted 2012)
- Planning Policies Document (due for adoption by Council in December 2012, following a sound inspector verdict in October)

Work continues on the final elements of the Local Plan, in particular a 'City Centre Plan', a draft of which is to be considered by Cabinet in December following consideration by Planning Committee and Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny in November. This Plan will set detailed planning policy for the city centre, including identifying specific 'opportunity areas' for new development.

(iii) Second, to support delivery of the Local Plan and to ensure the right infrastructure (including community infrastructure such as parks, play areas and other community facilities), are provided at the right time, the council is currently consulting on a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The CIL will ensure developers pay towards the necessary infrastructure, which in turn will help ensure the city can grow sustainably and create desirable communities. Background documents to the CIL consultation include full details of all the infrastructure projects the council would like to see implemented over the next 15 years or so.

(iv) Third, it is essential that the public is well aware of its rights in getting involved in the planning system, and are encouraged to get involved at all opportunities. To ensure communities are aware of their rights (including new ones in the Localism Act), the council adopted on 5 November 2012 a new 'Statement of Community Involvement' (SCI) which explains how the public can get involved in planning decisions. It also sets out a clear step by step guide for any community wanting to prepare their own 'neighbourhood plan'. The draft SCI was well received at all Neighbourhood Committees when presentations were given to them in the summer. Parish Councils have particularly welcomed the clarity the document gives, and have appreciated the one-to-one support officers have given them when requested.

(v) Fourth, one of the most fundamental needs of any citizen is a roof over their head and a place they can call home. And such a home should be safe, affordable and healthy. To enable these, and other housing actions to be achieved, the council adopted a Housing Strategy in February 2012, including a detailed action plan. The Cabinet Member has again overseen excellent progress being made on delivering those actions, as can be seen in the latest monitoring report (July 2012 - <http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/pdf/env-cc-housing%20monitoring%20report.pdf>). The Cabinet Member can also report that, despite the continued national economic downturn and difficulty for home buyers in securing mortgages, house building continues relatively strongly in Peterborough, including affordable homes with a target of delivering over 250 new affordable homes this year well on track.

(vi) Fifth, with the wet summer being a useful reminder, the council (which is now a Lead Local Flood Authority under the 2010 Flood and Water Management Act) has made significant progress putting in place policy measures to protect our residents and business from flood risk. In particular, the Cabinet Member will shortly be recommending to Council the adoption of a Flood and Water Management SPD, which will ensure all development proposals are, as best as possible, located in low risk flood areas (surface water and river flooding) and make special efforts to minimise the increase in flood risk elsewhere. It also assists developers in their new duty to provide detailed surface water drainage solutions for their developments. Other flood related policy initiatives will be forthcoming over the next 12 months.

#### 5.1.7 **Building Control and Planning Compliance**

The Cabinet Member has overseen the following key developments from this service area:

- Income is only 11% down from predicted levels and is expected to be on target at the end of this year
- Positive customer feed back is currently running at 100%
- The service is working on:
  - 15 retail fit-outs across the country with Age UK
  - 3 school projects with Carillion
  - a large project at Peterborough Regional College with Jefferson Sheard (currently at planning stage)
- The service has a large involvement with the Peterborough Development and Environment Awards 2012 – judging has been completed and the website is now being updated, with trophies and certificates being prepared.
- Results from a customer survey carried out with Compliance service customers between July to September 2012 highlighted only around 8% adverse feedback (10 cases out of 125)

#### 5.1.8 **Planning Development Management**

The Cabinet Member has overseen the following key developments from this service area:

##### (i) Service Enhancements

To enable easier access to historic planning applications, we have made available online our 'plotting sheets'. This enables private individuals and property search companies to quickly check the planning history of land and property in the city without needing the help of planning staff. This service has been very popular with customers and we have received great feedback. We have recently introduced QR codes on our site notices and neighbour application notification letters meaning that customers can get to look at the applications much quicker than before. Finally to help applicants submit the right information with their planning application, we have developed the online 'one-stop-shop' tool. By simply identifying the type of development you want to do, the tool will guide you through the information that needs to be submitted with the application. This enables us to process the applications more quickly.

(ii) Major Development Proposals

Although we are in hard economic times, Peterborough has continued to see some exciting projects coming forward through the planning system such as:

- Mixed use schemes at both the ING and Great Northern Hotel sites in the Railway Quarter
- Food supermarket at the Garden Park development, Eye

And it is particularly encouraging to see that many large schemes are actually being implemented including:

- The extension to the Queensgate Centre which will bring Primark to the city before Christmas this year
- A new private neurological hospital /care facility in Bretton
- A new office for the Kelway Group in Hampton
- The access road to the Great Haddon employment area
- Brotherhood Retail Park

(iii) Natural & Built Environment

Major successes this year have been the delivery of the new war memorial in the City Centre and the Cowgate improvements which will be completed in time for the switch on of the Christmas lights. The funding for the Cowgate improvements has come from the Section 106 contributions arising from the Brotherhood Retail Park development. A new challenge arose this year with the need to facilitate at short notice a management scheme for the Council's tree stock which has involved strong partnership working with Enterprise Peterborough. Already a substantial start has been made on implementing the programme. This year has also seen the publication of the Council's Historic Environment Records online.

(iv) Government's Plans for the Modernisation of the Planning System

The Government has identified areas where change is needed in the planning system in order to facilitate economic recovery. Some of the Government's ideas relating to the viability of development and the renegotiation of Section 106 agreements set before the recession have been in operation in Peterborough for the last 3 years. This demonstrates the foresight of the service and its commitment to deliver the right growth for the City.

## 5.1.9 Transport and Engineering

*(i) Service summary*

Last year the Cabinet Member oversaw the amalgamation of the Network Management and Infrastructure, Planning and Delivery groups, bringing all aspects of Peterborough's transport and engineering functions into one team. The Transport and Engineering group's function can be summarised as providing for the continued good and sustainable operation of the transport system. This includes:

- network management
- signal operation
- traffic management
- highway maintenance
- structures
- drainage
- project planning and scheme delivery
- and future planning

The group also has responsibility for developing transport policy, the street-lighting asset & related projects, public transport, community transport, school transport, development control and promoting sustainable transport through Travelchoice.

*(ii) What has been achieved in 2011/12*

In a challenging climate the Transport and Engineering Group has continued to deliver a substantial range of projects and initiatives that are integral to maintaining and improving Peterborough's transport system and meeting objectives of growth and advancing Peterborough's sustainable credentials. These include:

- The Local Transport Plan and Long Term Transport Strategy
- Completion of the new A1073 and associated projects
- The start of the street lighting efficiency programme
- Extensive structural bridge bearing replacement and repair works on the A1260 and A1139.
- A series of service and system improvements in ITS, highway maintenance and asset management.

## **5.2 Forthcoming Priorities**

5.2.1 From April 2013 the council will become responsible for the Public Health function that currently falls under the remit of the NHS. In Peterborough, the Public Health function and delivery staff will be integrated into the existing Neighbourhoods Department so that synergies between the various functional areas can be identified and maximised.

The vision for Public Health is to improve and protect the nation's health and wellbeing, and improve the health of the poorest fastest. The new Public Health outcomes framework details the outcomes that the council is required to deliver and there is a significantly close fit between these outcomes and the work of the Neighbourhood Department.

5.2.2 National reforms in the welfare system are to be welcomed, but it is recognised that there will be local impacts of these reforms that need to be carefully planned. Under the direction of the Cabinet Member, the Head of Service for Neighbourhoods has formed and leads a Welfare Reform Action Group which brings together key service providers from across the council, the wider public sector and the voluntary sector. Its aim is to identify and mitigate the risks associated with reform in order that those people in genuine need of advice and assistance are identified and measures put in place to support them.

5.2.3 Achieving the right balance between needing to find savings and efficiencies whilst developing and enhancing our approach to working with and supporting communities and businesses is critical, especially as the council begins to prepare its budget for the coming years. Increasingly, the Cabinet Member will be seeking ways of working more collaboratively with partners and across the council to ensure the right services are delivered in the right way in the right places and at the right price.

5.2.4 The integration of the four main transport and engineering contracts into one new core contract, which will further strengthen our ability to deliver all aspects of the service in a efficient and effective manner. Transport functions into one contract provides an opportunity for greater levels of cross team working and planning that could yield significant benefits to the authority through a comprehensive whole life-cycle approach to planning and scheme design.

5.2.5 The major challenges to the transport group will stem from continued budgetary pressures that are inevitable in the current economic climate and reduced funding from central Government. At the same time the transport group is integral to the authority's capacity to meet its growth agenda and will need to continue to improve the network to accommodate the increasing need to travel of businesses and residents. The group will also have to strive to further reduce the environmental impact of existing and new infrastructure.

- 5.2.6 A vibrant, thriving, safe, attractive and sustainable city centre is key to Peterborough's future bringing economic prosperity, inward investment and a greater sense of pride. With the regeneration work already completed in the city centre, broader delivery of city centre regeneration through the planning process is now underway. The new City Centre Plan will shortly be published for public consultation, and a number of recently approved and forthcoming development schemes are taking place.

## **6. IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 It is anticipated that the Scrutiny Committee will comment on and make recommendations relating to the updates provided in this report in order that delivery potential is maximised for the benefit of our communities.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Consultation relating to any specific action or initiative contained within this report takes place as required.

## **8. NEXT STEPS**

- 8.1 Comments and recommendations made by Scrutiny Committee members will be considered as part of the ongoing development and delivery of specific business areas.

## **9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 9.1 None

## **10. APPENDICES**

- 10.1 None

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<b>STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 6</b>
<b>20<sup>th</sup> November 2012</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## **Report of the Community Cohesion Manager**

**Contact Officer – Jawaid Khan**  
**Contact Details – 863833**

### **COMMUNITY COHESION STRATEGY AND DELIVERY**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to scrutinise the effectiveness of the 2012/13 Cohesion Strategy in tackling current cohesion action plan priorities and make any recommendations for the cohesion strategy/action plan for 2013/14.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the progress on delivery of the Cohesion Strategy, and provides a steer on future delivery.

#### **3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 3.1 Community cohesion features as part of the Empowering People and Creating Cohesive Communities priority within the Sustainable Community Strategy. Within the community cohesion action plan (attached), there are three underlying themes, namely:

- improving community harmony
- engaging young people
- engaging and empowering communities

- 3.2 These themes (and the projects contained therein) link strongly to the priorities identified throughout the Single Delivery Plan – for example, improving educational attainment and parental engagement through an innovative programme of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) delivery, targeted work to reduce hate crime and supporting the work of the Disability Forum to give disabled people a voice in the city.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Community cohesion is a term that is easily misunderstood. Many confuse community cohesion as another word for diversity or equality. Whilst cohesion does encompass these principles, it is a much broader term that describes how the impact of a range of social issues can affect both individuals and the wider community. Cohesive communities are ones that have a shared sense of togetherness and enjoy positive relationships between people from different backgrounds. Put simply, it is about people getting on well together irrespective of differences in age, gender, background, culture of belief.
- 4.2 Peterborough is a largely tolerant and peaceful city, which enjoys positive community relationships. However, tensions can rise quickly in any community and if left unchecked, can result in crime, or as we saw in the national disorders last summer, large scale public disorder.
- 4.3 Whilst most community tensions are centred within the city, there is nevertheless potential for broader cohesion issues to be faced within rural communities. These might include social isolation, intergenerational issues, integrating new and existing communities or a lack of connection between villages and the city.

4.4 Through the Greater Peterborough Partnership, a Community Cohesion Board (made up from representatives from the public sector, business sector and voluntary, community and faith organisations) works to manage and reduce community tensions. The Board is supported by a Police-led Tension Monitoring Group, which closely monitors issues that may affect community relations.

## 5. KEY ISSUES

5.1 The 2012/13 action plan has identified three broad themes (outlined in section 3.1) where targeted actions are required in order to improve community harmony. Fourteen discrete projects have been identified and are delivering through a variety of community and statutory partners. Delivery is on track and no projects are rated as red risk. Key projects from the action plan are as follows:

5.1.1 • **Building better mutual understanding between communities through ESOL and family learning.** Improving English language is key to building a cohesive society. Being able to speak a common language increases understanding between communities and reduces community tensions. This is the flagship project from this year's delivery plan and builds upon the successful pilot programme delivered earlier this year. The project is delivered through local schools and supports parents to gain a better understanding of the education system and the language skills to support their child. The project is now in the process of being rolled out to further schools including secondary later this year.

5.1.2 • **Inspire Peterborough – aiming for the games.** We are working closely with DIAL Peterborough on an ambitious new project that is looking to build upon the legacy of the Paralympic games. We will improve sporting provision and access for disabled people that can provide a pathway from social activities through to paralympic standard. Inspire Peterborough will be established as an independent charity that will bring together sports providers from across the city under a unified brand. This will allow partners to bid for funding, gain access to specialist support and provide an enhanced sporting offer for disabled people from across Peterborough. Sport can be a highly effective tool to improve long term life outcomes for disabled people.

5.1.3 • **Events to bring communities together.** Opportunities to bring different people together are essential to building cohesion across Peterborough. This includes people from different backgrounds, ages, faiths and existing/new communities. We have supported a number of community and resident groups to hold celebratory events that can bring people together. Earlier this year, we supported thirty eight groups to hold Jubilee celebrations within their community. Feedback from community groups shows that the events were highly successful in engaging both new and existing communities. We are working with Neighbourhood Committees to roll out a further programme of cohesion grants to develop new projects that can bring people together and improve cohesion.

5.1.4 • **International Family Fun day.** The cohesion team supported the Friends of Central Park to hold an International Family Fun day in September. The event showcased music and dance from a range of different communities (English, Polish, Roma, Hindu etc) and was supported by a number of partner agencies to provide information and entertainment for all communities. The event was very successful with an estimated 2000 people attending throughout the day. We are now exploring developing further events in both the city centre and central park for 2013.

## **6. IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The vast majority of cohesion issues have been city centre focussed based upon the evidence of need from police and other partners. We have developed a strong and practical ethos of partnership working across a range of different communities and with partner organisations. This allows for intelligence to be shared rapidly and helps to pinpoint where community grievances may be developing. Our approach has been a combination of reacting to known hot spot tensions and identifying communities/localities likely to be vulnerable to a breakdown in cohesion.
- 6.2 Our overarching strategy is to address emerging community concerns before they are able to escalate into wider community tension or public disorder.
- 6.3 We will continue to work with a wide range of partners to reduce community tensions using an issues-based approach.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Consultation with the Community Cohesion Board and wider partners took place during the summer 2012 in order to identify and agree projects for the year. We regularly engage with community partners and networks to understand issues from a community perspective. Intelligence is shared amongst relevant partners to enable a targeted response.

## **8. NEXT STEPS**

- 8.1 Priorities for the coming months can be summarised as follows:
1. Deliver the projects as outlined within the Community Cohesion action plan
  2. Explore opportunities to bid for external funding to support the work of cohesion, particularly in relation to increasing English language skills
  3. Support Inspire Peterborough to become an established charity and develop a work programme to improving sporting provision and access for disabled people
  4. To support further events that can bring people together and improve cohesion.
- 8.2 We would welcome the Committee's view on the above and a steer for future areas of engagement within the community cohesion agenda.

## **9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 9.1 None

## **10. APPENDICES**

- 10.1 Appendix 1: Community Cohesion Strategy 2012  
Appendix 2: Community Cohesion Action Plan 2012-13  
Appendix 3: Cohesion Action Plan progress update (October 2012)

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# One Peterborough One Community Community Cohesion Strategy



February 2012

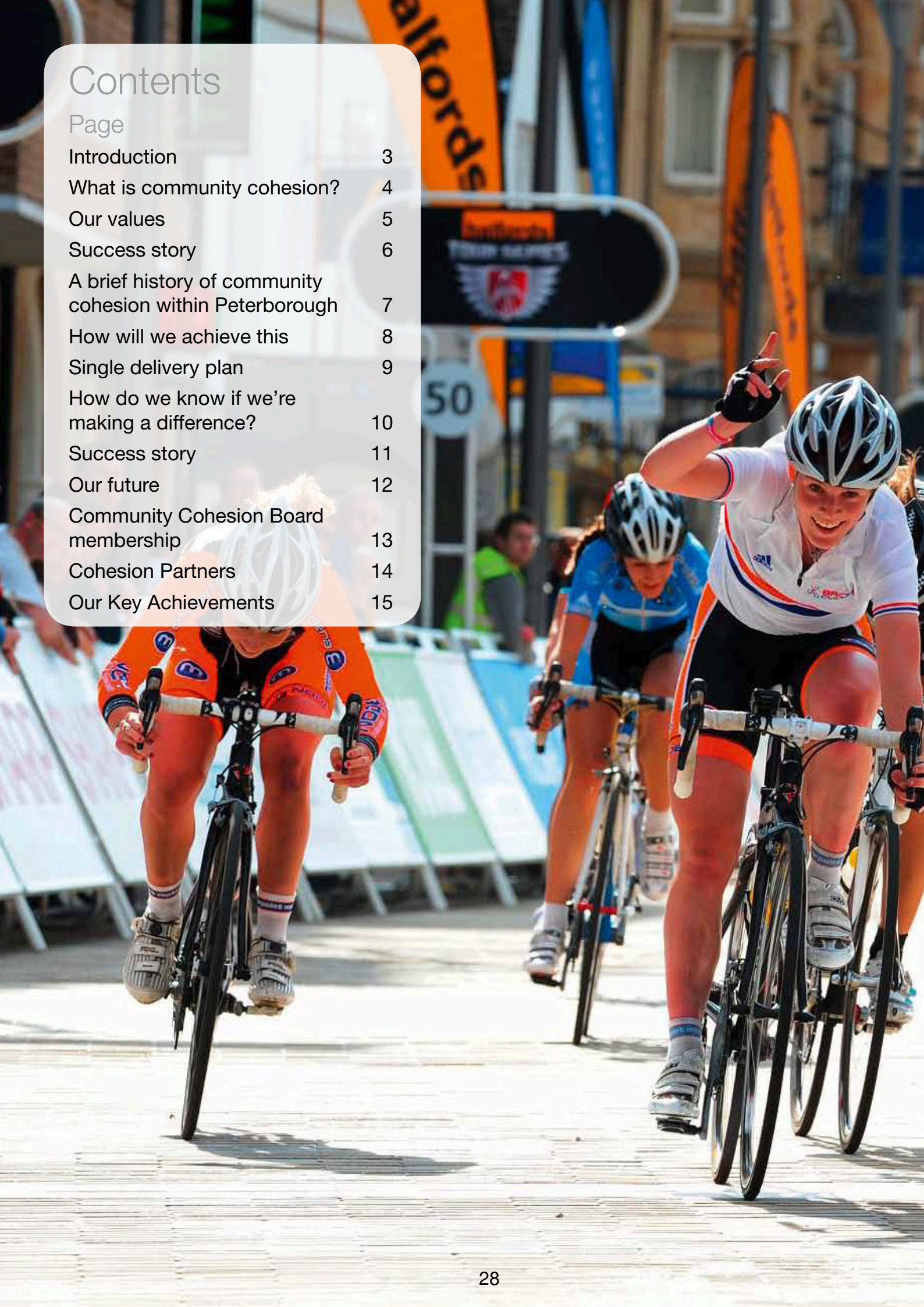


THE GREATER  
PETERBOROUGH  
PARTNERSHIP

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# Introduction

Community cohesion is very easy to take for granted. When we have it, we almost don't notice it. However, when cohesion is missing, its absence can create a range of social problems from the minor to more serious civil disorder.

