

**MINUTES OF THE GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT 7PM ON
WEDNESDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2019
BOURGES / VIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Councillors G. Casey (Vice Chairman), K. Aitken, A. Ali, R. Brown, C. Burbage, Judy Fox, J. Howard, S. Nawaz, N. Sandford, I. Yasin

Officers Present: Dave Anderson – Interim Development Director
David Hemming – Senior Coroner
Any Donovan – Coroner Service Manager
Christine May – Assistant Director, Cultural and Community Services
Lewis Banks – Principal Sustainable Transport Planning Officer
David Beauchamp – Democratic Services Officer

Also Present: Councillor John Fox – Representing the Group Leader of the Werrington First Group

The Chairman requested that agenda item 6. Coroner Service Update Report be considered before item 5. Peterborough City Council's Submission to the Combined Authority's Local Transport Plan Consultation. This was **UNANIMOUSLY** agreed by Committee Members.

12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors:

- C. Harper (Chairman)
- H. Skibsted – S. Nawaz in attendance as a substitute.
- J. Lillis – N. Sandford in attendance as a substitute

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

No declarations of interest were received.

14. MINUTES OF THE GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 JULY 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2019 were agreed as a true and accurate record. This was proposed by Cllr. Aitken, seconded by Cllr. Brown and agreed **UNANIMOUSLY**.

15. CALL IN OF ANY CABINET, CABINET MEMBER OR KEY OFFICER DECISIONS

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

16. CORONER SERVICE UPDATE REPORT

The report was introduced by the Coroner Service Manager accompanied by the Senior Coroner and the Assistant Director – Cultural and Community Services. The reported provided members with an update on the Coroner Service and highlighted the issues and challenges facing the Service.

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- All deaths have been reported for scrutiny by either the medical examiner or a coroner's investigation since the Harold Shipman case.
- Medical examiners were only used in acute trusts. The cost was funded by families as part of cremation fees.
- These requirements had been introduced due to the possibility of incorrect causes of death being recorded in hospitals, e.g. by a junior doctor who had just started practicing.
- A large amount of work was done in collaboration with Addenbrooke's and Papworth hospitals. Key clinicians were Dr. Ellie Makings (Regional Medical Examiner Lead for East Anglia) and Dr. Flora Jessop (Medical Examiner Lead at Addenbrooke's). The work of the Coroner's Office had benefited from the medical input of the medical examiners as coroners today were generally legal professionals rather than clinicians. For example, 8 QCs had been involved in a recent pre-inquest review. There were few medically trained coroners and they had not been appointed since 2013.
- Members noted the increase in workload experienced by the Coroners Service and asked how they had coped with this. Members also requested information on current staffing levels and whether more resources were required. Officers responded that the job could be a challenging one and retaining staff was an issue, with 50% being lost over six months. There was a limited job market for new coroners.
- New coroners were primarily ex-police officers
- The pay structure for medical examiners was superior to that of coroners.
- Medical examiner assistance was not as extensive at Peterborough City Hospital compared with Addenbroke's and Papworth.
- Medical examiners were currently used in Addenbroke's and Papworth hospitals but had yet been fully implemented at Peterborough City Hospital.
- There had been issues with the funding of medical examiner officers in Peterborough. The Department for Health had suggested that a fund was to be made available to provide support staff. All medical examiners at Peterborough and Hinchinbrook hospitals had been appointed but were unable to start. It was not yet known what their start date would be.
- Recruiting medical examiners reduces the pressure on the Coroner's Office by reducing the number of referrals needed. The delay therefore had an impact on the performance of the Coroners Service.
- Members asked if the new medical examiners would be working within the next month. Officers responded that they should have been in place since 1 April 2019. The Senior Coroner had no control over this process. The relevant section of the 2009 Coroners and Justice Act had never come into force and could only be activated with the agreement of the acute trust. This would be the responsibility of appointed clinical leads and medical directors.

