



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT
CAPITAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE BOUGES/VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL
ON 16 JULY 2015**

Present: Councillors Sandford (Chairman), N Khan MBE (Vice Chairman), D Over, R Brown, A Iqbal, C Harper, R Bisby, M Jamil, JA Fox, J Whitby

Also Present: Councillor JR Fox, Group Leader, Werrington First
Hani Mustafa, Youth Council Representative

Officers Present: Simon Machen, Corporate Director, Growth and Regeneration
Mark Speed, Commissioning Manager, Transport and Infrastructure
James Fisher, Wildlife Officer
Andy Tatt, Head of Peterborough Highways Services
Amy Petrie, Principal Programme and Project Officer
Paulina Ford, Senior Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of interest or whipping declarations.

3. Minutes of Meetings held on 10 June 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2015 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. Peterborough City Council's Biodiversity Strategy Progress Report

The report was introduced by the Wildlife Officer and provided the Committee with information in respect of progress against the actions and targets contained in the Council's Biodiversity Strategy (2010).

Questions and observations were made around the following areas:

- Members congratulated the Wildlife Officer on the report and asked if a complete list of areas listed for biodiversity could be provided to the Committee.
- Members referred to page 15 of the progress report: "*Showing regard for biodiversity on public authority managed land and buildings: Roads & Verges*" and noted that some of the protected verges in rural areas which had been identified to be left to provide a wildlife corridor had on occasions been cut more than the specified once a year in September. *The Officer advised that he would speak to Amey to discuss the management of these areas.*
- Members commented that planning permission had been given on some new developments for the installation of bat boxes but this did not appear to have been

completed. *The Wildlife Officer advised that he would contact the Planning Enforcement Team to follow up.*

- Members noted that the Broadway Cemetery was very overgrown in areas and left uncut. People did not understand that it was a designated wildlife site. *Members were informed that as a designated wildlife site there was an interesting range of wild flowers and wild life, grass was therefore carefully managed to protect the site and at the same time provide a safe environment for people visiting the site. The Officer advised that he would speak to Bereavement Services to see if more information could be put on the notice board at the entrance to the site to explain why areas were being left uncut during the summer months.*
- Members commented that there was a lack of communication with the public on what the biodiversity strategy was and therefore people often complained about the lack of grass cutting without understanding why it had not been cut. *The Officer advised that there was signage in some areas to inform the public of why the grass was not being cut but agreed that more work needed to be done on communicating with the public.*
- Members commented that there had been a noticeable increase in wildlife in some areas due to the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy and congratulated the team on the work done so far.
- Members commented about the trial biodiversity areas and that comments had been received about the untidy verges. There should be a clear indication as to which areas were designated as biodiversity areas and which areas were part of the reduced cutting regime. The verges that were being cut needed to look as though they were being managed and not abandoned. *Members were informed that there were a number of verges in rural areas which were specifically left uncut with only one cut in September. There was however normally site lines where the edging was cut back. There were benefits to leaving some areas uncut and DEFRA had recently issued a Pollinator Strategy to encourage land owners and managers of land to identify and promote pollinator-friendly land to others. There was a list of actions that could be taken and the Biodiversity Strategy covered several of the actions.*
- The Chairman provided a copy of the actions listed in the Pollinator Strategy and noted that one of the actions was to grow more flowers, shrubs and trees that provided nectar and pollen as food for bees and other pollinators throughout the year. The Chairman suggested approaching Natural England to seek advice on how to manage biodiversity better. *The Wildlife Officer advised that the council were already working closely with a conservation charity called Bug Life to look at sites which could be used to provide areas for wild flower seeding.*
- Members sought clarification as to the criteria for choosing biodiversity sites. *Members were informed that sites were selected through working with Amey to identify sites that:*
 - *would be supported by the public*
 - *that were currently underused and out of the way*
 - *suitable areas across all of the city**Last year was the first attempt at identifying sites but these could be changed.*
- It would be beneficial if officers could attend public meetings to explain what the biodiversity strategy was.
- A member of the Youth Council referred to page 19, *“the Council continues to provide support for small-scale community wildlife schemes”*. What support was the Council putting in place to support the wildlife schemes and how was this support being promoted. *Members were informed support was given to local community groups by providing detailed advice and comments on conservation schemes through Parish Councils or community interest groups. Signposting and guidance was also provided for available funding opportunities.*
- How do you control other plants seeding in the biodiversity areas? *Members were informed that new areas created through the Bug Life project would have native wild flower seeds. There were some areas in the city where there had been problems with Japanese Knot Weed and if it was on council land officers would work with Amey to tackle the problem. During established wild flower areas work was undertaken to tackle*

weeds prior to planting and this was continued after planting to ensure it did not become a perennial problem.