Community cohesion is both very simple and incredibly complex. It exists everywhere; in our schools, offices, shops and neighbourhoods. Put simply, it is about ensuring different groups of people get on well together. It is not however, just another word for diversity or equality.

It is recognising that we may not all be the same, but we treat each other with equality and with mutual respect. Often, community cohesion is described as the glue that binds us together. It makes our society function with a strong sense of belonging and community spirit. A cohesive society is one where strong and positive relationships exist and where people's differences are recognised and valued.

Peterborough has a proud history of being a peaceful, vibrant and tolerant city. To ensure that our city remains peaceful, the Greater Peterborough Partnership has developed a community cohesion strategy to promote greater harmony and reduce tensions between communities.

Our vision is to create a truly sustainable Peterborough that is a healthy, safe and exciting place to live, work and visit.

## **Cllr Irene Walsh**

Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Safety

## **Paul Phillipson**

Chair of Community Cohesion Board



# What is community cohesion?

Put simply, community cohesion brings groups of people from different faiths, race, cultures, ages and backgrounds together and helps us all get on. Community cohesion allows us to celebrate the best of other cultures, share common values and respect our differences.

Put simply, community cohesion is the social glue that binds communities together.

The Government has defined cohesion as:

- A shared future vision and a sense of belonging
- A focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of community
- Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds

## What do we mean by 'community'?

Within this strategy, we have defined community as:

- People living or working within a defined geographical area, for example; a council ward, neighbourhood or housing estate
- People who share a particular identity, for example; people of a similar age, who have a disability, practice the same faith or students

Within Peterborough community cohesion means:

- Giving everybody similar life opportunities
- Better understanding of our individual rights and responsibilities
- Trusting one another and local institutions acting fairly
- Sharing a vision and a sense of belonging
- Recognising and valuing diversity
- Creating strong and positive relationships within the whole community







## Our Values

We believe that Peterborough's cultural diversity is one of its greatest strengths and the city's future depends upon people from different backgrounds getting on well with each other.

Peterborough should be a place where:

- People from different backgrounds get on well with each other – in the community, at work and at school
- Age, gender, race, religion or beliefs, disability, sexual orientation and cultural differences must be respected and valued
- People are proud of their city, and its surrounding, and can have a say in its future
- The contribution of young people to the life of Peterborough must be recognised and facilitated
- Peterborough's image, to its own people and to the outside world is of a vibrant and cohesive community

Our aim is that these values should be reflected in the policies and delivery of the public services and community and voluntary groups within the city.

## Our Strategy

Our overarching aim is to make Peterborough a more cohesive city by enabling everyone, regardless of background, belief or circumstances to be respected and feel part of the community.

We have identified four key priorities where we believe we can have the most impact on improving cohesion:

- Tackling hate crime (where an offender targets a victim because of his or her ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability etc) and reduce tensions in the city
- Engaging young people - especially those who are not in education, employment or training
- Improving access and take up of services in deprived neighbourhoods and families
- Promoting a better understanding and harmony between Travellers, Gypsies and the wider community





## Success story

### Faith Statement and 'One Voice One Community' event

On 5 December 2010 faith groups came together and signed a faith statement which publicly pledged their commitment to stand together against anyone who seeks to divide or sow seeds of distrust.

This ceremony was held at the Peterborough Cathedral and supported by leaders from all faiths including different denominations. After the faith statement was signed, it was taken by a procession to the Town Hall where the Mayor started a signature book in support.

On 5 December 2010 faith groups came together and signed a faith statement which publicly pledged their commitment to stand together against anyone who seeks to divide or sow seeds of distrust.

On 12 December 2010, the Faith and Cohesion Network organised 'One Voice and One Community' outside the Cathedral. It was attended by over 700 people from all walks of life. The event was marked by a peace vigil with message of peace and tolerance.

The faith statement was taken back to the Cathedral where it remains to be displayed for all visitors.

# One Peterborough, One Community

- a brief history of community cohesion in Peterborough

**'One Peterborough, One Community'** is not something that is as new to Peterborough as one may think. It has in fact been developing within Peterborough from our beginnings over two thousand years ago, when the migrating Austrian Celts settled here originally in about 45 BC. The area soon became a settlement known as Medeshamstede, which roughly translates into 'A Home in the Meadow'.

In the seventh century, Peterborough became the site for a new monastic Order of Christian Benedictine Monks who were renowned for embracing and welcoming weary and lost travellers. They provided food and shelter for the poor and those who were in distress, or unable to care for themselves.

Today, Peterborough has a rich

cultural diversity that gives it a unique cosmopolitan feeling. There could be no better expression of how this city is a beacon to the world and has stood the test of time. Our city can rightfully take its place as one of the most forward looking cities in Europe. It has never been afraid of change or adapting to a modern way of life and has a cohesive strength like no other city in Britain. Through the historical and cultural diversity, we can truly be proud to call our city **"One Peterborough, One Community"**.

**Brian Gascoyne**

*Community Cohesion Board member  
and Chair of Millfield and New England  
Regeneration Partnership (MANERP)*

'One Peterborough, One Community' is not something that is as new to Peterborough as one may think'.

# How will we achieve this?

The cohesion strategy is overseen by the Community Cohesion Board – part of the Greater Peterborough Partnership (GPP). The GPP is Peterborough’s Local Strategic Partnership; the body that unites the public, private, faith, community and voluntary sectors together to work collectively together.

Through our partnership working we will:

- Positively engage and understand our communities
- Monitor, manage and reduce community tensions including extremism
- Identify issues which may affect community relations and proactively develop multi agency responses to address them
- Recognise the contribution that communities play in achieving a sense of belonging



## Success story

### Engaging young people

Successfully engaging young people is a priority for the Community Cohesion Board. Young people have made a significant contribution to keeping our city cohesive. Some of the ways in which we have positively worked with young people are:

- Unity Saturday Club - the Unity Saturday Club was set up for 12 to 18 year olds and ran at a local nightclub during the day. The project was set up in response to young people not having enough to do during the winter. Young people were able to listen to music, play computer games or try MC-ing. The project was considered a great success with young people and led to a considerable reduction in anti social behaviour.
- Public engagement events – a number of public meetings have been held to discuss community issues of concern. These have ranged from British Foreign Policy (held in conjunction with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) to the protest march by the English Defence League. These meetings have proved a successful way to debate controversial topics and allow young people to have a voice.
- Youth MP – Kamal Hyman is the elected youth MP for Peterborough and is able to represent the views and experiences of young people in a range of different partnerships, including the Community Cohesion Board. Kamal was instrumental in organising an event to celebrate Black History Month. He is now developing a project that will allow young people to have better access to advice and support on a range of issues.

# Single Delivery Plan

The GPP has developed a Single Delivery Plan which pulls together the cross cutting strategic priorities for the city as a whole. The long term agenda is to create a bigger and better Peterborough by:

There are seven programmes of the Single Delivery Plan which are:



The GPP Executive oversees delivery of the Single Delivery Plan.

# How do we know if we're making a difference?

A vibrant and diverse Peterborough which enjoys strong community relations has a positive impact on everyone who lives, works and visits the city. Community cohesion is part of our everyday lives and often goes unnoticed. However, there are many positive examples of community cohesion within the city. These include:

- Perkins Great Eastern Run
- International Children's festival
- Race for Life
- Big Lunch in neighbourhoods
- Pride in Peterborough event in college/schools
- Dozens of fayres, fetes and festivals
- Schools conference on celebrating diversity and challenging homophobia
- Leadership seminars led by the Faith and Cohesion network
- Community forums (for example the Disability forum which seeks to engage and influence public services on a whole range of local and national policies)
- Intergeneration conference
- International Children's Festival





Our last survey showed that 67.8 per cent (national average 75.8 per cent) of people thought that Peterborough was a place where people from different backgrounds got on well together.

## Success story

# St George's Hydrotherapy Pool

Improving cohesion within the city can come about in many different ways. The re-opening of the hydrotherapy pool is an excellent example of how a problem can empower an individual and provide an essential facility for many of the city's residents enabling them to lead fuller lives.

When local resident Karen Oldale discovered that the hydrotherapy pool at the old Peterborough hospital was to close, she took matters into her own hands to ensure that this vital facility would not be lost.

Hydrotherapy is a form of physiotherapy treatment conducted in a small heated swimming pool where people undertake specially designed exercise to regain or enhance their well-being. Around 35,000 residents have long-term health conditions could benefit from this facility.

Karen brought the issue to the attention of the NHS who worked with partners to develop a replacement facility.

A year later, Karen was celebrating as Peterborough's first community hydrotherapy pool opened.

Karen, who now regularly uses the pool said "St George's Community Hydrotherapy Pool is beyond my expectations, it really is a superb facility.

Community cohesion is a difficult area to accurately measure. Public perceptions are the most important factor in measuring levels of community cohesion. Our last survey showed that 67.8 per cent (national average 75.8 per cent) of people thought that Peterborough was a place where people from different backgrounds got on well together.

The use of modern technology such as the city council's Neighbourhood Window system can draw together information from a range of sources. By regularly monitoring information, the Community Cohesion Board can review performance, identify trends and hot spots and commission activity from partners to address issues.



## Our future

Peterborough is recognised as a major growth hotspot for the region and nationally. We have undertaken a number of major projects which have included; the redevelopment of Cathedral Square, a financial school as part of the University campus and the City West project to transform the station gateway potentially creating 8,000 jobs and 1,000 new homes. Other projects include the £35million redevelopment of Edith Cavell Hospital, the regeneration of the South Bank and the ongoing work to position Peterborough as the UK's Environmental capital.

Community cohesion plays a vital role for all those who live and work in the city. Often we focus on the issues and problems within our city and whilst it is right that we do so, we mustn't overlook the great number of successes we have had and will continue to have. There are untold every

day activities that bring our communities together and help breakdown barriers. In shops and libraries, offices and public spaces, communities interact and make Peterborough a peaceful and successful city.

Each one of us can play a role in making our city more cohesive. From helping out a neighbour, to organising a citywide festival there are opportunities for everyone to make a difference.

The future prospects for our city are bright and having a strong and cohesive society continues to make a positive difference to people's daily lives. A cohesive community will help our city grow into a vibrant place where people want to live, work and visit.

**For further information on this document please contact Peterborough City Council Neighbourhood Services Community Cohesion team:**

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## Community Cohesion Board Membership



## Cohesion Partners



# Our Key Achievements

The Cohesion Board, through its partners have developed and delivered a number of successful projects and interventions. A selection of these is set out below:

## Engaging and understanding our community

1. The Faith Community Network has been established to work on common social issues across a range of different faiths and communities.
2. We have worked in partnership with MANERP (Millfield and New England Regeneration Partnership) to respond to challenges around growing communities especially in housing and education.
3. Facilitated the development of numerous community and resident groups to have a voice within the community and engage with public services.
4. We have held a number of public Free Discussion forums to debate sensitive and complex agendas. Topics so far covered include British foreign policy, Islamophobia and Stop and Search.

## Monitor, manage and reduce community tensions

1. Partnership working to identify and address hate crime issues in the city. Key issues have been the identification of hot spot areas, raising awareness of hate crimes and ways in which crimes can be reported.
2. Work in a multi agency partnership through Tension Monitoring Group to strategically review inter community tensions, identify and implement solutions.
3. Engaged vulnerable young people through youth workers and diversionary activities in partnership with voluntary and community sector and PCC 8-19 service.
4. Workshops for front line community workers are taking place to address myths and misconceptions regarding different communities.

## Identify issues which may effect community relations

1. The lack of English language can lead to a range of social problems for individuals. We have worked in partnership to increase the availability and access to ESOL provision within the city.

2. The 2011/12 community cohesion action plan developed for the first time cross cutting priorities that deliver against a number of the priorities outlined in the single delivery plan. A Project Review Group has been established to monitor progress and review delivery.
3. In 2011 a schools conference was held to look at the role schools have in relation to cohesion and equality. 80 staff from schools across Peterborough attended.
4. Working with voluntary sector partners to look at ways which educational attainment and literacy support can be improved in deprived neighbourhoods.

## Recognise the contribution that communities play in achieving a sense of belonging

1. Taxi drivers perform a vital public service for the city. A number of workshops have been held to look at issues, which most concern drivers. In addition, the Cohesion Board is keen to recognise the service taxi drivers bring, and from 2012 will be running a taxi driver of the award.
2. Many community associations are keen to host events that can bring people from different backgrounds together. The community cohesion grant provides small grants to these groups for just this purpose. In 2011/12 we estimate over 500 people will have benefited from this grant.
3. City Centre celebrations bring people together in a positive environment. We have worked with a number of partners to develop activities, which engage people from a range of different communities. Some examples include, Black History month, Inter Faith week, Big Lunch, One Voice, One Community event.
4. The disabled community can often struggle to have a voice within the city. The Cohesion Board has supported the Disability Forum to provide a platform for disabled to regularly meet and have meaningful dialogue in relation to policies from across the public sector.



**COHESION BOARD ACTION PLAN 2012-2013**

<p><b>Community Cohesion Priority One:</b></p> <p><b>Improving Community Harmony</b></p> <p>Theme: Identify, understand and tackle underlying issues that can be the cause of community tensions – especially those which have the potential to escalate into more serious disorder.</p>	<p><b>Areas to address</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reducing hate crime</li> <li>2. Reducing the harm to communities caused by extremist groups</li> <li>3. Reduce conflict within neighbourhoods</li> <li>4. Respond to ad hoc “hot spot” tensions within the city</li> </ol> <p><b>Stakeholders likely to be involved</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PREC (Open Out)</li> <li>2. Police</li> <li>3. Mediation Services</li> <li>4. City College/Regional College</li> <li>5. PCC Neighbourhood Managers</li> <li>6. PCVS</li> <li>7. Cohesion team</li> <li>8. Faith Communities Network</li> <li>9. Housing providers</li> <li>10. PCC 8-19 service</li> <li>11. LGBT reps</li> <li>12. CAN Do</li> <li>13. MANERP plus other Resident Groups</li> <li>14. Taxis and Private Hire</li> </ol> <p><b>Cohesion Board Champion</b></p> <p><i>Brian Gascoyne (supported by Ian Phillips and Sharon Nicolson)</i></p>
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**Why has this priority been chosen?**

The Single Delivery Plan has identified six programmes of partnership work that focus on the key issues facing the city. The Community Cohesion priorities will directly deliver against programme four; Empowering People and Creating Cohesive Communities. The priorities also link closely to PCC Neighbourhoods Service Plan objectives.

Whilst Peterborough enjoys largely peaceful relationships within and between communities, there nevertheless remains the potential for issues to develop, which if left unchecked can turn into tension, or in extreme cases disorder.

By addressing some of the known "sparks" to community tension, we can take a proactive stance to reduce the harm to individuals and wider community relationships.

Tackling hate crime and addressing neighbourhood concerns form part of the preventative agenda to ensure that tensions within the city remain low.

<p><b>Community Cohesion Priority Two:</b></p> <p><b>Engaging Young People</b></p> <p>Theme : Raising the aspirations of children and young people (including 19-24)</p>	<p><b>Areas to address</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Responding to the After the Riots report</li> <li>2. Linking with the Troubled Family agenda</li> <li>3. Greater engagement with arts/culture/sports</li> <li>4. Inter-generational</li> <li>5. Encouraging volunteering</li> </ol> <p><b>Stakeholders likely to be involved</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PCC 8-19 service</li> <li>2. Youth MP</li> <li>3. Princes Trust</li> <li>4. Faith Communities Network</li> <li>5. School representatives</li> <li>6. Neighbourhood/Cohesion team</li> <li>7. City/Regional College</li> <li>8. Schools Equality Diversity Cohesion Group</li> <li>9. School Councils</li> <li>10. Head Teacher Forum</li> <li>11. Unity</li> <li>12. Step Up</li> <li>13. Troubled Families Group</li> <li>14. Peterborough Youth Council</li> <li>15. Peterborough Learning Partnership</li> <li>16. Vivacity</li> <li>17. POSH</li> <li>18. Safer Schools Partnership</li> <li>19. Fire and Rescue Services</li> <li>20. Cabinet lead for CYPS</li> <li>21. PREC (Education Group)</li> </ol> <p><b>Cohesion Board Champion</b></p> <p><i>Wendi Ogle-Weilbourn (supported by Alison Sunley &amp; Jawaid Khan)</i></p>
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**Why has this priority been chosen?**

Following the national riots during summer 2011, a report entitled "After the Riots" has recently been published. The report looks at why individuals became involved in the riot and makes a number of recommendations. Whilst Peterborough remained relatively peaceful, there are nevertheless a number of national lessons to be considered locally.

By raising children and young people's aspirations, it can create a greater stake for local people in their community. This can lead to lower crime/anti social behaviour, increased educational attainment and greater community cohesion.