- An extensive recruitment process had been undertaken in Peterborough but start dates for new medical examiners had yet to be publicised.
- Members praised the service provided to the Muslim community by the Coroners' Service, noting that there was often a requirement for quick burials in this community. Some concerns were expressed that this quality of service would not be maintained and that delays could prolong the a difficult period for families.
- The Senior Coroner stated that faith deaths and organ donations were dealt with by the Out of Hours Service. There was no link between the provision of these services and the budget pressures.
- The Service was facing difficulties in securing the resources it needed to match the growth rate of Peterborough. There were three prisons in the Cambridgeshire Coronial District, HMP Peterborough, HMP Whitemoor and HMP Littlehey and this posed a challenge for the Service because of the often complex nature of deaths in prisons.
- Members suggested that some people might question the use of significant resources to investigate deaths in prisons.
- There were often high profile inquests at mental health units such as Fulbourn Hospital due to people taking their own lives. All deaths in custody (mental health or prisoners) must be reported to the Coroners with jury inquests required for suicides.
- There were currently 13.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff in the coroner's office. Recruitment would take this number up to 18 FTE officers.
- 65% of the Service's budget was provided by Cambridgeshire County Council with the remaining 35% (£1.7m) provided by Peterborough City Council. This was agreed when the service had first merged in 2015 and had been subject to appropriate governance processes. The Service Level Agreement was kept under review.
- Members asked if there was anything they could do to encourage the faster uptake of Medical Examiners at Peterborough City Hospital.
- A member stated that she had close contact with the CEO of the City Hospital due to her role as Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee and was already working in this area.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee scrutinised and commented on the services described in this report.

17. PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL'S SUBMISSION TO THE COMBINED AUTHORITY'S LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN CONSULTATION

The report was introduced by the Principal Sustainable Transport Planning Officer which asked the Committee to scrutinise and comment on the Council's proposed consultation response to the Combined Authority's Local Transport Plan.

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- The wording of the climate change emergency motion in the response should be corrected to reflect the amendments that were made to it at Full Council
- The reference to the timescales for PCC developing a climate emergency action plan should be corrected from 12 months to 31 March 2020.

- Members noted that the declaration of a climate emergency by Peterborough City Council involved contributions across party lines and demonstrated unity on the issue. It was therefore felt that this should be referenced explicitly within the Local Transport Plan.
- The LTP should be fully aligned with Peterborough City Council's declaration of a Climate Change emergency and contain practical steps for meeting Peterborough City Council's ambitious Environmental targets, such as achieving a zero Carbon City by 2030. Some members expressed scepticism about the chances of achieving this target.
- Officers acknowledged the points raised by members relating to environmental issues. It was noted that the Climate Emergency Action Plan had been under development for some time and may need to be reframed to reflect the passing of the climate change motion. The current Government funding system prioritised time savings over environmental issues. Officers suggested that a covering note could be submitted to the Combined Authority with the Consultation Response, reserving the right to re-frame the response to better reflect environmental issues.
- Suggested improvements to local bus services were overly vague with no detailed financial information. By contrast, there was a long list of highway schemes included within the LTP such as the dualling of the A47.
- Members praised the aspirations and transport hierarchies for Peterborough in the Local Transport Plan but felt there were more proposals for practical schemes in Cambridgeshire such as the Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro.
- Officers stated that Cambridge and Southern Cambridgeshire had received additional government funding via the Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership. This gave the area greater opportunities to develop its walking and cycling infrastructure. This work was at an earlier stage in Peterborough and was being developed via the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans with support from the Department for Transport. Greater assistance had been requested from the Combined Authority to jointly secure new funding opportunities once the infrastructure plans were in place. Officers stated that members could suggest changes if they felt the response needed to be strengthened in this area.
- Members felt that the new walking and cycling infrastructure should be in place by 2025 and felt that the Combined Authority should be a centre of excellence for this infrastructure.
- Members referred to the Local Cycling and Walking on section 4.24 on page 16 of the reports pack and commented that the bridleways were overgrown and unusable and suggested that funding should be used to open them up. Officers responded that Peterborough City Council remained the Highways Authority for the City despite no longer being the Transport Authority. Members were therefore encouraged to contact the Highways team regarding any ward-specific road or path issues.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on developing infrastructure for cycling, walking and public transport in Peterborough.
- Members referred to section 4.27 on page 18 of the reports pack and asked how greater control could be exercised over Stagecoach buses. Anecdotal evidence was raised of five buses scheduled for a service every 10 minutes all arriving within one 10 minute period with many of them being empty. Officers responded that Stagecoach was private company and could therefore operate the service as they saw fit. One of their policies was to operate regular buses so that people did not have to refer to timetables. Peterborough City Council had monthly meetings with Stagecoach and no timekeeping issues had been reported but officers would investigate this further.
- A Bus Review Group had been set up by involving the Combined Authority and Peterborough City and Cambridgeshire City Councils. All services and options