- Councillor Ferris was in attendance in the public gallery and was invited to address the committee.
- Councillor Ferris made the following points:
 - Peterborough had a wealth of green space and biodiversity areas. More work needed to be done to engage with the public and local communities about the wealth of biodiversity in the city.
 - More work needed to be done with regard to joined up working with the health sector and biodiversity to encourage people to get out into the natural environment to enjoy its benefits.
 - Some parts of the city lacked accessibility to green space and work needed to be done on how people living in those areas could access and improve their experiences of biodiversity.
- The Wildlife Officer agreed with Councillor Ferris's comments regarding the public health benefits of the availability of green space. Work was being done with regard to tree canopy cover in areas where green open space was limited. There was also a Green Infrastructure Strategy in place which provided opportunity to put in place more green open space when opportunities arose.
- Mrs Joan Wilkinson a member of the public in attendance was invited to address the committee.
- Mrs Wilkinson made the following points:
 - Most difficult task was to change public perception of how public funds were being used. E.g. seeing the grass cut regularly as opposed to leaving it to become a biodiversity area.
 - Where grass was allowed to grow it looked much nicer.
 - Biodiversity areas attracted more diverse wildlife and insects.
 - Brown field sites were the most bio diverse and these sites should be kept.
- The Wildlife Officer responded that it was important to engage with all people to obtain different views on how open space should be managed. The Government was keen to develop brown field sites but when sites were identified for development, work was done to try and protect parts of the site.
- Members commented that the Governments Pollinator Strategy stated that herbicide should only be used when there was no other feasible alternative. There had appeared to have been an increase in the use of herbicide by Amey over the past year. Members sought assurance that herbicide was only used when absolutely necessary. *The Wildlife officer responded that he was not aware of an increase in the use of herbicide and would need to speak to Amey concerning this and about areas where they could reduce usage.*
- Members commented on the problems with Japanese Knotweed and asked if any proactive preventative work could be done. *Members were advised that the Environment Agency had recently launched an App that encouraged members of the public to report any sightings of Japanese Knotweed.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that the Wildlife Officer:

- a) Look at better ways of communicating to the public about biodiversity and its benefits; and how Amey can communicate to the public which areas have been set aside for biodiversity and which areas have a management regime in place.
- b) That the Wildlife Officer contacts councillors in order to identify other areas across the city that would be suitable to become biodiversity areas.
- c) That the council as part of its general landscape management through Amey should seek to identify any areas of Japanese Knotweed and ensure the appropriate action is taken.

ACTIONS AGREED

1. The Committee requested that the Wildlife Officer:
 - a) Provide a complete list of areas designated for biodiversity.
 - b) Provide the costs incurred to deal with Japanese Knotweed.
 - c) Speak to Bereavement Services to see if more information could be put on the notice board at the entrance to the Broadway Cemetery to explain why areas were being left uncut during the summer months.
 - d) Speak to Amey regarding reducing the usage of herbicide.
2. The Committee requested that the Director of Public Health provide a briefing note regarding the link between access to natural green open space and people having a healthier lifestyle to inform them of what action was being taken to address this and how Biodiversity is included in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

6. Peterborough Long Term Transport Strategy (2011-2026) and Local Transport Plan (2016-2021)

The report was introduced by the Head of Peterborough Highways Services and the Commissioning Manager, Transport and Infrastructure. Members were advised that the presentation of the report to the Committee was the start of the process for approval and provided suggestions and key themes for the review of the Peterborough Long Term Transport Strategy (2011-2026) and Local Transport Plan (2016-2021). The Commissioning Manager, Transport and Infrastructure provided the Committee with background context to the documents and the process that would be undertaken to update the Local Transport Plan.

The Chair thanked officers for bringing the report to the Committee at the beginning of the process.

Questions and observations were made around the following areas:

- The Youth Council Representative asked if the Council were working with Network Rail on the location of any new railway stations and had land been allocated in Hampton for a station. *Members were informed that land had been identified but the Council had no say in when and if a station would be built. Network Rail could not be made to put a station on the allocated land. As the city grows and sites start to develop operators would look more at the possibility of building additional stations.*
- Had the line that goes out to Spalding been considered for an additional station? Members were informed that officers were engaging with rail transport providers to consider this.
- Members referred to page 23, City Core and were concerned that not enough was being done with regard to the air quality in the city centre and suggested the use of air quality indicators in the city centre to monitor this. *Members were informed that the city had a very good sustainable transport agenda and Travel Choice had won awards. The City did not have any air quality management zones as the air quality was not that bad. The air quality was however monitored nationally.*
- Members also referred to page 24, City Centre and the aim to reduce the amount of traffic in the wider city centre. Members had noted the amount of vans in the city centre around 9.30am in the pedestrian areas and felt that they should not be there by this time of the morning. *The Corporate Director shared Members concerns and informed them that a solution was being worked on within the Public Realm improvement plan which would be to only allow taxis and buses to come into the city centre at that time.*
- The Corporate Director informed Members that his expectation was that the LTP would need to tie in with the Health and Wellbeing Board Agenda. An example of how this was already happening was with the recent Skanska contract where the ten One Planet Living principles had been used as an assessment tool for the contract and was now embedded

in the highway service. Public Health was fundamental to the future prosperity of the city and was taken into account across all service areas.