<p><b>Community Cohesion Priority Three:</b>  <b>Engaging and empowering communities</b>  Theme: Improve the access and take up of neighbourhood services</p>	<p><b>Areas to address</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increasing engagement with hard to reach communities</li> <li>2. Improving parental engagement with schools through ESOL provision</li> <li>3. Supporting vulnerable communities to have a greater voice. Understanding the needs and issues from the White British population.</li> <li>4. Improving access and availability of English for Speakers of other languages (ESOL) provision</li> <li>5. Promoting the Equality Agenda</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Stakeholders likely to be involved</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PCVS</li> <li>2. PREC</li> <li>3. Cohesion team</li> <li>4. Neighbourhood Managers</li> <li>5. City Centre Management</li> <li>6. Friends of Central Park</li> <li>7. City/Regional College</li> <li>8. Community representatives</li> <li>9. School representation</li> <li>10. Faith and Communities Network</li> <li>11. Community Groups Forum</li> <li>12. ESOL Delivery Board</li> <li>13. Equality and Diversity Strategic Group</li> <li>14. Link/Health Watch</li> <li>15. Traveller/Gypsy reps</li> <li>16. MANERP</li> <li>17. Co-opted residents/Councillors</li> <li>18. Red Cross</li> <li>19. Muslim Community Reference Group</li> <li>20. CSR and business community</li> <li>21. DIAL &amp; Disability</li> <li>22. Registered Social Landlords</li> <li>23. Voluntary and Community Sector</li> <li>24. Princes Trust</li> <li>25. Police</li> <li>26. PCT</li> </ol>

**Cohesion Board Champion**

*Cllr Walsh and deputised by Mahebab Latha (supported by Leonie McCarthy and Jawaid Khan).*

**Why has this priority been chosen?**

Supporting communities to have a greater voice within the city can help breakdown tensions and increase cohesion. Whilst we have a good understanding of some communities, there are others which are increasingly difficult to engage with, or feel that mainstream services have little to offer.

**Appendix 3**

**Community Cohesion Action Plan 2012/13 (Progress update: October 2012)**

**Priority one: Improving Community Harmony**  
*Priority Champion: Brian Gascoyne*  
*Supporting officers: Ian Phillips and Sharon Nicolson*

<b>Outline of activities</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Update</b>
1. Targeted work to reduce or prevent hate crime	PREC	£2k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased reporting of hate crime</li> <li>• Decreased hate crimes/incidents</li> </ul>	Awaiting a project proposal from PREC
2. Provide opportunities for community to discuss “hot topics” in an open and safe environment via Free D Forums.	PREC	Already covered via existing budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community engagement</li> <li>• Reduced tensions</li> <li>• Dispel myths</li> <li>• Increased understanding of sensitive topics</li> </ul>	Funded from last year’s action plan. 6 Free D forums to be delivered – 1 held to date. Possible future topics to include Prevent, Human Rights issues and issues effecting young people
3. Contingency to respond to escalating tensions within the city e.g. additional youth worker provision, mobile cctv etc.	Ian Phillips/ Tension Monitoring Group	£2k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced tensions</li> <li>• Reduced crime/ASB</li> </ul>	Details being developed.
4. In partnership with Millfield Medical Centre, produce and translate newsletters. Content to include key messages from partners.	Jawaid Khan/Ian Phillips	£1k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved engagement between stakeholders/new communities</li> <li>• Increased take up of services from new communities</li> </ul>	SLA to be developed

**Allocation - £5k**  
**Project costs identified - £5k**

**Priority two: Engaging Young People**  
*Priority Champion: Wendi Ogle-Welbourn*  
*Supporting officers: Alison Sunley and Jawaid Khan*

Outline of activities	Lead	Budget	Outcomes	Update
<p>1. Enhance ESOL provision for Year 11 students who are without a school place - offer day a week work experience placement to improve take up of provision by those MENA young people who are more reluctant to engage in learning. This programme offers bespoke provision with access throughout Year 11 to engage new arrivals and those without a school place.</p>	<p>Jenni Hepworth</p>	<p>£1.7k</p>	<p>To secure post 16 provision for these young people who otherwise are at considerable risk of ASB, Substance Misuse, Sexual Exploitation due to lack of participation in EET which are contributory factors to community cohesion when young people are not engaged.</p>	<p>Project outlined agreed and funds to be transferred imminently</p>
<p>2. Roma / MENA Dance Project at Voyager School (6 months) and the continuation of Art Project in Century Square (to enhance the identification of year 11 above)</p>	<p>Matt Oliver</p>	<p>£1.2k</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with Roma young people and their families to support them to feel involved in their school and community.</li> <li>• Increase self esteem and raise aspiration – particularly of girls</li> <li>• Identification of young people who could be at risk of gang related activity.</li> <li>• Identification of young people in the city who are newly arrived and who are without a school place.</li> </ul>	<p>Continuation of a previous project SLA to be updated and funding transferred</p>

Outline of activities	Lead	Budget	Outcomes	Update
<p>3. Unity Peacemakers Project: The identification of key young people in targeted communities who can act as ambassadors for young people, for their communities and support the city to engage with key communities in times of heightened tension.</p> <p>Communities identified for this work through ASB, Prevent agenda and general youth work in targeted areas.</p>	Matt Oliver	£2k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young People from each community meet regularly to bond as a team, learn about each other and build mutual respect for one another.</li> <li>• Young People will undertake 2 days of Peer Mentoring and youth training.</li> <li>• Young People organise an event which aims to bring young people from different communities together.</li> <li>• Included in the event will be activities which gather the opinions of young people from across the city promote decision making democracy and citizenship and link in to the Neighbourhood committees.</li> </ul>	SLA to be developed

**Allocation - £5k**  
**Projects costs identified £4.9k**

### Priority three: Engaging and Empowering Communities

Priority Champion: Cllr Irene Walsh

Supporting officers: Jawaid Khan and Leonie McCarthy

Outline of activities	Lead	Budget	Outcomes	Update
<p>1. Work in partnership with PCVS to recognise the contribution volunteering makes to the city, and increase awareness of opportunities available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hold a “market place” style event in the Town Hall with a range of partners to promote volunteering</li> <li>- Consider developing volunteering awards</li> </ul>	<p>Jawaid Khan/Ian Phillips</p>	<p>£500</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased civic engagement</li> <li>• Raising pride in local neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Local people feeling valued</li> </ul>	<p>Discussed with PCVS; broad agreement to combine a volunteering event with a city centre activity such as International Family Fun day in 2013.</p> <p>A further option is to work with PCVS to maximise national volunteering week in June</p>
<p>2. Support communities to develop cohesion within their neighbourhood:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work through Neighbourhood Committees to support community groups to undertake family focused activities in their area</li> <li>- Activities should provide a safe place for children and promote inter-generation</li> <li>- Budget available for Neighbourhood Committees to allocate to activities.</li> </ul>	<p>Jawaid Khan/Ian Phillips</p>	<p>£6k (£2k per neighbourhood area)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased civic engagement</li> <li>• Number of groups supported/activities undertaken</li> <li>• Increased cohesion within neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Increased volunteering</li> </ul>	<p>Clearance received from legal to deliver grants through neighbourhood committees</p> <p>Guidance drafted for neighbourhood managers to roll out</p>

Outline of activities	Lead	Budget	Outcomes	Update
<p>3. Armed Forces and rural engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote opportunities to increase engagement between the Armed Forces and rural communities through local volunteering</li> <li>- Key partners will be parish Councils, Royal British Legion, scouts/cadets etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Jawaid Khan/Julie Rivett</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconnect the armed forces with local communities</li> <li>• Increase volunteering and civic engagement</li> </ul>	<p>A project bid submitted by Cambridgeshire County Council to develop a database of disabled veterans. This work will help to support the wider aims of Inspire Peterborough.</p>
<p>4. Improving access and availability of ESOL provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work in partnership with Job Centre plus to deliver skills for employment via ESOL (tbc)</li> <li>- Explore opportunities through “Together on the Move” programme for ESOL</li> <li>- Continue to engage with schools to offer ESOL support to parents</li> <li>- Cohesion Board can match fund school (via pupil premium) local ESOL provision using existing bespoke course.</li> </ul>	<p>Cllr Walsh/Jawaid Khan</p>	<p>£10k</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved understanding of English speaking and writing/reading</li> <li>• Improved understanding between communities</li> <li>• Increased engagement with service providers</li> <li>• Increased take up of services</li> </ul>	<p>Secured investment from Children Services of £7k to support ESOL delivery. There is strong support from head teachers for the project at a recent conference.</p> <p>All schools contacted and asked to express their interest. Once feedback has been received we will look developing a programme through the ESOL Delivery Board to cater for as many schools as possible.</p>

<b>Outline of activities</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Update</b>
<p>5. Support inter and intra faith dialogue throughout the city:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide Secretariat support to Faith Communities Network</li> <li>- Through FCN, provide a focal point of contact/ response in facing any local/national challenges</li> <li>- In partnership with East of England Faiths Council, hold a regional seminar in Peterborough exploring the role of faith in fostering/ adoption.</li> </ul>	Jawaid Khan/Ian Phillips	£3k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased engagement of the faith sector</li> <li>• Improved understanding and relationships between faith groups</li> </ul>	FCN work ongoing via Sister Mary Clare Mason
<p>6. Support communities in new housing developments (such as Manor Drive) to develop the community infrastructure needed to engage and empower new residents.</p>	Jawaid Khan/Julie Rivett			Neighbourhood Manager to develop a work programme to address needs.
<p>7. Project to enhance involvement of disabled community to improve accessibility in Peterborough</p>	Bryan Tyler	£2k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empowering disabled community</li> <li>• Improving accessibility in Peterborough</li> <li>• Enhancing pride in Peterborough</li> </ul>	Project proposal required from DIAL before taking further.
<p>8. Develop the Inspire Peterborough project to improve sporting provision for disabled people.</p>	Cllr Walsh/Jawaid Khan/Ian Phillips	£4k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access and sporting facilities within the city</li> <li>• Co-ordinate sporting offer</li> <li>• Engage more disabled people through sport and offer a pathway to success</li> </ul>	Conference held to engage key stakeholders. Governance models are being explored in order to establish a charitable body.

**Allocation - £20k**  
**Projects identified - £25.5k**



<b>STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 7</b>
<b>20<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2012</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## Report of the Strategic Housing Manager

Contact Officer – Sharon Malia  
Contact Details – 863764

### EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY 2012 - 2015

#### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with the opportunity to scrutinise the council's new draft Empty Homes Strategy.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to scrutinise the draft strategy and the current incentives, initiatives and enforcement options that are available to assist or enforce owners of empty property to bring their properties back into use. Members are asked to provide challenge where necessary and to suggest ideas and initiatives to support further activity.

#### 3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1
- *Creating Opportunities & Tackling Inequalities* - by regenerating neighbourhoods, including tackling the blight of empty properties
  - *Creating Strong & Supportive Communities* – by building and empowering local communities, making Peterborough safer and building pride in Peterborough
  - *Creating the UK's environmental capital* – by improving the energy efficiency of existing empty housing stock and reducing carbon emissions from domestic dwellings
  - *Delivering substantial and truly sustainable growth* – by creating better places to live and increasing economic prosperity by creating a well managed private rented housing sector

#### 4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The current population of Peterborough is 183,600. In 2010 Peterborough City Council and three neighbouring local authorities commissioned an update to the 2007 sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Some key findings of this study were:
- At the current rate of household formation and housing supply, an average of 1,008 households will fall into housing need each year in Peterborough
  - If we were to solely address the highest levels of housing need, 38% of all new housing built in Peterborough would need to be affordable
  - Based on present housing needs, around two thirds of future new affordable housing would need to be smaller one and two bed units. However, based on future demographic trends, long term housing need is expected to shift towards a requirement for two and three bed properties
  - The percentage of households in need is lower in rural areas than in urban Peterborough, however, housing need as a proportion of supply in rural Peterborough is ten times higher than it is in the urban area.
- 4.2 Data from the Peterborough Homes Housing Register confirms the findings of this assessment. As at the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2012 there were 9,622 applicants on the register.

- 4.3 At the same time a significant number of homes in Peterborough remain empty for varying reasons and for varying lengths of time. Whilst the reoccupation of empty homes is not the whole answer to the current shortage of homes in the City, they are recognised as a valuable resource with huge potential to be turned into occupied homes thereby increasing the supply of and reducing demand for housing. Bringing empty properties back into use will make a significant contribution to alleviating the huge demand for affordable housing in the City. Local Authority intervention to assist owners in bringing their properties back into use means that the Housing Needs Service will receive nomination rights to allocate people on the housing register in housing need into these properties. This will contribute to the reduction of applicants on the housing register.
- 4.4 Peterborough City Council will also have more scope to prevent homelessness with the Housing Needs Service being able to discharge its homelessness duty into the private sector with the knowledge that the properties have reached the required standard and are being effectively managed. Increased supply of properties in the private sector will in turn result in the reduction in the use of expensive Bed & Breakfast accommodation to temporarily house people until more permanent accommodation is sourced and secured.
- 4.5 The majority of empty properties in the city are privately owned. Often owners do not know how to get their property back into use. The aim of this strategy is to set out how we will work with property owners, the local community and our partners to bring empty properties back into a functioning and habitable state.

## **5. KEY ISSUES**

### **5.1 Empty Homes – Increasing Housing Supply**

- 5.1.1 A Private Sector Stock Condition Survey was commissioned by Peterborough City Council in 2009 and the final report was published in February 2010. It estimated that there were 60,041 private sector dwellings in the city of which approximately 2,300 were empty, representing 3.8% of the private sector stock.
- 5.1.2 The Empty Homes Strategy aims to:
- bring empty homes in the private sector back into use, utilising both voluntary means and statutory enforcement powers, which will increase the housing supply, alleviate the numbers of people in housing need on the housing register, improve neighbourhoods and community confidence and contribute to tackling homelessness in Peterborough
  - offer a comprehensive advice and assistance service to the owners of empty property, those who are looking to purchase or develop empty property and those who are experiencing problems arising by living near to empty properties.
  - maximise income from the New Homes Bonus and to utilise it effectively by delivering initiatives to tackle empty homes
  - improve our evidence base by assembling relevant, accurate and current information
  - raise awareness of the Empty Homes issue and to promote the service and strategy to owners, neighbours and those affected by empty homes
  - retain dedicated staffing resource to tackle the problems of empty homes and to effectively bring them back into use thus preventing the waste of valuable housing resource across the city.

## **5.2 Progress to Date**

- 5.2.1 Problematic or long term empty properties, which are empty for more than six months, are targeted under the City Council's Empty Homes Strategy.
- 5.2.2 In July 2011 the council recruited a dedicated empty homes officer. At the time of his appointment there were 2,099 empty properties in the city, comprising:
- 523 long term empty, of which
  - 396 had been empty between 6 and 23 months, and
  - 127 had been empty for more than 2 years
- 5.2.3 As at the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012 there were a total of 1,915 empty properties in the City, comprising:
- 453 long term empty, of which
  - 338 have been empty between 6 and 23 months, and
  - 115 have been empty for more that 2 years

## **6. IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Empty homes have implications for all sections of society and all wards and parishes of the local authority area.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Full consultation will take place on the Empty Homes Strategy.

## **8. NEXT STEPS**

- 8.1 Following scrutiny of current actions and interventions to bring empty properties back into use, and after consideration of all comments made by the committee, officers will further develop the Empty Homes Strategy in order to go out to pubic consultation.

## **9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 9.1 None

## **10. APPENDICES**

- 10.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Empty Homes Strategy 2012 - 2015

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# **Peterborough City Council**

## **Empty Homes Strategy**

**2012 - 2015**

DRAFT

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## 1. Introduction

Peterborough City Council's vision is for a bigger and better Peterborough, where sustainable growth brings with it opportunities that will improve the quality of life of its residents, help to preserve our environment and helps to create vibrant and cohesive communities.

The Peterborough Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 – 2021 is an overarching strategy that guides the work of the Council and its partners and the strategy's four key priorities are:

- Creating opportunities – tackling inequalities
- Creating strong and supportive communities
- Creating the UK's 'Environment Capital'
- Delivering substantial and sustainable growth

Whilst the creation of new businesses brings new people and new homes, the housing need continues to outnumber supply and many local people struggle to afford to buy or rent a suitable home.

The current population of Peterborough is estimated to be 173,100 (ONS, 2010) with an expected to increase to 199,800 by 2026. In 2010 Peterborough City Council and three neighbouring local authorities commissioned an update to the 2007 sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Some key findings of this study were:

- At the current rate of household formation and housing supply, an average of 1,008 households will fall into housing need each year in Peterborough
- If we were to solely address the highest levels of housing need, 38% of all new housing built in Peterborough would need to be affordable
- Based on present housing needs, around two thirds of future new affordable housing would need to be smaller one and two bed units. However, based on future demographic trends, long term housing need is expected to shift towards a requirement for two and three bed properties
- The percentage of households in need is lower in rural areas than in urban Peterborough, however, housing need as a proportion of supply in rural Peterborough is ten times higher than it is in the urban area.

Data from the Peterborough Homes Housing Register confirms the findings of this assessment. As at the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2012 there were 9,622 applicants on the register.

The Government has developed a new delivery model for affordable housing and announced a target to deliver 150,000 new affordable homes through the Homes & Communities Agency's Affordable Homes Programme Framework 2011-2015. However, with overall reduced funding it is unlikely that delivery of new build, affordable properties will meet the future housing need of the City.

At the same time a significant number of homes in the city remain empty for varying reasons and for varying lengths of time. Whilst the reoccupation of empty homes is not the whole answer to the current shortage of homes in the City, they are recognised as a valuable resource with huge potential to be turned into homes and thereby increasing the supply and reducing demand for housing. Bringing empty properties back into use will make a significant contribution to alleviating the huge demand for affordable housing in the City. Local Authority intervention to assist owners in bringing their properties back into use means that the Housing Needs Service will receive nomination rights to allocate people on the housing register in housing need into these properties. This will contribute to the reduction of applicants on the housing register.

Peterborough City Council will also have more scope to prevent homelessness with the Housing Needs Service being able to discharge its homelessness duty into the private sector with the knowledge that the properties have reached the required standard and are being effectively managed. Increased supply of properties in the private sector will in turn result in the reduction in the use of expensive Bed & Breakfast accommodation to temporarily house people until more permanent accommodation is sourced and secured.

The majority of empty properties in the city are privately owned. Often owners do not know how to get their property back into use and sometimes they simply don't seem to care. The aim of this strategy is to set out how we will work with property owners, the local community and our partners to bring empty properties back into a functioning and habitable state.