were reviewed. Options being taken forward included the option for bus franchising. This would take at least a year and regular updates and information on this process should be provided.

- Members expressed a general concern that Cambridge was being given priority over Peterborough in the Local Transport Plan. It was noted that Peterborough was a growing city that deserved appropriate attention.
- Officers acknowledged that many of the transport schemes in the plan were road building projects. Walking, cycling and electric vehicle infrastructure had also been discussed however.
- Members expressed concern over the limited discussion of rural transport in the LTP response. Members referred to the Executive Summary of the Local Transport Plan itself and felt that some of the points, such as local rail connections, were not relevant to Peterborough. Members felt that the policies proposed for rural areas had been proven not to work, with the exception of community transport. Members felt that the provision of public transport had failed to encourage a modal shift away from car use in rural areas. More frequent services would be required if public transport was to be attractive to rural residents, necessitating greater expenditure from the Mayor's budget if there was to be any improvement. Officers responded that the Local Transport Plan discussed possible rural bus improvements without a commitment to fund them. Provision of bus services in the future would be determined by the Bus Service Review.
- Members responded with concerns that the main issue was that service provision was determined by the individual bus operator. Officers responded that the Combined Authority would soon take a decision on whether to introduce bus franchising and stated that there would be a high cost for subsidised services if attempting to provide universal public transport service provision.
- Members updated the Committee on the progress of the Task and Finish Group to Review Air Quality and stated that the outcomes of this should be incorporated into the Local Transport Plan. This was noted by officers.
- Members felt that there were a number of actions that could be undertaken to meet air quality targets in the city.
- Consideration should again be given to an orbital bus route for Peterborough in collaboration with Stagecoach. Members stated that despite the city having a ring road, all buses currently travelled via the City Centre increasing the cost of mileage of journeys for residents.
- Officers responded that they had previously discussed the possibility of introducing an orbital bus service with Stagecoach who had concluded there was insufficient profit to operate such a service. Officers would raise the issue again with Stagecoach.
- The LTP should take into account the total cost of journeys made using different modes of transport and how this impacts travel choices. For example, it may be cheaper for two people to use a taxi than take a bus for a short journey in Peterborough. Officers responded that they understood the issues relating to group bus travel but that buses were operated under a private sector model and could therefore set their own fares with the council having little influence.
- Members wished for the importance of the Bus Review, the Bus Quality Partnership and consideration of Franchising to be emphasised. If franchising was not introduced, an alternative model of 'quality partnerships' could be considered.
- Members raised specific issues relating to the No. 1 bus route, noting that the problem was not the frequency of services but traffic congestion near the hospital.