- Members referred to page 25, Rural and were pleased to note the proposals to make it easier for residents and visitors to travel to, from and around rural areas. Members suggested further use of old railway lines and the possibly of turning them into tram lines and level crossing improvements with a small station and car park at one of the rural crossings.
- Members were informed that in the long term there would be a review of the Local Plan which was the Core Strategy. This would provide an evidence base for long term planning. It would be difficult to get investment into new rail lines because of the HS2 project.
- Members noted that there was no mention of the Millfield Shopping area. Was this part of the City Core? This area needed to be looked at with regard to air quality and improving the area for people getting around. *Members were advised that the LTP was a strategy and therefore did not include specific area detail. The Corporate Director advised that these issues were being dealt with within the Commission for Can do Strategy which was a separate piece of work.*
- The Youth Council Representative wanted to know if there were plans for a permanent Park and Ride scheme in Peterborough. *Members were informed that there were plans in the long term strategy however there were many things to take into consideration before one could be put in place. The growth of Peterborough had not got to the position of warranting a Park and Ride scheme and therefore the demand was not there yet but it was still on the agenda.*
- Members noted that there was a lot of emphasis on buses, bus lanes and HGV lanes. This has proven to cause more congestion and poor air quality. *The officer advised that they may look at changing the wording in the document to say bus priority measures.*
- Members noted that the report advised that the city centre would become much more user friendly and wanted to know how this would be achieved. How would accessibility to the railway station be improved for people with disabilities? *Members were advised that in Annex 1 of the Local Transport Plan there was a section dedicated to mobility and there was money allocated to accessibility. The authority worked closely with organisations such as DIAL who had advised on accessibility needs both in the city centre and wider. The authority were also in discussions with Network Rail regarding accessibility around the station area.*
- Members commented that there were bridleways across Peterborough that had been neglected and should be opened up for use by cyclists, walkers and the use of mobility scooters. *Members were informed that the Government were looking to start a new cycle fund and to invest in cycling nationally. The Council had written to the Government to advise that they would like to get involved in the project at national level.*
- Members commented that the city centre was losing trade to out of city developments and therefore consideration must be given to not making it difficult for people to access the city centre. *The Corporate Director advised Members that footfall in the city centre was increasing due to the investment that had been made in the city centre.*
- Councillor Ferris who was in attendance was invited to address the committee.
- Councillor Ferris made the following points:
 - *The report was potentially exciting but there was a need to be proactive and drive a change in behaviour.*
 - *Concerned about air quality and the fact that some parts of the city were exceeding safe limits for nitrogen dioxide.*
 - *There were a number of diesel vehicles e.g. taxis, buses that used narrow roads which caused a build-up of pollutants. This needed to be looked at.*
 - *Consideration should be given to reducing the speed limit to 20mph in residential areas.*
- The Commissioning Manager, Transport and Infrastructure responded and advised that there had already been an in-depth review into reducing the speed limit to 20mph. Behaviour change was already part of the work being done through Travel Choice which

had been a huge success. Much work was being done with regard to changing people's behaviour and the authority had been identified as an exemplar authority in this area.

- Members commented that the current Local Transport Plan contained a policy which was a Transport User Hierarchy. It stated that in all aspects of transport planning where possible priority would be given first of all to pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and then car. Would this principle be kept throughout the new Local Transport Plan? *Members were advised that this was always used as a principle of any new design regarding transport.*

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee noted the report and requested that the consultation results be brought back to the Committee when available.

7. Street Lighting Replacement Programme

The report was presented by the Commissioning Manager, Transport and Infrastructure and provided the Committee with information regarding the street lighting replacement programme.

Questions and observations were made around the following areas:

- Are new developments installing the correct lighting? *Members were informed that 'developer standards' were in place to ensure that all new developments were of the correct standard and with LED lighting.*
- Members congratulated officers on the street lighting replacement programme.
- Members commented that there had been some street lighting columns added to rural areas without consultation with the Parish Council and requested that going forward the Parish Councils should be consulted first before any new street lighting is put in place. It was also noted that the new street lighting had not been in keeping with the rural area and that if funds permitted consideration should be given to putting similar style street lighting in place. *Members were informed that recent work had taken place by one of the power distributors which was not part of the council's programme of works which may have accounted for the new street lighting and no consultation with the Parish Council. The officer would look into this and find out.*
- Members noted that in the older parts of Peterborough some individual columns were being replaced. Was this the most economical and practical way of dealing with replacements or would it be better to replace a whole area at a time. *Members were informed that electrical and structural testing was undertaken to establish if a column needed to be replaced to ensure that only those columns that were unsafe were replaced. This was the most cost effective way of replacing columns.*

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee noted the report.

8. Forward Plan of Executive Decisions

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

Members sought clarification on the following key decision:

- Sale of the Lindens, Lincoln Road – KEY/24JUL15/04.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee noted the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and requested a briefing note on the Sale of the Lindens, Lincoln Road – KEY/24JUL15/04.

9. Work Programme 2015/2016

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2015/16 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

ACTION AGREED

To confirm the work programme for 2015/16 and the Senior Democratic Services Officer to include any additional items as requested during the meeting.

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 9.00pm

CHAIRMAN