## **2. The National Context**

In 2010 there were an estimated 734,000 empty homes in England and it is expected that figure will continue to rise in the short to medium term. Homes that have been empty for more than six months are classified as long term empty. There are currently approximately 300,000 long term empty homes in England.

The increasing commitment to meeting housing need has been evident through successive Governments and the role of bringing empty properties back into use has been recognised. From the ODPM publication "Empty Property: Unlocking the Potential" in 2003 through to the announcement of a £100 million Empty Homes fund in the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2010, it is evident that the empty home issue is moving up the political agenda and becoming a key strategic housing priority for Local Authorities.

The Empty Homes Fund, administered by the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) aims to finance returning to use 3,300 homes for affordable housing over three years. The funding commenced in April 2012 and covers both short-term leasing and purchase of empty properties.



Initially this funding was open to registered providers of housing but Communities Minister, Andrew Stunell, announced at the end of September 2011 that community groups and voluntary organisations will now be able to bid for part of the £100 million funding (£30 million in total) to tackle empty properties and provide affordable housing.

The Government followed this up by publishing its Housing Strategy on the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2011, of which an important part is its strategy for tackling empty properties. As well as the £100 million Empty Homes Fund, the Government also committed to a further £50 million to tackle some of the worst concentrations of empty homes. The Local Government Finance Bill includes provisions that will allow a Council Tax billing authority to charge an empty homes premium of up to 50% of the council tax on property left unoccupied and unfurnished for two years.

DCLG also introduced the New Homes Bonus in February 2011 which is designed to create an effective fiscal incentive to encourage local authorities to facilitate housing growth. As well as providing this bonus for new affordable homes being built the policy recognises that empty properties returned to use also provides additional accommodation.

An empty property returned to use is rewarded in the same way as a new home via a “bonus” equivalent to the council tax income to the local authority for six financial years following the date it was brought back into use. The Coalition Government is encouraging local authorities to re-invest the bonus in empty homes work to reduce the number in its area and also to make tackling empty properties part of their overall approach to meet housing need.

Conversely, however, as the New Homes Bonus is calculated on the net available housing stock, an increase in the number of empty properties will attract a penalty, negating any New Homes Bonus that may be payable on new build, affordable properties. In order for Peterborough City Council to benefit from the New Homes Bonus, it is vital that not only do we work to reduce the number of empty properties in the city but to also ensure the number continually remains as low as possible. Some criticism has been levelled at the New Homes Bonus as it is difficult for a local authority to directly influence the prevailing housing market. However, empty homes activity must be seen as a vital contribution to either earning New Homes Bonus or minimising the loss of New Homes Bonus whether the local housing market is in recovery or decline.

DCLG have recently announced that Local Authorities have brought nearly 38,000 long term empty homes back into use over the last two years unlocking over £63 million of additional funding through the New Homes Bonus.

Bringing empty properties back into use should not, however, be seen just as an income generator for the Council and the wide ranging positive aspects of empty homes activity should not be overlooked.

The increase in housing supply with the potential reduction of homelessness as well as the community related benefits including the enhancement of local neighbourhoods, the reduction of vandalism and anti-social behaviour and the improvement of housing standards are key to achieving the strategic priorities of the Council to improve the quality of life and the environment of it's residents.

Please refer to Appendix A which illustrates potential local authority New Homes Bonus income using the DCLG's New Homes Bonus Calculator.

### **3. The Local Context**

A Private Sector Stock Condition Survey was commissioned by Peterborough City Council in 2009 and the final report was published in February 2010. It estimated that there were 60,041 private sector dwellings in the city of which approximately 2,300 were empty, representing 3.8% of the private sector stock.

There is no single definition used by DCLG to describe an empty home but suggest focus is on problematic empty properties (i.e. those that are not subject to a transactional process).

Transactional vacant properties are those that are re-occupied relatively quickly and are necessary for the mobility and normal operation of the housing market. These are properties that are actively being marketed for sale at realistic asking prices, properties involved in probate or those that are being actively refurbished prior to re-occupation.

These properties seldom require the intervention of the Council in order to ensure that they are brought back into the housing stock within 6 months of being vacated. Statistics show that just over half of all empty properties remain vacant for less than six months.

The DCLG does not count second homes and other properties that may only be used occasionally (e.g. holiday homes and other seasonal lets) as empty and these are not targeted under this strategy. When deciding if a property is a second home or holiday home, each case is assessed individually. A second property left vacant where the owner resides in Peterborough would not be classed as a second home or holiday home. This classification is normally reserved for owners who work away from the City, i.e. in the armed forces.

Problematic or long term empty properties, which are empty for more than six months, are targeted under the City Council's Empty Homes Strategy. As at the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012 there was a total of 1,915 empty properties in the City of which 453 were long term empty. Out of the 453 long term empty properties, 338 have been empty between 6 and 23 months and 115 have been empty for more that 2 years.

Peterborough City Council has had a degree of success in bringing empty properties back into use in recent years. Peterborough was the first authority in the country to make full use of the new powers granted by government under the Housing Act 2004 and made the first ever Final Empty Dwelling Management Order in July 2008 resulting in a property that had stood empty for over 5 years to be renovated to decent homes standard and become re-occupied within three months of the order being made. The profile of Peterborough and its Empty Dwelling Management Order success has been widely publicised and is featured as an example of best practice by the Empty Homes Agency, LACORS and in various industry publications.

#### 4. Corporate Context and Links to Other Council Strategies

- **Sustainable Communities Strategy**  
*Creating Opportunities – Tackling Inequalities* – by regenerating neighbourhoods, including tackling the blight of empty properties  
*Creating Strong & Supportive Communities* – by building and empowering local communities, making Peterborough safer and building pride in Peterborough  
*Creating the UK's environmental capital* – by improving the energy efficiency of existing empty housing stock and reducing carbon emissions from domestic dwellings  
*Delivering substantial and truly sustainable growth* – by creating better places to live and increasing economic prosperity by creating a well managed private rented housing sector
- **Housing Strategy**  
*To secure the regeneration and improvements to Peterborough's housing stock* – tackling empty property contributes to improving the condition and energy efficiency of the housing stock, meeting housing need, increasing investment in Peterborough and the regeneration of neighbourhoods.
- **Homelessness Strategy**  
*Maximise the opportunities for differing accommodation choices for people seeking accommodation. To continue to increase the accommodation choices available to persons in housing needs* – by securing nomination rights into empty properties brought back into use through Local Authority intervention for people in housing need on the housing register. By discharging the authority's homelessness duty into empty properties brought back into use in the knowledge that their condition and management reaches the required standard.
- **Poverty Strategy**  
*Creation of inspirational places to live and cohesive communities* - Use all mechanisms to bring empty homes across the City back into use to ensure maximisation of housing availability and choice for families in housing need

## 5. Our Priorities

The Empty Homes Strategy has been developed with these main objectives:

- To bring empty homes in the private sector back into use, utilising both voluntary means and statutory enforcement powers, which will increase the housing supply, alleviate the numbers of people in housing need on the housing register, improve neighbourhoods and community confidence and contribute to tackling homelessness in Peterborough.
- To offer a comprehensive advice and assistance service to the owners of empty property, those who are looking to purchase or develop empty property and those who are experiencing problems arising by living near to empty properties.
- To maximise income from the New Homes Bonus and to utilise it effectively by delivering initiatives to tackle empty homes
- To improve our evidence base by assembling relevant, accurate and current information
- To raise awareness of the Empty Homes issue and to promote the service and strategy to owners, neighbours and those affected by empty homes
- To retain dedicated staffing resource to tackle the problems of empty homes and to effectively bring them back into use thus preventing the waste of valuable housing resource across the city.

## 6. Why do Properties Remain Empty?

Homes may be empty for a number of reasons. The most common reasons are:

- **Lack of funding for repair work**
  - This maybe a DIY renovation project where the property is in disrepair and/or the property requires modernisation to bring it up to a decent home standard. Often expense and unforeseen problems escalate and the owner has insufficient funds to finance repairs or is unwilling to spend the money required
- **Inheritance**
  - Properties that are inherited are often left empty for considerable periods of time whilst awaiting the outcome of probate or legal disputes. The emotional turmoil of losing a family member can also delay the process as it often takes the new owner several months to feel able to consider the various options available to them. In some cases, it is extremely difficult to trace the next of kin and indeed, the new owners of the property may even be unaware that they have inherited it.

- **Family/Business Disputes**
  - Sometimes properties are left empty as they are owned by more than one person and agreement on the future of the property cannot be reached.
- **Repossessions**
  - Repossessed properties can sometimes remain empty for long periods due to complex legal circumstances
- **Potential planning developments**
  - Planning consent for large sites earmarked for re-development can often take a considerable length of time to complete due to their complexity. Empty properties included in the catchment area of such projects, often remain empty for the duration of the planning consultation period, and can only be properly targeted under the strategy once a decision has been made.
- **Lack of Information and advice**
  - Many people cite “not knowing what to do about it” as the main reason for not bringing a property back into use. There is a lack of information on the best way to refurbish, manage or sell a vacant property. Owners also cite being worried about the complexities of the private rental market as the reason that they have not been able to make a decision regarding the future use of their property.
- **Housing Market Conditions and Land Banking**
  - When housing prices are increasing rapidly, properties are often purchased as an investment to sell once the market peaks and can be left empty in order to achieve a quick sale when prices peak. They may be reluctant to offer the property for rent in the meantime. In contrast, if property prices are falling, many prospective purchasers will wait for the market to ‘bottom out’ in order to achieve the best possible price. In recent years Peterborough has seen a large increase in properties being bought under buy-to-let schemes and then used as houses in multiple occupation. With the current downturn in the housing market more and more properties are being repossessed as owners fall behind with repayments and with falling house prices find themselves in negative equity.
- **Lethargy/Indifference**
  - Maximisation of wealth from assets is not a priority for an individual or company
- **Obstruction**
  - Owners can simply refuse to bring their property back into use

Whatever the reason, they are frequently a cause for concern for local residents. They can become a drain on resources and some can become potentially dangerous and unsafe.

By reducing the number of empty properties we can help to:

- **Improve neighbourhoods through**
  - Making areas more attractive by removing the blight of empty properties
  - Increased property values
  - Reduction in anti-social behaviour
  - Reduction of fly tipping, vandalism and other criminal activity as well as reducing the fear of crime in the local community
- **Increase opportunities for people in housing need through**
  - More good quality, affordable housing
  - Greater choice
  - Improved standards of housing
- **Help the owners of the properties to benefit through**
  - Rental income or capital
  - Security of the property
  - Unlocking the potential of a wasted resource
- **Benefit the local economy and wider community through**
  - Reduced demand on other services – police, fire, other Council departments etc
  - Reduced demand for building new homes particularly on Greenfield sites
  - Improve the local existing built environment

## **7. Achieving the Objectives**

### **7.1 To Bring Empty Homes Back into Use**

A systematic three stage approach, adopted by many local authorities has been implemented. The starting point for this approach will always be to work with the property owner wherever possible. As previously mentioned there are many reasons why a property becomes empty. Some of those reasons may be sensitive and it is important to be understanding of the full range of different situations that may occur. However, it is also important not to lose sight of the fact that an empty home is a wasted resource and a blight on any neighbourhood.

Owners should be made aware that although we would prefer to work with them, non-action is not an option. As an owner of a property, they must take responsibility for it.

The three stage approach is:

#### **7.1.1 Identification**

- *Identify properties for action based on length of time they have been empty, the level of nuisance being caused, and the condition of the building.*
- *Establish ownership and make contact*
- *Decide on proportionate action*

The most useful way of gathering information about empty property is through Council Tax records.

Permission to use this information was given in the Local Government Act 2003 which allowed Local Authorities to use Council Tax information for “identifying vacant dwellings and taking steps to bring vacant dwellings back into use”.

The Empty Homes Officer is also contacted by members of the public, who report empty properties that they are aware of. The Empty Homes pages on the Council website have been developed and have included a facility for members of the public to report an empty home electronically. This may be done anonymously. There is also a dedicated email address [emptyhomes@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:emptyhomes@peterborough.gov.uk) which goes straight through to the Empty Homes Officer.

The Empty Homes Officer also get reports of empty properties from the <http://reportemptyhomes.com> This is a website set up by the Homes from Empty Houses campaign group in conjunction with Shelter.

In addition to this, the Empty Homes Officer liaises with visiting officers in Neighbourhood Enforcement, Planning Services and Building Control Services, talks to neighbours, accesses Land Registry Online and checks with Probate Offices.

#### **7.1.2 Encouragement & Incentive**

- *Work with the owner offering advice and assistance*
- *The aim is to bring the property back into use through voluntary action of the owner*

In the first instance our aim is to provide advice and assistance to the owner with a view to outlining the options that are available to them. The options are to rent out the property, to sell the property or to live in it themselves. How quickly they are able to do any of these will depend on the condition of the property.

A three stage template letter process has been developed which escalate in seriousness. Please refer to Appendix B for sample template letters.

Once the three stage letter process has been instigated, the property is assessed to determine its condition and its affect on the local area. A priority status score is then calculated and an overall priority rating for action is determined. Please refer to Appendix C for a sample Empty Homes Assessment Form.

### **Incentives for Owners**

In order to facilitate the return of empty properties back into use, a framework of incentive options has been developed to assist owners. The Empty Homes Officer will determine the most appropriate incentive depending on the priority rating.

- **The Peterborough Empty Homes Partnership**
  - In March 2012 Cross Keys Homes, with the support of Peterborough City Council and Huntingdonshire District Council, were successful in their bid to the Empty Homes Funding administered by the HCA.
  - Just over £1 million was received (the 12<sup>th</sup> highest grant award in the country) and this will be match funded by Cross Keys Homes with the aim of bringing 100 properties in Peterborough and 20 properties in Huntingdonshire back into use as affordable housing by the end of March 2015.
  - The Empty Homes Officer will identify owners of empty property that will potentially qualify for this funding and carry out all necessary negotiations with the owner. The property will be surveyed to identify what improvements are required. Before and after refurbishment valuations will be made and a proposed lease under which Cross Keys Homes will carry out the work in return for the owner accepting a reduced rent under a short lease (5 – 20 years) will be offered.
  - The property will then be let as an affordable rent and managed by Cross Keys Homes and advertised through Choice Based Letting to people on the Housing Register and who are currently homeless or in need of housing in a more suitable property due to their present circumstances.
  - At the end of the lease period the owner will receive the property back in its improved state.
  - Cross Keys Homes will also consider purchasing properties and offering them under shared ownership subject to an evaluation of housing need/financial resources as part of appraising potential shared owners.
  
- **Private Leasing Scheme with Cross Keys Homes**
  - The Council have run a private Sector Leasing Scheme since April 2006 making properties available for rent through choice based letting and housing families in need on the housing register.
  - The leasing scheme guaranteed the rental income to the owner for a period of three to five years (depending on whether financial assistance was given) with no void losses between lettings. Our partner “Homes from Houses” managed the property throughout the leasing period, providing a hassle free way for owners to earn an income from a former empty property.



- Recently, the current leasing arrangements have faltered due to our partner feeling unable to guarantee the rent to new cases particularly in light of the proposed changes to local housing allowance and the welfare benefit reforms, including the proposed move to a Universal Credit.
  - As an extension to the Empty Homes Partnership, we are currently in negotiation with Cross Keys Homes to finalise a Private Leasing Scheme that can be offered to owners of both empty and tenanted properties who either can not or do not want the responsibility of property management. The aim is to have these leasing arrangements in place by the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013.
  - This leasing scheme can be offered to owners of empty property who do not want to enter into the Empty Homes Partnership with Cross Keys as they do not want to be tied into a long lease arrangement or it is not financially viable for them to do so.
  - This leasing scheme will be used to ensure acceptable standards of accommodation are met to enable the Housing Needs Service to discharge its homelessness duty into the private rented sector and will also be used after enforcement action has been taken due to landlords not licensing properties and where the Local Authority has a statutory duty to take over the management of that property.
- **Rent Deposit Scheme**
    - The Rent Deposit Scheme is administered by the Housing Needs Service. Many prospective tenants do not have the necessary funds to provide a landlord with a deposit.
    - This scheme can help to encourage an owner to bring a property back into use by guaranteeing the deposit and give them peace of mind and will be used in conjunction with the Private Leasing Scheme.
- **Hope into Action Partnership**
    - Government announced at the end of September 2011 that community groups and voluntary organisations would be able to bid for £30 million of the total £100 million Empty Homes Funding administered by the HCA.
    - In July 2012 Peterborough City Council supported the successful bid by the charity Hope into Action which aims to provide accommodation and support for clients (aged 18-85) who are least able to obtain suitable housing or support by other means.
    - Hope into Action currently run 9 properties in partnership with local churches. The award (amounting to £193,000) is to purchase and renovate 2 further properties which will be used to provide homes to homeless people in Peterborough.
    - The Empty Homes Officer will identify suitable properties and assist in the negotiation of the sale of those properties through liaison with the owner.
    - It is hoped that further grant opportunities will be available through the HCA to continue this and other partnerships in the community/voluntary sector in the future.

- **Empty Homes Assistance**

- In the past, an Empty Homes Grant was available to owners of long term empty properties up to a value of £20,000 subject to the property then being signed up for a period of 5 years through the Council's Private Sector Leasing Scheme.
- The 40% reduction of the Council's capital programme for Repairs Assistance from £1,700,000 to £1,020,000 in 2011/2012 resulted in the withdrawal of this grant.
- We are currently exploring the feasibility of utilising some of the money generated by the New Homes Bonus to establish a recyclable loan fund that will give owners of long term empty properties an incentive grant of up to £20,000 to carry out essential works. Repayment of the grant through a proportion of the rental income will be made over a 5 year period allowing the full amount of the grant to be repaid and re-used. The property will be placed on the leasing scheme and the council will have full nomination rights to the property for families on the housing register in housing need.
- Again, this funding could be utilised for owners of empty property who do not want to be tied into a long lease arrangement or it is not financially viable for them to enter in the Empty Homes Partnership with Cross Keys Homes.
- Please refer to Appendix D which illustrates how a recyclable empty homes grant fund might work.