- Officers stated that they were exploring links between transport and technology e.g. 'big data', congestion charging and price mechanisms in the market to encourage people to switch modes of transport.
- Consideration should be given to introducing financial measures to encourage modal shift, e.g. congestion charging or workplace parking charges.
- The Combined Authority should note that Peterborough City Council intends to produce detailed proposals regarding rapid transit once the Mass Transit Study has been completed. Some members felt that the introduction of trams, elevated railways and monorails should be considered for Peterborough.
- The Council also needs to fully evaluate its response in light of its declaration of a Climate Emergency. This response to the consultation should therefore be considered a provisional one.
- Work should be undertaken to improve capacity on the Birmingham - Stansted Airport rail route and increase the frequency of the Peterborough to Ipswich train service to hourly.
- Recognise and address the impact of traffic congestion on bus performance. Particular issues were noted around the City Hospital.
- Recognition that current models of bus provision will not encourage a modal shift towards increased public transport use in rural areas.
- Investigate the possibility of building a second railway station for Peterborough in Hampton and Werrington if the line is improved to have four tracks to Huntingdon. Officers responded that this had been omitted from the LTP response because these stations were no longer in the local plan but could consider including this in the submission.
- Members felt that an additional station could also be considered on the Spalding line to serve new housing developments.
- General concern that the LTP had a disproportionate focus on Cambridge.
- It was noted that the Scrutiny Committee's comments would be included in report to Cabinet who would be responsible for preparing Peterborough City Council's final submission to the Combined Authority.

ACTIONS AGREED:

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee considered and made comments in respect of the Council's proposed consultation response to the Combined Authority's Local Transport Plan (LTP) as follows:

- The wording of the climate change emergency motion in the response should be corrected to reflect the amendments that were made to it at Full Council
- The reference to the timescales for PCC developing a climate emergency action plan should be corrected from 12 months to 31 March 2020.
- The LTP should be fully aligned with Peterborough City Council's declaration of a Climate Change emergency and contain practical steps for meeting Peterborough City Council's ambitious Environmental targets, such as achieving a zero Carbon City by 2030.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on developing infrastructure for cycling, walking and public transport in Peterborough.
- Consideration should again be given to an orbital bus route for Peterborough in collaboration with Stagecoach.
- The LTP should take into account the total cost of journeys made using different modes of transport and how this impacts travel choices. For example, it may be cheaper for two people to use a taxi than take a bus for a short journey in Peterborough.

- Consideration should be given to introducing financial measures to encourage modal shift, e.g. congestion charging or workplace parking charges.
- The Combined Authority should note that Peterborough City Council intends to produce detailed proposals regarding rapid transit once the Mass Transit Study has been completed. The Council also needs to fully evaluate its response in light of its declaration of a Climate Emergency. This response to the consultation should therefore be considered a provisional one.
- Work should be undertaken to improve capacity on the Birmingham - Stansted Airport rail route and increase the frequency of the Peterborough to Ipswich train service to hourly.
- Recognise and address the impact of traffic congestion on bus performance. Particular issues were noted around the City Hospital.
- Recognition that current models of bus provision will not encourage a modal shift towards increased public transport use in rural areas.
- Investigate the possibility of building a second railway station for Peterborough in Hampton and Werrington if the line is improved to have four tracks to Huntingdon.
- Network rail / bus quality partnership.
- General concern was expressed that the LTP had a disproportionate focus on Cambridge and should not be endorsed by Peterborough City Council.

18. MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which enabled the committee to monitor and track the progress of recommendations made to the Executive or Officers at previous meetings.

There were no comments by Members.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the responses from Cabinet Members and Officers to recommendations made at previous meetings as attached in Appendix 1 to the report.

19. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which invited members to consider the most recent version of the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and identify any relevant items for inclusion within the Committee's work programme or to request further information.

There were no comments by Members

ACTIONS AGREED:

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to consider the current Forward Plan of Executive decisions.

20. WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the item which gave members the opportunity to consider the Committee's Work Programme for 2018/19 and discuss possible items for inclusion.

There were no comments by members.

ACTIONS AGREED

The committee noted the work programme for 2019/20.

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

6 November 2019 – Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee
27 November 2019 – Joint Scrutiny of the Budget

Chairman
7pm– 8.17pm