- **Accreditation**

- Officers are currently looking at the feasibility of Peterborough City Council adopting an Accreditation Scheme for landlords of privately rented properties operated nationally by the National Landlords Association (NLA)
- The benefits of this include landlords becoming part of a nationally recognised scheme and being able to verifiably promote their service as a good landlord. They can improve their knowledge and property management skills and use the NLA Accredited logo and Landlord Certificate which will assist potential tenants in their choice of properties and ensure acceptable standards of accommodation are met to enable the Housing Needs Service to discharge its homelessness duty into the private rented sector.
- The Empty Homes Officer will actively encourage owners of empty properties who wish to retain their properties to join the Accreditation Scheme to give them the skills and support to offer tenancies and manage the property effectively.
- Please refer to Appendix E which outlines the NLA's Accreditation Scheme and the Code of Practice that NLA members are required to abide by.

▪ **Energy Performance Certificates**

- Since 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008 landlords have been required to provide an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) when they rent out a house giving information on the energy efficiency of the property. It provides an energy rating of a home from A to G where A is very efficient and G is very inefficient. The landlord must make the EPC available free of charge to prospective tenants
- EPCs are valid for 10 years and can be reused as many times as required within that period – it is not necessary to commission a new EPC each time there is a change of tenant.
- EPCs must be produced by an accredited assessor and will have a unique number which is entered on a national register. The provision of EPCs is enforced by Trading Standards who can impose a penalty charge of up to £200 for each breach.
- The Energy Act 2011 makes the provision that from April 2016 landlords of residential properties will not be able to unreasonably refuse requests from their tenants for consent to energy efficiency improvements where financial support, such as the Green Deal and the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is available
- Following this from April 2018, private rented properties must be brought up to a minimum energy efficiency rating of 'E'. This provision will make it unlawful to rent out a house or business premise that does not reach this minimum standard.
- In advance of regulations coming into force, the Council will be encouraging landlords and owners of empty property to plan energy efficiency improvements effectively and will be working in partnership to develop Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funded projects within the City.
- The Empty Homes Officer is also an accredited Domestic Energy Assessor and as an incentive to bringing empty properties back into use and for joining the NLA's national Accreditation Scheme, we are developing a competitive pricing structure for EPCs that can be offered to landlords and owners of empty property.

▪ **VAT Relief on Empty Homes**

- Owners who renovate properties that have been empty in excess of 2 years can pay reduced VAT at 5%
- If the property has been empty in excess of 10 years works are VAT exempt
- The owner is usually required to provide documentary evidence of the length of time the property has been vacant – which the Empty Homes Officer can usually provide

▪ **Inspections**

- All empty properties will undergo a full inspection under the Housing Act's 2004 Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS) inspection regime to identify defects which pose a significant hazard within the property. Advice and assistance is given to owners to ensure those hazards are reduced to an acceptable level to ensure all properties brought back into use are safe, healthy and energy efficient.

- This inspection also forms the basis for the service of statutory Improvement Notices where defects are found in a property which poses a significant risk to the health and/or safety of any potential occupiers and where co-operation of the owner has not been forthcoming

- **Information and Advice**

- Some owners of empty homes do not know what to do with them and we can provide advice and assistance to help them.
- The initial approach is to offer them advice and address the issues and concerns about the nuisance that can be associated with empty homes
- We can put them in contact with builders and other agencies that can assist with letting and leasing their home, including the NLA Accreditation Scheme.
- The owners are also made aware of their legal obligations and the legal options available to the Council if homes are not returned to use.

### 7.1.3 Enforcement

- *When all other negotiation and persuasion has failed, we will take appropriate enforcement action to ensure the property is in habitable condition and free from high risk hazards in order that it can be brought back into occupation.*

Where the encouragement option has failed and owners are not willing to engage proactively with the Empty Homes Officer, or where it is considered that the property is unlikely to be brought back voluntarily, there is little option but to proceed with enforcement action. By closely following the approaches outlined above and recording all actions taken, an extensive evidence base will have been built up which demonstrates that the Council has taken all reasonable steps to bring the property back into use voluntarily. This evidence base will accelerate the enforcement process and increase the chance of success if the owner were to appeal the enforcement action.

Enforcement action through the Empty Homes Strategy is to ensure the re-occupation and/or refurbishment of the empty property. This action can be in addition to action taken for other issues such as accumulations, vermin or other action taken by Planning or other service areas. The property will be evaluated to ascertain which enforcement option is most suitable for that particular case and will consideration will be given to whether there is a history of nuisance or anti-social behaviour and the impact on the surrounding neighbourhood.

When enforcement is taken, the Empty Homes Officer will aim to ensure the property is brought back into use as quickly as possible through whatever means the form of enforcement action dictates. Preference will be given to leasing schemes and partnership arrangements with Registered Providers for affordable housing but private sales and renting will also be considered.

Enforcement Options are:

- **Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO's)**
  - EDMO's were first introduced in 2006 and allow local authorities to take management control of an empty property for up to 7 years, carrying out any necessary repairs and arranging for the property to be rented out during this period.
  - The owner retains the right to sell the property and receives any surplus income made during this time once management costs and refurbishment costs have been reclaimed from the rental income.
  - Government has now changed the criteria for using an EDMO. The minimum time a property has to be empty has increased from six months to two years. An EDMO is also now only applicable for properties attracting anti-social behaviour. This will inevitably restrict its use to a smaller number of properties, but will remain a valuable tool for long term empty properties having a significant adverse impact on a neighbourhood.
  
- **Enforced Sale**
  - The Law of Property Act 1925 allows local authorities to recover charges through the sale of the property. This option can only be utilised where there is a debt to the local authority registered as a charge on the property and this can be in the form of Council Tax debt or works in default following notices being served to remove accumulations or carry out improvement works etc.
  - This option is more attractive than compulsory purchase as it does not require the authority to take ownership of the property and sell it on and therefore requires no capital outlay.
  - At the time of writing this Strategy, the first enforced sale involving a long term, problematic empty property has just been successfully completed which involved close collaborative working between the Empty Homes Officer, Housing Enforcement, the Housing Needs Service, Council Tax and Legal Services.
  - As well as recovering a substantial amount of debt owed to the Council it is hoped the publicity from this enforced sale should encourage other owners of long standing, problematic empty properties to actively engage with the Council to prevent similar action.
  
- **Improvement Notices**
  - All empty properties undergo an assessment by the Empty Homes Officer and an inspection carried out under the Housing Act 2004 Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The Housing Act places a duty on local authorities to take action when the most serious Category 1 hazards are identified. The authority has the option to serve Improvement Notices requiring the owner to carry out the necessary works to remedy defects which will reduce the hazards to an acceptable level.

- If the owner fails to comply with a notice, the authority can arrange for the works to be carried out in default and recover the costs from the owner. Any costs are registered as a local land charge against the property and may count in any subsequent enforced sale action.

- **Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO's)**

- CPO's can be made under Sect 17 of the Housing Act 1985 or under Sect 226 (as amended by the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, for the provision of housing accommodation or to make a quantitative or qualitative improvement to existing housing.
- The initiation of a CPO is often enough to encourage owners to bring their properties back into use voluntarily.
- This process is costly with regard to time and resources and is used only when all other options are unsuccessful as it removes ownership from the current owner.

Please refer to Appendix F where a detailed list of the enforcement powers available to the local authority can be found.

The systematic three stage approach for bringing empty properties back into use with escalating letters making it easier for the owners to engage allows for effective monitoring of progress of a large and often complex workload. However, it also allows time for the Empty Homes Officer to deal with the difficult, time consuming and often high profile cases of empty properties that are having a serious and detrimental impact on neighbourhoods.

The introduction of the New Homes Bonus encourages the return to use of all empty properties. The reward is the same, no matter what condition the property is in or the level of work involved to secure re-occupation. It would be wrong, however, just to concentrate activity on the "quick wins" in order to obtain the maximum bonus available. The detrimental effect of empty properties on the community includes urban decline and blight and they can become a magnet for crime, anti-social behaviour and nuisance as well as discouraging investment in an area.

It is important to reach a compromise on the approach to tackling empty properties ensuring those that can be returned to use quickly through minimal help and advice are dealt with, but also that the worst empty homes in the City are also effectively tackled to achieve refurbishment and re-occupation.

Please refer to Appendix G where a process flow diagram illustrating the full procedure for dealing with empty homes can be found.

## **7.2 To offer a Comprehensive Advice and Assistance Service**

As explained in the 7.1.2 Encouragement section of this strategy how in the first instance our aim is to provide advice and assistance to the owner of an empty property with a view to outlining the options that are available to them. Advice and assistance will focus on:

- Whether the property requires any work in order to make it habitable? If so, does the owner intend to fund direct, seek private finance or do they require grant assistance
- Whether the owner wants to rent the property out? Do they intend to rent out privately or through a leasing scheme? The Empty Homes Officer can outline the schemes available and carry out financial viability modelling
- Whether they are aware of the current VAT rates for developing empty properties
- Whether they want to sell the property. The Empty Homes Officer can forward a list of potential purchasers who have registered an interest with us and offer guidance on looking for estate agents and letting agents locally.
- Whether the property has been subject to any complaints? It may be necessary to take action against the owner if there are issues such as vermin, rubbish, 'nuisance' to adjoining properties or if the condition of the property is affecting the local amenity
- The Empty Homes Officer also liaises with the wider community that may be affected by a problematic empty property, noting their concerns and issues and updating them on progress made in returning the property to use.

## **7.3 To Maximise Income from the New Homes Bonus**

An empty property returned to use is rewarded in the same way as a new home via a "bonus" equivalent to the council tax income to the local authority for six financial years following the date it was brought back into use. The Coalition Government is encouraging local authorities to re-invest the bonus in empty homes work to reduce the number in its area and also to make tackling empty properties part of their overall approach to meet housing need.

Conversely, however, as the New Homes Bonus is calculated on the net available housing stock, an increase in the number of empty properties will attract a penalty, negating any New Homes Bonus that may be payable on new build, affordable properties. In order for Peterborough City Council to benefit from the New Homes Bonus, it is vital that not only do we work to reduce the number of empty properties in the city but to also ensure the number continually remains as low as possible.

DCLG have recently released details on delivery and payment of the empty homes element of the New Homes Bonus. The figures for Peterborough City Council are as follows:

Empty homes bought into use (data derived from Council TaxBase form Oct 09 to Oct 10)	25
Y1 delivery: empty homes component of payment	£51,812
Empty homes bought into use (data derived from Council TaxBase form Oct 10 to Oct 11)	134
Y2 delivery: empty homes component of payment	£124,422
Total 2012-13 Empty Homes payment: i.e. Y1 2nd instalment plus Y2 1st instalment	£176,234
Total payment for Empty Homes over 2011-12 and 2012-13: i.e. 2 x Y1 instalment and 1 x Y2 instalment	£228,046

These figures reflect the increased activity in bringing empty homes back into use resulting from the appointment of a full-time, dedicated Empty Homes Officer in July 2011. It is expected that increased empty homes activity achieved through the dedicated resource of a full time Empty Homes Officer from October 2011 to date will be reflected positively in future instalment payments of the New Homes Bonus.

Empty homes activity carried out by the Empty Homes Officer is instrumental in updating council tax records and subsequently informs the annual snapshot of the Council Tax register which forms the basis for the New Home Bonus funding from Government. We are committed to ensuring this money is recycled back into the ongoing work with empty homes. This Strategy commits The Housing Programmes Team to provide empty homes loans to landlords ensuring the available housing stock in the City is maximised and secured for households on the council's housing register and therefore reducing the pressure on the council's bed and breakfast budget for homeless families in the City.

#### **7.4 To Improve our Evidence Base**

The Empty Homes Officer uses a dedicated Empty Homes Module of the Northgate Public Protection Software currently in use across various housing teams with Neighbourhoods. The database has been built up using information relating to empty properties from reports from various sources including information from Council Tax records and Land Registry information.

The database provides a reference point enabling us to monitor the number of long term empty properties, the date it became vacant, its current condition, ownership details, current status, a history of correspondence and communication and informal and enforcement action taken.



If a complaint from a member of public or an elected member is received, or if a property is notified to us by any other field based officer from any department as being of imminent danger or concern, the length of time it has been vacant become irrelevant. If the property is not already being investigated, it is added to the Empty Homes Officer current workload and prioritised accordingly.

The accuracy of Council Tax data must be evaluated regularly to ensure that the overall picture of empty homes in the City is as accurate as possible. The Empty Homes Officer works closely with colleagues in Shared Transactional Services (Council Tax) and carries out verification visits on properties listed as empty for longer than six months.

This ensures properties have the correct designation which contributes to the cleansing of data in order to report accurate empty property figures for the purpose of the New Homes Bonus.

Peterborough City Council's Neighbourhood Window will also enable us to map long term empty properties across the City and to identify those areas where the problem is most pronounced and can overlay those areas with information on anti-social behaviour and crime.

## **7.5 To raise awareness of the Empty Property Issue**

In order to ensure the profile of empty homes work and its contribution to the New Homes Bonus is maintained it is necessary to liaise with other departments within the Council including:

- The Media & Communications Team
- The Housing Strategy Team situated within Strategic Planning & Enabling
- The Housing Needs Service
- Shared Transactional Services (Council Tax)
- Operations Financial Services Team
- Housing Enforcement Officers situated within Neighbourhood Enforcement
- Planning Services
- Building Control Services
- Members Services

The recruitment of a dedicated, full time Empty Homes Officer has also prompted favourable press coverage about empty properties across the City on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, Heart FM and the Peterborough Evening Telegraph. It is our aim to keep the issue of empty properties and the work of the Empty Homes Officer regularly in the spotlight by regular press releases.

A series of leaflets and factsheets are being produced to assist owners of empty properties which will be placed on a dedicated Empty Homes web page on the Councils website.

## 7.6 To Retain Dedicated Staff Resource

A dedicated full time Empty Homes Officer has been appointed and commenced duties in July 2011. This post is situated in the Housing Programmes Team within the Strategic Housing Service of Neighbourhoods. This appointment has increased the Council's capacity to deal effectively with empty properties across the city and the post holder is able to work effectively with colleagues across Neighbourhoods including:

- The Housing Needs Team – working to identify and target property types and address specific housing needs, including liaison with the Rough Sleeper Outreach Officer
- The Neighbourhood Enforcement Teams – for housing and pollution enforcement issues
- The Community Safety Team – for properties which are attracting anti-social behaviour or are at risk of attracting squatters

The post holder also works closely with colleagues in other services across the Council including:

- Council Tax – identifying properties and owners details
- Planning Services – information sharing and enforcement issues
- Legal Services – taking enforcement action
- Housing Strategy Team – contributing to the Council's overall strategic housing objectives.

The Empty Homes Partnership with Cross Keys Homes requires detailed negotiated agreement with owners of empty property, including a property survey and a financial appraisal in order to negotiate a proposed term of lease. All empty home activity requires a relationship to be established between the Empty Homes Officer and the property owner to secure the necessary commitment and action to get the property back into use. Ultimately, if voluntary action through the use of incentives is not secured, a detailed case is built in order to secure appropriate and proportionate enforcement action.

The work of the Empty Homes Officer is vital in its contribution to increasing the net available housing stock in the city to meet housing demand as well as bringing properties into use that can be utilised by the Housing Needs Service to reduce the amount of people on the housing register in housing need and to provide private sector homes into which the authority can discharge its homelessness duty.

## 8. Monitoring & Performance

Performance will be monitored using the following measures:

- *The total number of long term empty properties as at 1<sup>st</sup> April*
- *The total number of long term empty properties that are returned to occupation or demolished through Local Authority intervention – measured monthly*
- *The number of long term empty properties accepted onto the Empty Homes Partnership with Cross Keys Homes- measured monthly*
- *No of Empty Properties accepted onto the Private Leasing Scheme with Cross Keys Homes*
- *The amount of the empty homes element of the New Homes Bonus received by the Local Authority – measured annually*
- *No of Empty Homes Assistance Loans approved*
- *No of EDMO's in place – measured monthly*
- *No of Enforced Sales executed – measured monthly*
- *No of Housing Act 2004 Improvement Notices Served*
- *No of Boarding Up action – on unsecured properties where there is a risk that it may be entered, suffer vandalism, arson etc*

These performance measures will be reported through the Strategic Housing Section of Neighbourhood Services Performance Framework Dashboard

## 9. The Empty Homes Action Plan

**Objective 1 - To bring empty homes in the private sector back into use, utilising both voluntary means and statutory enforcement powers, which will increase the housing supply, alleviate the numbers of people in housing need on the housing register, improve neighbourhoods and community confidence and contribute to tackling homelessness in Peterborough**

Action Number	Targets and Outcomes	Action Description	Target Date	Leading Officer
1	To constantly improve performance in reducing the number of empty homes, by accessing and utilising the latest tools and best practice.	Continuously develop and sustain up-to-date knowledge of best practice procedures, through ongoing research and liaison with appropriate external bodies.	Ongoing	Empty Homes Officer
2	To give priority to nuisance and unsightly properties, but to also increase the number of 'quick hits', to increase the revenue for the Council via the New Homes Bonus.	Using the up-to-date information database, categorising properties on their length of time empty, to provide both long term and shorter term empties in batches, for a broader focus.	Ongoing	Empty Homes Officer
3	To continue to reactively investigate all reports of empty homes received by the public, whilst also monitoring and reviewing points at which active intervention in long-term empty properties is best implemented.	The investigation of all reported empty properties, and proactively investigate all identified long term empty homes.	Ongoing	Empty Homes Officer
4	To increase enforcement activity against prominent and high priority property, whether the owner is known or not, and regardless of their previous co-operation	Identification through the database and priority scoring system, of long term empty and problematic properties to be targeted through EDMO, enforced sale or CPO.	Ongoing	Housing Programmes Manager Empty Homes Officer

5.	Bring long term empty property back into use through the Empty Homes Partnership with Cross Keys Homes	Identification of 120 suitable properties in Peterborough (100) & Huntingdonshire (20). Carry out initial appraisal of properties and complete the financial appraisal. Negotiate and secure owners commitment	By end March 2015	Empty Homes Officer
6.	Implement the NLA Accreditation Scheme for Private Landlords reaching the required standard	Publicise the launch of the NLA Accreditation Scheme in the City. Promote the scheme to owners of both empty and tenanted property. Inspect property and offer agreed incentives to landlords wishing to be accredited	By end December 2012	Empty Homes Officer
7.	Bring long term empty property back into use through the Private Leasing Scheme with Cross Keys Homes	Identify owners of empty property where the Empty Homes Partnership is not financially viable. Encourage owners to hand over property to Cross Keys for the agreed leasing period	Commencing 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2013	Empty Homes Officer

**Objective 2 - To offer a comprehensive advice and assistance service to the owners of empty property, those who are looking to purchase or develop empty property and those who are experiencing problems arising by living near to empty properties**

Action Number	Targets and Outcomes	Action Description	Target Date	Leading Officer
8	Advise and inform owners of all possible options available in bringing empty properties back into use.	Frequent and regular recorded communications, including letters, telephone conversations etc, outlining willingness and co-operation of owner, and progression made.	Ongoing	Empty Homes Officer
9	To offer support and advice to property owners whose properties are likely to become empty for a significant period, and tailor support to ensure the property doesn't become a long term empty home.	By promoting the service, offer support to those who have little experience on what to do with a property once empty, to ensure the additions to the long term figures are kept as low as possible	Ongoing	Empty Homes Officer

**Objective 3 - To maximise income from the New Homes Bonus and to utilise it effectively by delivering initiatives to tackle empty homes**

Action Number	Targets and Outcomes	Action Description	Target Date	Leading Officer
10	Establish a Empty Homes Loan Fund to assist owners to carry out essential repairs to Empty Homes	Develop a business case to utilise the element of New Homes Bonus received for previous activity in bringing empty property back into use to establish a recyclable loan fund	Ongoing	Empty Homes Officer
11	Deliver Empty Homes Loans where the Empty Homes Partnership with Cross Keys Homes is not financially viable	Identify required works through HHSRS assessment, instruct the Care & Repair Home Improvement Agency on required works, negotiate and sign up the owner onto a lease arrangement and monitor repayment taking action where required	Ongoing	Empty Homes Officer

**Objective 4 - To improve our evidence base by assembling relevant, accurate and current information**

Action Number	Targets and Outcomes	Action Description	Target Date	Leading Officer
12	To produce and maintain an accurate and relevant source database of empty homes, to provide up-to-date and comprehensive information.	A thorough data cleanse process using Council Tax data, to update the database and give accurate statistical and owner information.	Bi-monthly	Empty Homes Officer
13	To visit all properties reported as empty, and note their location, description and condition, for ease of referral or future enforcement.	To increase the knowledge and evidence base of empty homes in the City, and provide and priority score for which enforcement action will be based on.	Ongoing	Empty Homes Officer
14	Forge and improve links between other council departments, particularly Housing Enforcement, Planning and Building Control, Environmental Service and Council Tax.	Arrange cross-departmental meetings, and improving information exchange links.	Ongoing	Empty Homes Officer

15	Update on all aspects of the Empty Home activity, current case progress and new initiatives.	Preparation of monthly empty homes monitoring and performance report, to be shared with Housing Programmes Manager, Neighbourhood Managers and Cabinet Member for Housing	Monthly	Empty Homes Officer
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**Objective 5 - To raise awareness of the Empty Homes issue and to promote the service and strategy to owners, neighbours and those affected by empty homes**

Action Number	Targets and Outcomes	Action Description	Target Date	Leading Officer
16	To raise awareness of the issues surrounding empty homes to both the public, and to empty home owners, and to improve the communication streams available to the public.	Review and update of publicity material and means by which the service is publicised, through targeted press releases, web based functions and through face to face contact.	Ongoing	Empty Homes Officer
17	To promote and highlight the advice and support network offered by the service, through public interaction and media.	Attending public meetings and community groups, and reach the public through Councillors and personal contact.	Ongoing	Empty Homes Officer

**Objective 6 - To retain dedicated staffing resource to tackle the problems of empty homes and to effectively bring them back into use thus preventing the waste of valuable housing resource across the city**

Action Number	Targets and Outcomes	Action Description	Target Date	Leading Officer
18	Maximise income through the enforcement of non compliance of landlords of the requirement to have an EPC	Check privately rented property against the national register of EPC's. Issue FPN to landlords who are not compliant	Ongoing	Empty Homes Officer

19	Maximise income through the offer discounted EPC's to landlords of private rented accommodation	Carry out DEA assessment of privately rented properties including empty property being transferred to a leasing scheme and lodge assessment on the EPC register. Issue invoices for all DEA assessments carried out	Ongoing	Empty Homes Officer
20	Annual review of Empty Homes Strategy targets, action plan and available resources.	Review action plan and targets and where possible, access additional funding to resource new/ additional measures.	Dec 2013	Housing Programmes Manager Empty Homes Officer

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## 10. Appendices

Appendix A - NHB Calculation examples

Appendix B - Three Stage Letter Process

Appendix C - Empty Home Assessment Form

Appendix D - Recyclable Empty Homes Fund

Appendix E - NLA Accreditation Scheme

Appendix F - Main Statutory Enforcement Options

Appendix G - Empty Homes Process Flow Diagram

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## New Homes Bonus – Calculation Examples

Possible Local Authority NHB income is illustrated by the following examples calculated using the NHB calculator provided by CLG. For reasons of simplicity, all empty homes returned to use are assumed to be in council tax band D, the average for the City.

### **Example A**

500 new homes are built in Peterborough during 2011/2012. The number of empty homes remains the same. The total New Homes Bonus payable of six years = £3,969,420

### **Example B**

500 new homes are built in Peterborough, and 150 empty homes are brought back to use in 2011/2012. The total New Homes Bonus payable over six years = £5,160,246.

Additional NHB due to empty homes work carried out = £1,190,826

### **Example C**

500 new homes are built in Peterborough in 2011/2012.

This should attract a NHB payment of = £3,969,420, however, the empty homes officer has found 4 cases particularly difficult, and has taken up all of their time during the year. This has led to an increase of 150 empty homes.

This means the actual NHB payment = £2,778,594

Total lost income due to the restricted empty homes work = £1,190,826

### The 3 Stage Letter Process

The first letter states that we know about the empty property and offers help, the second stresses that we are awaiting for a response and we still think we can help. The third states that the owner should really let us help and presents the possibility of enforcement action including the service of an Empty Dwelling Management Order, enforced sale procedures or compulsory purchase.

This system provides a structured process that is both consistent and persistent and demonstrates transparency and fairness. Letters can be sent out in manageable batches with set time periods for return and the sending out of subsequent letters. It keeps properties and owners on the Empty Homes Officer's "radar" and allows for effective monitoring of cases and the progress being made. A systematic approach also frees up officer time to be able to deal with the "difficult cases" where detailed casework needs to be compiled for enforcement action.

If the first two stage letters prompt a response from the owner, the Empty Homes Officer can offer advice and assistance as well as building a relationship with the property owner in order to secure voluntary reoccupation of the property. The introduction of the New Homes Bonus makes this initial contact and assistance even more important. The more people that respond to assistance and advice and the more incentives that can be offered to achieve reoccupation of the property at this relatively early stage, means the greater possibility of the reduction in empty homes. This will contribute to the New Homes Bonus received and/or protect the bonus payments earned through the provision of new affordable housing.

If owners do not engage as a result of the letters, the Empty Homes Officer may have to adopt a more individualistic approach with visits and telephone calls to the owner's property and bespoke negotiation detailing the circumstances of the empty property and its impact and the Council's options to secure reoccupation. This work is very detailed and time consuming but is an important part of the Empty Homes Officer role. If successful, this negotiation can reduce the need for formal enforcement action. If not, it will provide the necessary groundwork and justification for enforcement action.

Telephone: 01733 864127  
Facsimile: 01733 863811  
E-Mail: [emptyhomes@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:emptyhomes@peterborough.gov.uk)  
Please ask for: Adam Cliff  
Our Ref: <Property Reference>  
Your Ref: <Property\_Reference>



**OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT**

Neighbourhoods - Housing

Bayard Place

Broadway

Peterborough

PE1 1HZ

DX 12310 Peterborough 1

Telephone: (01733) 747474

<First Letter Sent>

<Registered Owner>  
<Forwarding Address>  
<Forwarding Address Line 2>  
<Forwarding Address Line 3>  
<Forwarding Address Postcode>

Dear <Addressee>

**Re: Empty Property at: <Empty Property Address> <Address Line 2> <Empty Property Postcode>**

Our records show that the property at the above address has been unoccupied since **<Date Empty From>**, and that you are the owner, or that you act on behalf of the owner.

In line with Government guidance, Peterborough City Council has developed an Empty Property Strategy working to bring privately owned empty property back into use as homes in the City. We maintain a record of identified empty properties, and your property is currently on this database. Our aim is to work with owners of empty properties to help bring them back into use, and we offer a range of advice and assistance to achieve this.

There are many reasons why it is in the owner's interest to bring an empty property back into use:

- To reduce your costs (council tax, insurance and maintenance bills)
- To generate a regular rental income or a capital sum if you want to sell.
- To provide a valuable resource helping the current housing shortage in the city.
- To provide a home for somebody and their family.
- To reduce deterioration of the property and avoid problems for the community

**CAN WE HELP?**

Whatever the reason your property has become empty, get in touch with us as there may be ways we can work together. You can telephone or e-mail us. Enclosed is an information fact sheet which outlines the council's empty homes strategy, and some of the options available in dealing with empty homes.

If your property is no longer empty or you already have plans for bringing your property back into use, please let us know so we can update our records, and see if we can still help in any way.

***Whatever the reason your property has become empty, we're writing to let you know that we want to help, and look forward to hearing from you so we can work together.***

Peterborough City Council is committed to bringing empty properties back into use, so if we haven't heard from you by <Deadline>, we'll contact you again.

Yours sincerely,

**Adam Cliff**  
Empty Homes Officer  
**Peterborough City Council**

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Telephone: 01733 864127  
Facsimile: 01733 863811  
E-Mail: [emptyhomes@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:emptyhomes@peterborough.gov.uk)  
Please ask for: Adam Cliff  
Our Ref: <Property Reference>  
Your Ref: <Property\_Reference>



**OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT**

Neighbourhoods - Housing

Bayard Place

Broadway

Peterborough

PE1 1HZ

DX 12310 Peterborough 1

Telephone: (01733) 747474

<Registered Owner>  
<Forwarding Address>  
<Forwarding Address Line 2>  
<Forwarding Address Line 3>  
<Forwarding Address Postcode>

<Second Letter Sent>

Dear <Addressee>

**Re: Empty Property at: <Empty Property Address> <Address Line 2> <Empty Property Postcode>**

We wrote to you on <First Letter Sent> but we do not appear to have received a reply.

This property has now been registered on the council's Empty Property Database for some time and is one of several that our Council Tax Department has told us are currently registered as having been **unoccupied since <Date Empty From>**. It is therefore important that you let us know as soon as possible how you intend to bring this property back into use.

If you are not sure how to do this, we would welcome the chance to help. A copy of the fact sheet sent previously is enclosed and we can provide further information as required.

We would remind you that there are many reasons why bringing an empty property back into use is extremely beneficial:

- To reduce your costs (council tax, insurance and maintenance bills)
- To generate a regular rental income or a capital sum if you want to sell.
- To provide a valuable resource helping the current housing shortage in the city.
- To provide a home for somebody.
- To reduce deterioration of the property and avoid problems for the community

**PLEASE CONTACT US**

You can use the reply slip on the fact sheet enclosed or contact us by telephone or email.

If your property is no longer empty, please let us know and we will update our records. Under current legislation there are no Council Tax discounts for unoccupied properties so Council Tax systems will not automatically update when a property becomes reoccupied. **A property will remain registered as empty, unless the owner has advised the Council Tax Department otherwise.** Please note: It is a requirement under Council Tax regulations that owners provide information on who occupies a property.

Peterborough City Council is committed to bringing empty properties back into use, so if we haven't heard from you by <2<sup>nd</sup> Deadline> we will contact you a final time before considering any further options or action.

Yours sincerely,

**Adam Cliff**  
Empty Homes Officer  
**Peterborough City Council**

DRAFT

Telephone: 01733 864127  
Facsimile: 01733 863811  
E-Mail: [emptyhomes@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:emptyhomes@peterborough.gov.uk)  
Please ask for: Adam Cliff  
Our Ref: XXXX/XXX  
Your Ref: XXXX/XXX

**PETERBOROUGH**  
  
CITY COUNCIL  
**OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT**

Neighbourhoods - Housing

Bayard Place

Broadway

Peterborough

PE1 1HZ

DX 12310 Peterborough 1

Telephone: (01733) 747474

Address

Date

Dear

Re: Empty Property at:

We wrote to you on XXXXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXXXX, but we still have not received a reply.

This property is now causing the council concern as it has been registered on our Empty Property Database for a considerable period of time and is one that our Council Tax Department has confirmed has been registered as **unoccupied since XXXXXXXXXX**.  
(Please note: A property will remain registered as empty, unless the owner has advised the Council Tax Department otherwise.)

We are continuing to contact you in line with Government guidance which requires local authorities to develop and implement strategies to work with owners of empty property to help them bring them back into use as homes.

***Please let us know how you intend to bring this property back into use.***

#### **IMPORTANT – PLEASE DO NOT IGNORE THIS LETTER**

We make it our priority to work **with** owners of empty properties providing advice, help and funding where appropriate (see enclosed fact sheet). However, if the council is unable to engage with owners, despite repeated attempts to do so, we will consider further action to ensure the re-use and reoccupation of the property. **This may include making recommendations for a range of enforcement action under current legislation, including an Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO), whereby control of the property is given to the local authority, an enforced sale, or the serving of a compulsory purchase order.**



Peterborough City Council is committed to bringing empty properties back into use so, if we haven't heard from you by XXXXXXXXXX, this property will automatically be assessed for priority and any further action will be decided based on that assessment.

Yours sincerely,

**Adam Cliff**  
Empty Homes Officer  
**Peterborough City Council**

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**Empty Property Assessment Sheet**

Used for scoring properties after the three letter process, to determine condition and affect on local area, to result in priority status score.

Priority Level	Scoring Bracket
High	> 45 Points
Medium	16 – 44 Points
Low	0 - 19 Points

**Empty Property Assessment Form**

<b>Property Address</b>	
<b>Date Confirmed Empty</b>	

Criteria	Score
<b>Length of Time Empty</b>	
18 Months – 2 Years	1
2 – 6 Years	3
> 6 Years	5
<b>Appearance</b>	
No Detriment to Area	0
Minor Detriment to Area	3
Major Detriment to Area	5
<b>Dangerous Structure</b>	
No	0
Possible, with further deterioration	2
Yes	5
<b>Nuisance</b>	
None	0
Minor	1
Significant	5

<b><u>Appearance of Surrounding Property</u></b>			
Good		<b>5</b>	
Fair		<b>3</b>	
Poor		<b>2</b>	
<b><u>Marketability / Habitability</u></b>			
Saleable in present condition		<b>0</b>	
Needs some improvement / repair		<b>1</b>	
Needs substantial renovation before occupation		<b>3</b>	
Not repairable at reasonable cost		<b>5</b>	
<b><u>Ownership</u></b>			
Contactable and responsive		<b>1</b>	
Contactable but not responsive		<b>3</b>	
Unable to trace		<b>5</b>	
<b><u>Owner's Attitude</u></b>			
Non compliant / uncooperative		<b>5</b>	
Some co-operation or compliance		<b>3</b>	
Willing and compliant		<b>1</b>	
<b><u>Enforcement History</u></b>			
None		<b>0</b>	
Statutory notice and / or work in default		<b>5</b>	
<b><u>Social Impact</u></b>			
Incidents of arson / fire		<b>5</b>	
Incidents of fly-tipping		<b>3</b>	
Infestation by vermin		<b>3</b>	
Associated with ASB		<b>5</b>	
<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b>_____</b>	<b><u>Priority Rating</u></b>	<b>HIGH / MEDIUM / LOW</b>

## Recyclable Empty Homes Fund over 5 year Repayment Plan

## Empty Home Loan Funding Example

Property Type:	Semi Detached
Bedrooms	3
Value Pre-Refurbishment	£95,000
Value Pos-Refurbishment	£120,000
Refurbishment Cost	£15,000
Refurbishment Time	3 Months
Rental Income PCM @ LHA Rate	£560
Loan Fee	3%
Management Fee	9%
Lease Length	5 Years

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Loan Payment	£15,000	0	0	0	0
Refurbishment Time	3 Months	0	0	0	0
Rental Months	9	11	11	11	11
Void Months	0	1	1	1	1
Income PCM @ LHA Rate	£560	£570	£580	£590	£600
Loan Repayment	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000
Interest Due	£450	£360	£270	£180	£90
Management Fee	£450	£600	£600	£600	£600
Maintenance costs	£250	£500	£750	£750	£750
Rent due to owner	£890	£1,810	£2,010	£2,210	£2,410

This example gives an outline of the possible costs and rental income an owner can expect, and although the rental income may initially seem low for the duration of the lease, the owner will ultimately end up with a refurbished property with an increased value at the end of the lease term. This calculation doesn't include the saving made on bills and insurance such as council tax, and the repair of the property should it become victim to vandals.

The interest rate is set at a low amount to increase the chances of owners taking up the scheme, with additional revenue made for the council through council tax payments and the payment of the New Homes Bonus reward.

- The loan is repaid over the period of the lease, with interest, resulting in Peterborough City Council retaining the financial asset as well as gaining interest over time
- Interest is purposely kept at a low rate, to ensure the loan through Peterborough City Council is favourable when compared with high street banks.
- The loan amount will be placed as a charge on the property, so that should the owner wish to sell once the refurbishment is carried out, the loan can be repaid through the proceeds of the sale. This ensures the investment of the council is secure and the charge is the first charge on a property therefore has priority over any others.
- The lease periods are flexible, although ideally kept below five years as to not produce a conflict of interest with the current Empty Homes Partnership run in conjunction with Cross Keys Homes.
- The maintenance costs over the duration of the lease are expected to rise over time, as works carried out at the start of the scheme will ensure that the property is up to the decent homes standard. As time progresses and faults occur, it is expected that this cost will increase and therefore is accounted for.
- A management fee of 9% of the rental income is charged to cover all administration costs of letting, advertising and managing the property. When compared with that of estate and letting agents available on the open market, this represents good value for money.

### NLA Accreditation Scheme

Landlord Accreditation is becoming increasingly important to landlords, tenants and local authorities. The NLA provides a central, nationally recognised accreditation scheme offering a UK-wide banner for responsible landlords to verifiably promote their services.

It costs local authorities nothing to work with us on NLA Accreditation as we look after all of the administration including course bookings, provision of trainers as well as handling all enquiries about the scheme. Once a landlord has completed the course to become accredited we are able to share their contact details with you.

This is set out in the NLA scheme rules document.

NLA Accreditation was designed to act as a stand alone model of accreditation. We believe as an organisation that landlords like all other professions should be accredited on what they know about the sector. However, it can also work well next to an inspection based element which some local authorities chose to do. In these cases it is essential that the NLA and the council work closely together to ensure that landlords in the relevant area are aware of the two aspects to the scheme.

#### Landlords can achieve NLA Accredited Status by:

1. Completing our one day attendance-based NLA Landlord Development Foundation Course (discounted for members), or completing the core subjects on the NLA Online Library (FREE for members).
2. If not already an NLA member all landlords are advised of The NLA Code of Practice which sets out the principles of best practice on managing a tenancy.
3. Signing up to the Scheme Rules in which Continued Professional Development is a requirement as well as agreeing to the terms of our complaints process.

#### Benefits of accreditation

- Landlords are part of a nationally recognised scheme that all tenants & councils can recognise no matter where they are based
- Improve their knowledge and property management skills
- Gain a competitive advantage over the local competition
- Verifiably promote their service as a good landlord
- Use of the NLA Accredited logo
- Display the NLA Accredited Landlord Certificate
- Appear on our online register of members as an NLA Accredited Landlord

#### Does a landlord need to become a member of the NLA in order to be accredited?

No, the NLA accepts that some landlords may just want to use the facilities required for accreditation. These landlords are able to purchase an Online Library subscription for £45 a year. This just gives them access to the Online Library where all the development to become accredited and sustain it is held. However, by becoming a member of the NLA they will benefit from on-going support to deal with landlord related matters and gain access to a range of benefits and services that are exclusive to NLA members.

## **NLA Code of Practice**

### **Introduction**

- 1.1 The NLA Code of Practice (CoP) is designed to raise and maintain standards in the private-rented sector. It sets out the standards of good practice that member landlords are expected to observe in connection with the letting of their residential properties, and it seeks to promote good relations between landlord and tenant by ensuring a good standard of service to tenants.
- 1.2 Members of the NLA, whether they manage their lettings themselves or do so through an agent or any third party, are expected to observe the CoP.
- 1.3 Amendments to the CoP will be made as necessary by the Board of the NLA and notified to members. Should there be any inconsistency between legislation and the CoP, legislation will take precedence.

### **Creating a Tenancy**

- 2.1 The landlord should provide tenants with a written statement of the terms of their occupancy, stating the:
  - 2.1.1 Address of the property being let, and what it is.
  - 2.1.2 Start and end dates of the tenancy period.
  - 2.1.3 Rent terms (frequency and method of payment).
  - 2.1.4 Deposit amounts (and how the deposit will be protected).
  - 2.1.5 Landlord's contact address in the UK for the service of notices.
- 2.2 The landlord will make every effort to assist the tenant with the understanding of their tenancy agreement, referring them if necessary to an independent body for further advice.
- 2.3 The landlord will inform the tenant in writing of any additional charges, utility bills, ground rent or maintenance charges that the tenant will be required to pay during the tenancy, stating where possible the amounts for each and the frequency and method of payment.
- 2.4 The landlord will provide the tenant, at the beginning of the tenancy, with a telephone number or other means of contacting the landlord or their agent in an emergency; in particular when the landlord is absent.
- 2.5 The landlord will give such reasonable assistance as is required by a local authority to enable a tenant to claim housing benefit.
- 2.6 If a tenancy is managed by an agent or other third-party there should be communication between the landlord and the agent regarding the NLA Code of Practice and its recommendations.

### **Maintaining a Tenancy**

- 3.1 NLA members are expected to abide by relevant landlord/tenant law, including racial equality and disability legislation, in the management of their lettings businesses. Where not covered specifically by the CoP, landlord/tenant law will, by implication and by default, be considered part of the CoP. In particular:
  - 3.1.1 Tenants will be treated with appropriate courtesy and respect and will not be deliberately misled.
  - 3.1.2 The landlord will act in a fair, honest and reasonable way in all their dealings with the tenant and will not, as far as is reasonable, disclose personal tenant information to other parties without their consent.
  - 3.1.3 The landlord will acknowledge promptly (usually within two working days of receipt) all communications received from the tenant.
  - 3.1.4 The landlord will inform the tenant of any change of manager or landlord contact details.
  - 3.1.5 The landlord will abide by the rules of any tenancy deposit scheme of which s/he is a member and accepts that any breach of relevant scheme rules may result in a review of NLA membership.

- 3.1.6 All disrepair in the property for which the landlord is responsible will be attended to promptly, with minimum disturbance to the tenant.
- 3.1.7 Wherever possible urgent repairs will be dealt with within 3 working days and less urgent repairs as soon as practicable.
- 3.1.8 The landlord will respect the tenant's rights to peaceful and quiet enjoyment of the property and will, emergencies excepted, ensure the tenant is given reasonable notice of at least 24 hours when access to the property is required by the landlord or agent.
- 3.1.9 The landlord will provide the tenant with accommodation that complies with legal requirements relating to the fitness of accommodation (including, but not limited to, the provision of furniture, gas and electrical supply and appliances and their service/maintenance and repair, provision of rent book for weekly tenancies as appropriate, and local authority occupancy standards).
- 3.1.10 The landlord will, when requested, provide the tenant with a written statement of their tenancy account within five working days.
- 3.1.11 Before proceedings are commenced, the tenant will be notified of any breach of the tenancy agreement that is to be used as a basis for legal proceedings against the tenant.

### **Determination of a Tenancy**

- 4.1 Members taking and holding a tenancy deposit, or on whose behalf a letting agent takes and holds a tenancy deposit, will do so in accordance with any legal requirements for the protection of deposits which may be in force at the time. At the end of the tenancy the landlord will return any deposit paid by the tenant promptly in accordance with tenancy deposit protection legislation in effect at the time.
- 4.2 The landlord will not refuse a tenant a reference for the purposes of securing a new tenancy, without good cause.

### **Complaints**

- 5.1 The objective of the NLA Code of Practice is to promote a professional approach to residential lettings and to improve standards in the sector, not to penalise. If members are found not to have met the standards and expectations of the Code, the NLA will, wherever possible, seek rectification and a commitment from the member to avoid repetition. The NLA will support and encourage members towards improving their practices.
- 5.2 The Code of Practice is an informal and voluntary process, in that the NLA has no power to compel a member to comply. Nevertheless, if a member were to refuse to comply, it would ultimately call into question their membership.
- 5.3 Any complaint about an NLA member should in the first instance be notified to the member directly in writing who should be given sufficient opportunity to resolve the matter.
- 5.4 If this has already been done, and you are not satisfied that it has been dealt with properly, you can make a complaint about an NLA member via the following process:
  - 5.4.1 Complete the form entitled Complaint about an NLA member (this is available in the About Us area of the NLA website).
  - 5.4.2 The form will ask for the name, contact details and where appropriate the position of the complainant.
  - 5.4.3 The form will also ask for confirmation as to which part of the Code of Practice you believe the NLA member has not upheld.
  - 5.4.4 Under a protocol approved by the Board of the NLA, your complaint will be reviewed by a case administrator. The case administrator will ensure that the complaint is relevant, appropriate and presents a possible breach of the Code of Practice. This will include checking that the landlord's NLA membership was in place at the time of the alleged breach of the Code NLA Accreditation 10



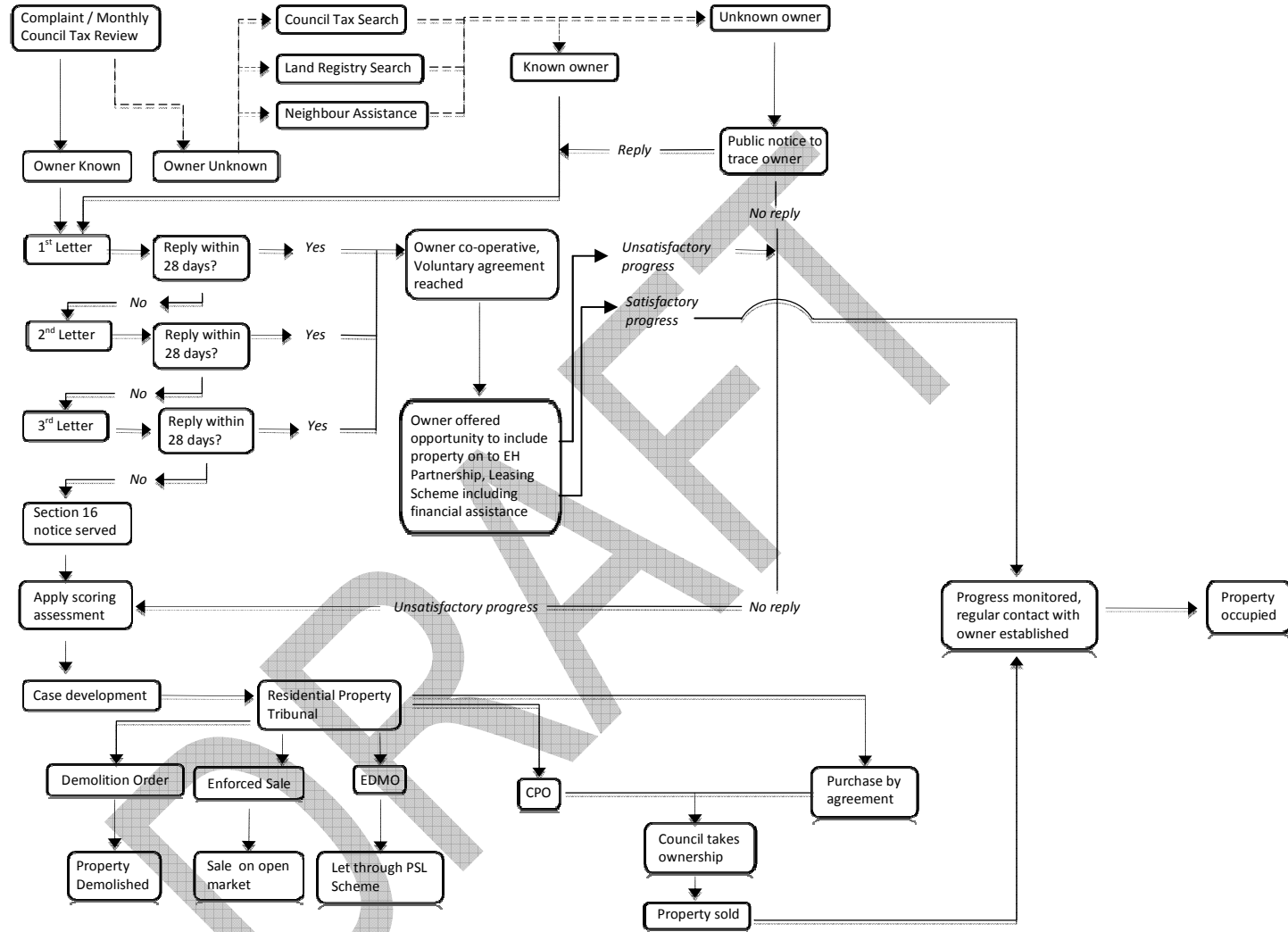
- 5.5 If the NLA Board becomes aware of a possible breach of the Code of Practice, it can initiate an investigation without the need for a formal complaint.
- 5.6 If a complaint is considered valid, the NLA will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant that it will be investigated. If the complaint is considered inappropriate, the case administrator will inform the complainant in writing of the reason.
- 5.7 The case administrator will also agree a realistic timeframe with the landlord within which they should respond to the complaint. All parties involved will be advised of the agreed timeframe.
- 5.8 Once the form and landlord's response have been received, the relevant paperwork will be passed over to a case handler who will review the case in consultation with the Director of Operations or the Chief Executive Officer and the Director in charge of complaints on the matter.
- 5.9 By liaising with the case handler, the case administrator will first attempt to resolve the complaint with all parties via mediation between all parties involved in the complaint
- 5.10 If mediation or recommendations to make changes fails, a report will be submitted to the Board of the NLA, which it will consider at its earliest opportunity.
- 5.11 If the Board accepts a report that the member concerned is not in breach of the CoP, the Director in charge of NLA complaints will write to the member informing them that no further action will be taken.
- 5.12 If the Board of the NLA accepts a report that the member concerned is in breach of the CoP, the Director in charge of complaints will write to the member concerned informing them of the Board's conclusion and the proposed remedy. The remedies may include:
  - 5.12.1 Recommending that the landlord completes development within the NLA relating to the nature of the complaint.
  - 5.12.2 Advising the landlord (and/or tenant) in writing of the NLA's recommendation of best practice to adopt in the future relating to the issues raised in the complaint.
  - 5.12.3 All recommendations will be made following consultation with the director in charge of complaints.
- 5.13 If the Board accepts a report that a member has breached the CoP and decides that the breach is of sufficient gravity to warrant exclusion from membership of the NLA, the Director in charge of NLA complaints will write to the member concerned advising them that the Board is 'minded to' exclude them from membership. In this situation, the following procedure will apply:
  - 5.13.1 Immediate suspension of member benefits.
  - 5.13.2 The member will be offered the opportunity to make written representations within one month as to why the Board's decision should not be confirmed. Oral representations will not be accepted.
  - 5.13.3 The Board will take account of any written representations and either confirm or amend its decision.
  - 5.13.4 The Director in charge of NLA complaints will write to the member informing them of the Board's decision.
- 5.14 The member or the complainant may appeal against the Board's decision. Appeals will be considered by an independent adjudicator. The party submitting an appeal must submit this in writing and agree to:
  - 5.14.1 To accept as final the decision of the independent adjudicator.
  - 5.14.2 To lodge with the NLA an amount to be determined by the NLA to cover costs and disbursements incurred by the NLA. This amount will be returned to the appellant should the adjudicator not uphold the NLA decision.
- 5.15 The Code cannot and does not supersede the normal operation of the law. A complainant retains the right throughout the process to choose to go to law; in this event, the complaint would be halted, as the courts take precedence over the Code. Similarly, the Code of Practice cannot be used to re-open an issue on which the courts have already adjudicated.

## Statutory Enforcement Options

Dangerous or dilapidated buildings or structures	Building Act 1984, Sections 77 and 78	To need the owner to make the property safe (Section 77) or to enable the Local Authority to take emergency action to make the property safe
	Housing Act 1985, Sections 189 and 190	To need the owner to make the property safe. Section 189 applies if the property is unfit for human habitation. Section 190 applies in other cases of serious disrepair.
Unsecured properties (if it poses the risk that it may be entered or suffer vandalism, arson or similar)	Building Act 1984, Section 78	To allow the Local Authority to fence off the property
	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, Section 29	To need the owner to take steps to secure the property or to allow the Local Authority to board it up in an emergency
	Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 80	
Vermin (If it is either present or there is a risk of attracting vermin that may detrimentally affect peoples health)	Public Health Act 1961, Section 34	To need the owner to remove waste so that vermin is not attracted to the site
	Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, Section 4	
	Public Health Act 1936, Section 83	
	Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 80	
	Building Act 1984, Section 76	
Unightly land and property affecting the amenity of the area	Public Health Act 1961, Section 34	To need the owner to remove waste from the property
	Town and County Planning Act 1990, Section 215	To need the owner to address unsightly land or the external appearance of the property
	Building Act 1984, Section 79	To need the owner to take steps to address a property adversely affecting the amenity of an area through its disrepair.
Long-term vacant property that is detrimental to the area	Housing Act 1985 Section 17	To grant the Local Authority the powers of Compulsory purchase
Long-term vacant property that does not meet the current housing standards	Housing Act 2004, Sections 11 & 12	To require the owner to carry out the necessary repairs to bring the property up to the current housing standards.

Properties that have been vacant in excess of 6 months where negotiation has been unsuccessful in returning the property to use.	Housing Act 2004, Part 4, Section 134	To grant the Local Authority the powers to take over the management of a property initially under an interim Empty Dwelling Management order then under a Final Empty Dwelling Management Order.
Properties on which the Local Authority have incurred costs, eg. for securing dwellings, or carrying out essential repairs.	Property Act 1925 Sections 101 & 103	Enables the Local Authority to require the sale of the property in order to recover any outstanding debts owed to the Authority including Council Tax Arrears

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Appendix G

<b>STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 8</b>
<b>20 NOVEMBER 2012</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## **Report of the Solicitor to the Council**

**Report Author** – Paulina Ford, Senior Governance Officer, Scrutiny

**Contact Details** – 01733 452508 or email paulina.ford@peterborough.gov.uk

### **NOTICE OF INTENTION TO TAKE KEY DECISIONS**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 This is a regular report to the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee outlining the content of the Notice of Intention to Take Key Decisions.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Committee identifies any relevant items for inclusion within their work programme.

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The latest version of the Notice of Intention to Take Key Decisions is attached at Appendix 1. The Notice contains those key decisions, which the Leader of the Council believes that the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Member(s) can make after 30 November 2012.

- 3.2 The information in the Notice of Intention to Take Key Decisions provides the Committee with the opportunity of considering whether it wishes to seek to influence any of these key decisions, or to request further information.

- 3.3 If the Committee wished to examine any of the key decisions, consideration would need to be given as to how this could be accommodated within the work programme.

- 3.4 As the Notice is published fortnightly any version of the Notice published after dispatch of this agenda will be tabled at the meeting.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 Details of any consultation on individual decisions are contained within the Notice of Intention to Take Key Decisions.

#### **5. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

None

#### **6. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Notice of Intention to Take Key Decisions

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# **PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL'S NOTICE OF INTENTION TO TAKE KEY DECISIONS**

## NOTICE OF INTENTION TO TAKE KEY DECISIONS

In the period commencing 28 days after the date of publication of this notice, Peterborough City Council's Executive intends to take 'key decisions' on the issues set out below. Key decisions relate to those executive decisions which are likely to result in the Council spending or saving money in excess of £500,000 and/or have a significant impact on two or more wards in Peterborough.

If the decision is to be taken by an individual cabinet member, the name of the cabinet member is shown against the decision, in addition to details of the councillor's portfolio. If the decision is to be taken by the Cabinet, it's members are as listed below:  
Cllr Cereste (Leader); Cllr Lee (Deputy leader); Cllr Scott; Cllr Holdich; Cllr Hiller; Cllr Seaton; Cllr Dalton; Cllr Walsh.

This Notice should be seen as an outline of the proposed decisions for the forthcoming month and it will be updated on a fortnightly basis. Each new notice supersedes the previous notice and items may be carried over into forthcoming notices. Any questions on specific issues included on the Notice should be included on the form which appears at the back of the Notice and submitted to Alex Daynes, Senior Governance Officer, Chief Executive's Department, Town Hall, Bridge Street, PE1 1HG (fax 01733 452483). Alternatively, you can submit your views via e-mail to [alexander.daynes@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:alexander.daynes@peterborough.gov.uk) or by telephone on 01733 452447.

Whilst the majority of the Executive's business at the meetings listed in this Notice will be open to the public and media organisations to attend, there will be some business to be considered that contains, for example, confidential, commercially sensitive or personal information. In these circumstances the meeting may be held in private, and on the rare occasion this applies this is indicated in the list below. A formal notice of the intention to hold the meeting, or part of it, in private, will be given 28 clear days in advance of any private meeting in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Council invites members of the public to attend any of the meetings at which these decisions will be discussed (unless a notice of intention to hold the meeting in private has been given).

You are entitled to view any documents listed on the notice, or obtain extracts from any documents listed or subsequently submitted to the decision maker prior to the decision being made, subject to any restrictions on disclosure. There is no charge for viewing the documents, although charges may be made for photocopying or postage. Documents listed on the notice and relevant documents subsequently being submitted can be requested from Alex Daynes, Senior Governance Officer, Chief Executive's Department, Town Hall, Bridge Street, PE1 1HG (fax 01733 452483), e-mail to [alexander.daynes@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:alexander.daynes@peterborough.gov.uk) or by telephone on 01733 452447. For each decision a public report will be available from the Governance Team one week before the decision is taken.

All decisions will be posted on the Council's website: [www.peterborough.gov.uk/executivedecisions](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/executivedecisions). If you wish to make comments or representations regarding the 'key decisions' outlined in this Notice, please submit them to the Governance Support Officer using the form attached. For your information, the contact details for the Council's various service departments are incorporated within this notice.



**NEW ITEMS THIS MONTH:**

**Change in Partnership Arrangements for the Children's Trust - KEY/30NOV12/01**  
**Healthwatch Commissioning - KEY/30NOV12/02**

## KEY DECISIONS FROM 28 NOVEMBER 2012

KEY DECISION REQUIRED	DECISION MAKER	MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC	RELEVANT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	CONSULTATION	CONTACT DETAILS / REPORT AUTHORS	DOCUMENTS RELEVANT TO THE DECISION SUBMITTED TO THE DECISION MAKER (IF ANY OTHER THAN PUBLIC REPORT)
<p><b>Moy's End Stand Demolition and Reconstruction - KEY/03APR/12</b> Award of Contract for the Demolition of the Moy's End Stand and Reconstruction</p>	<p><b>Councillor David Seaton</b> Cabinet Member for Resources</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital</p>	<p>Internal and External Stakeholders as appropriate.</p>	<p>Richard Hodgson Head of Strategic Projects Tel: 01733 384535 richard.hodgson@peterborough.gov.uk</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.</p>
<p><b>Delivery of the Council's Capital Receipt Programme through the Sale of Dickens Street Car Park - KEY/03JUL/11</b> To authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council, Executive Director – Strategic Resources, the Corporate Property Officer and the Cabinet Member Resources, to negotiate and conclude the sale of Dickens Street Car Park.</p>	<p><b>Councillor David Seaton</b> Cabinet Member for Resources</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital</p>	<p>Consultation will take place with the Cabinet Member, Ward councillors, relevant internal departments &amp; external stakeholders as appropriate.</p>	<p>Richard Hodgson Head of Strategic Projects Tel: 01733 384535 richard.hodgson@peterborough.gov.uk</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.</p>
<p><b>Rolling Select List - Independent Fostering Agencies - KEY/01JUL/12</b> To approve the list for independent fostering agencies.</p>	<p><b>Councillor Sheila Scott OBE</b> Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities</p>	<p>Internal and external stakeholders as appropriate.</p>	<p>Oliver Hayward Commissioning Officer - Aiming High Tel: 01733 863910 oliver.hayward@peterborough.gov.uk</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.</p>

<b>Write off approval for debts over £10,000 in relation to Non Domestic Rates - KEY/31OCT12/01</b> Authorise the write off of debt shown as outstanding in respect of non domestic rate accounts.	<b>Councillor David Seaton</b> Cabinet Member for Resources	N/A	Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital	Internal and External Stakeholders as appropriate.	Richard Godfrey ICT and Transactional Services Partnership Manager Tel: 01733 317989 richard.godfrey@peterborough.gov.uk	It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.
<b>Expansion and Refurbishment of Queens Drive Infants School - KEY/31OCT12/02</b> To award the contract for the expansion and refurbishment of Queens Drive Infants School.	<b>Councillor John Holdich OBE</b> Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University	N/A	Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities	Internal and external stakeholders including ward councillors as appropriate.	Brian Howard Programme Manager - Secondary Schools Development Tel: 01733 863976 brian.howard@peterborough.gov.uk	It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.
<b>Expansion and Refurbishment of Old Fletton Primary School - KEY/31OCT12/03</b> Award of contract for the expansion and refurbishment of Old Fletton Primary School.	<b>Councillor John Holdich OBE</b> Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University	N/A	Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities	Internal and external stakeholders including ward councillors as appropriate.	Brian Howard Programme Manager - Secondary Schools Development Tel: 01733 863976 brian.howard@peterborough.gov.uk	It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.
<b>Expansion and Refurbishment of Hampton Vale Primary School - KEY/31OCT12/04</b> Award of Contract for the expansion and refurbishment of Hampton Vale Primary School.	<b>Councillor John Holdich OBE</b> Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University	N/A	Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities	Internal and external stakeholders including ward councillors as appropriate.	Brian Howard Programme Manager - Secondary Schools Development Tel: 01733 863976 brian.howard@peterborough.gov.uk	It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.

<p><b>New Build of the Thomas Deacon Junior Academy - KEY/31OCT12/05</b> Award of Contract for the new build of the Thomas Deacon Junior Academy</p>	<p><b>Councillor John Holdich OBE</b> <b>Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities</p>	<p>Internal and external stakeholders including ward councillors as appropriate.</p>	<p>Brian Howard Programme Manager - Secondary Schools Development Tel: 01733 863976 brian.howard@peterborough.gov.uk</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.</p>
<p><b>Flood and Water Management Supplementary Planning Document - KEY/13NOV12/01</b> To adopt the supplementary planning document guiding developers on water related legislation and planning.</p>	<p><b>Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<p>Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital</p>	<p>Internal and external stakeholders as appropriate.</p>	<p>Julia Chatterton Sustainable Infrastructure Officer Tel: 01733 452620 julia.chatterton@peterborough.gov.uk</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.</p>
<p><b>Council Tax Base 2013/14 - KEY/13NOV12/02</b> To agree the calculation of the council tax base for 2013/14.</p>	<p><b>Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<p>Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital</p>	<p>Internal and external stakeholders as appropriate.</p>	<p>Steven Pilsworth Head of Strategic Finance Tel: 01733 384564 Steven.Pilsworth@peterborough.gov.uk</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.</p>
<p><b>Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy - KEY/13NOV12/03</b> Draft budget for 2013/14 and Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2023/24 to be agreed as a basis for consultation. This will include the Council's Capital Strategy, Asset Management Plan and Draft Annual Accountability Agreement between Peterborough City Council and Peterborough Primary Care Trust.</p>	<p><b>Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<p>Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital</p>	<p>Internal and external stakeholders as appropriate.</p>	<p>Steven Pilsworth Head of Strategic Finance Tel: 01733 384564 Steven.Pilsworth@peterborough.gov.uk</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.</p>

<b>Peterborough City Centre Development Plan Document - Consultation Draft - KEY/13NOV12/04</b> To approve the Consultation Draft version of the Peterborough City Centre DPD for public consultation.	<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>Yes</b>	Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital	Internal and external stakeholders as appropriate.	Richard Kay Policy and Strategy Manager richard.kay@peterborough.gov.uk	It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.
<b>Mental Health Services at Clare Lodge - KEY/13NOV12/05</b> Undertake a tender to secure Mental Health Services for Clare Lodge Secure Unit.	<b>Councillor Sheila Scott OBE Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b>	<b>N/A</b>	Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities	Internal and External Stakeholders as appropriate.	Oliver Hayward Commissioning Officer - Aiming High Tel: 01733 8639 10 oliver.hayward@peterborough.gov.uk	It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.
<b>Clare Lodge Service Review Outcome - KEY/13NOV12/06</b> To approve the outcome of the service review of Clare Lodge Secure Unit.	<b>Councillor Sheila Scott OBE Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b>	<b>N/A</b>	Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities	Internal and External Stakeholders as appropriate.	Oliver Hayward Commissioning Officer - Aiming High Tel: 01733 8639 10 oliver.hayward@peterborough.gov.uk	It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.
<b>Family Support Framework - KEY/13NOV12/07</b> Create a framework for Family Support services.	<b>Councillor Sheila Scott OBE Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b>	<b>N/A</b>	Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities	Internal and external stakeholders as appropriate.	Oliver Hayward Commissioning Officer - Aiming High Tel: 01733 8639 10 oliver.hayward@peterborough.gov.uk	It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.

<b>Residential Approved Provider List - KEY/13NOV12/08</b> Create a compliant Approved Provider List for Residential units for children and young people.	<b>Councillor Sheila Scott OBE</b> <b>Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b>	N/A	Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities	Internal and external stakeholders as appropriate.	Oliver Hayward Commissioning Officer - Aiming High Tel: 01733 863910 oliver.hayward@peterborough.gov.uk	It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.
<b>Children's Play Services Review - KEY/13NOV12/09</b> To undertake a review of the Play Services in the city	<b>Councillor Sheila Scott OBE</b> <b>Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b>	N/A	Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities.	To be undertaken with key stakeholders.	Oliver Hayward Commissioning Officer - Aiming High Tel: 01733 863910 oliver.hayward@peterborough.gov.uk	It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.
<b>Superfast Broadband - KEY/13NOV12/10</b> To authorise the award of the contract for the provision of Superfast Broadband in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire	<b>Councillor David Seaton</b> <b>Cabinet Member for Resources</b>	N/A	Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital	Relevant internal departments.	Richard Godfrey ICT and Transactional Services Partnership Manager Tel: 01733 317989 richard.godfrey@peterborough.gov.uk	It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.
<b>Change in Partnership Arrangements for the Children's Trust - KEY/30NOV12/01</b> To change the partnership arrangements of the Children's Trust.	<b>Councillor Sheila Scott OBE</b> <b>Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b>	N/A	Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities	Key internal and external stakeholders.	Oliver Hayward Commissioning Officer - Aiming High Tel: 01733 863910 oliver.hayward@peterborough.gov.uk	It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.
<b>Healthwatch Commissioning - KEY/30NOV12/02</b> Approval of the proposed approach to commission Healthwatch Peterborough.	<b>Councillor Wayne Fitzgerald</b> <b>Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care</b>	N/A	Health Issues	Internal and external stakeholders as appropriate.	Nick Blake Improvement & Development Manager Tel: 01733 452406 nick.blake@peterborough.gov.uk	It is not anticipated that there will be any further documents.

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT** Town Hall, Bridge Street, Peterborough, PE1 1HG

Communications  
Strategic Growth and Development Services  
Legal and Governance Services  
Policy and Research  
Economic and Community Regeneration  
HR Business Relations, Training & Development, Occupational Health & Reward & Policy

**STRATEGIC RESOURCES DEPARTMENT** Director's Office at Town Hall, Bridge Street, Peterborough, PE1 1HG

Finance  
Internal Audit  
Information Communications Technology (ICT)  
Business Transformation  
Strategic Improvement  
Strategic Property  
Waste  
Customer Services  
Business Support  
Shared Transactional Services  
Cultural Trust Client

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT** Bayard Place, Broadway, PE1 1FB

Safeguarding, Family & Communities  
Education & Resources  
Strategic Commissioning & Prevention

**OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT** Director's Office at Town Hall, Bridge Street, Peterborough, PE1 1HG

Planning Transport & Engineering (Development Management, Construction & Compliance, Infrastructure Planning & Delivery, Network Management, Passenger Transport)  
Commercial Operations (Strategic Parking and Commercial CCTV, City Centre, Markets & Commercial Trading, Tourism)  
Neighbourhoods (Strategic Regulatory Services, Safer Peterborough, Strategic Housing, Cohesion, Social Inclusion, Neighbourhood Management)  
Operations Business Support (Finance)

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE** Director's Office at Town Hall, Bridge Street, Peterborough, PE1 1HG

Care Services Delivery (Assessment & Care Management; Integrated Learning Disability Services and HIV/AIDS; Regulated Services)  
Strategic Commissioning (Mental Health & Integrated Learning Disability; Older People, Physical Disability & Sensory Impairment; Contracts, Procurement & Compliance)  
Quality, Information and Performance (Performance & Information; Strategic Safeguarding; Business Support & Governance; Business Systems Improvement; Quality and Workforce Development)

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**STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13**

Meeting Date	Item	Progress
<p><b>6 June 2012</b> <i>Draft Report 17 May</i> <i>Final Report 24 May</i></p>	<p><b>Strong and Supportive communities: introduction, Overview and Work Programme</b></p> <p>To receive a comprehensive overview of the issues, opportunities, priorities and challenges in connection with the strong and supportive communities theme, with the aim of establishing a scrutiny work programme for the year.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer: Adrian Chapman</b></p> <p><b>Review of 2011/12 and Future Work Programme</b></p> <p>To review the work undertaken during 2011/12 and to consider the future work programme of the Committee</p> <p><b>Contact Officer: Paulina Ford</b></p>	<p>Items identified at the meeting to be programmed into the work programme.</p> <p>Items identified at the meeting to be programmed into the work programme.</p>
<p><b>25 July 2012</b> <i>Draft Report 9 July</i> <i>Final Report 16 July</i></p>	<p><b>Consultation and Engagement Strategy</b></p> <p>To scrutinise the Consultation and Engagement Strategy and make any recommendations</p> <p><b>Contact Officer: Paul Stevenette</b></p> <p><b>CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>Police and Crime Commissioners and Police and Crime Panels</b></p> <p>To receive a report on information regarding the changes in police governance leading to the election of a Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner and make any comments</p> <p><b>Contact Officer: Adrian Chapman/Gary Goose</b></p> <p><b>Neighbourhood Committee Implementation Task and Finish Group Final Report</b></p>	

Meeting Date	Item	Progress
	<p>To receive the final report from the Neighbourhood Committee Implementation Task and Finish Group and make any recommendations.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer: Adrian Chapman</b></p>	
<p><b>12 September 2012</b></p> <p><i>Draft Report 28 Aug</i> <i>Final Report 3 Sept</i></p>	<p><b>CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>Protecting the Public Through Regulatory Services</b></p> <p>To Scrutinise the work of the Regulatory Team and make any comments and recommendations.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer: Peter Gell</b></p> <p><b>Responsible Dog Ownership</b></p> <p>To scrutinise the K9 Project which encourages responsible dog ownership and make any recommendations.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer: Peter Gell</b></p> <p><b>Reducing Reoffending Through Behaviour Change</b></p> <p>To scrutinise the approach taken by the Community Safety Partnership to reduce reoffending within the city and make any recommendations.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer: Gary Goose</b></p>	
<p><b>20 November 2012</b></p> <p><i>Draft Report 2 Nov</i> <i>Final Report 9 Nov</i></p>	<p><b>Community Cohesion Strategy and Delivery</b></p> <p>To Scrutinise the effectiveness of the 2012/13 Cohesion Strategy in tackling current cohesion action plan priorities and make any recommendations for the cohesion strategy/action plan for 2013/14.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer: Jawaid Khan</b></p> <p><b>Empty Homes Strategy 2012 - 2015</b></p>	

Meeting Date	Item	Progress
	<p>To Scrutinise the new Draft Empty Homes Strategy and make any Comments and Recommendations.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer: Sharon Malia</b></p> <p><b>Portfolio Progress Report from Cabinet Member relevant to the Committee</b></p> <p>To Scrutinise and comment on the progress of the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods</p> <p><b>Contact Officer: Adrian Chapman/Cllr Hillier</b></p>	
<p><b>16 January 2013</b></p> <p><i>Draft Report 31 Dec</i> <i>Final Report 7 Jan</i></p>	<p><b>Peterborough Homes Allocations Policy</b></p> <p><b>Contact Officer: Belinda Child</b></p> <p><b>The Homelessness Strategy</b></p> <p><b>Contact Officer: Belinda Child</b></p> <p><b>City Centre – Priorities and Vision</b></p> <p><b>Contact Officer: Annette Joyce</b></p> <p><b>Citizens Power – Task and Finish Group Report</b></p> <p><b>Contact Officer Graeme Clark</b></p>	
<p><b>9 OR 21 January 2013</b> <b>(Joint Meeting of the</b></p>	<p><b>Budget 2013/14 and Medium Term Financial Plan</b></p> <p>To scrutinise the Executive's proposals for the Budget 2013/14 and Medium</p>	

Meeting Date	Item	Progress
Scrutiny Committees and Commissions)	Term Financial Plan. <b>Contact Officer: John Harrison/Steven Pilsworth</b>	
<b>6 March 2013</b>	<b>Vivacity – Annual Report</b>	
<i>Draft Report 18 Feb</i> <i>Final Report 25 Feb</i>	<b>Contact Officer: Kevin Tighe</b> <b>Portfolio Progress Report from Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation and Strategic Commissioning</b>	
	<b>Contact Officer: Annette Joyce/ Cllr M Lee</b> <b>CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	
	<b>Annual Community Safety Plan Strategy</b>	
	<b>Contact Officer: Gary Goose</b> <b>Update on the Impact of the New Police and Crime Commissioner</b>	
	<b>Contact Officer: Gary Goose/ Adrian Chapman</b>	

**To be programmed into work programme:**

Introduction to Selective Licensing to Improve Standards in Private Rented Housing – Briefing Note – Belinda Child

Portfolio Progress Report from Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Safety – Cllr Walsh

Update on Responsible Dog Ownership