

**MINUTES OF THE GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT 7PM ON
WEDNESDAY, 8 JANUARY 2020
BOURGES / VIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Councillors C. Harper (Chairman), R. Brown, C. Burbage, K. Aitken, G. Casey, Judy Fox, J. Howard, H. Skibsted, C. Wiggin, I. Yasin
Co-opted Member: Parish Councillor Keith Lievesley

Officers Present: James Collingridge – Head of Environmental Partnerships
Richard Pearn – Head of Waste, Resources and Energy
Lynden Leadbetter – Principal Regulatory Officer, Environment and Pollution
Dorothy Poulter – Senior Environment and Pollution Officer
Charlotte Palmer – Group Manager, Transport and Environment

Also Present: Councillor M. Cereste – Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene and the Environment
Councillor John Fox – Representing the Group Leader of the Werrington First Group
Councillor N. Sandford – Member of the Task and Finish Group and Group Leader, Liberal Democrats
Councillor J. Howell – Member of the Task and Finish Group

34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ellis.

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of interest or whipping declarations.

36. MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD ON:

6 November 2019 – Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2019 were UNANIMOUSLY agreed as a true and accurate record.

18 December 2019 – Joint Scrutiny of the Budget

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2019 were UNANIMOUSLY agreed as a true and accurate record.

In response to a Members' query it was clarified by the Democratic Services Officer that 'Matters Arising' from the minutes should not be discussed during this agenda item.

The Democratic Services Officer requested that the Committee noted that Parish Councillor Keith Lievesley was in attendance at the 4 September 2019 committee meeting.

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

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

38. PORTFOLIO PROGRESS REPORT – CABINET MEMBER FOR WASTE, STREET SCENE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Waste and Street Scene, accompanied by the Head of Environmental Partnerships and the Head of Waste, Resources and Energy. The report updated the Committee on the progress of items under the responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene and the Environment.

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

- Members asked how Aragon Direct Services were performing following the transfer of services from Amey. The Cabinet Member responded that there had been no increase in complaints and the transfer could be considered a success considering its scale. Staff morale was also high. Performance was expected to continue improving as the new company became more established.
- Councillors asked how Peterborough's recycling rate of 40% compared to other local authorities and the national average and what was being done to increase performance in light of the City's 1% decrease in recycling rates. Officers responded that 40% was a fairly typical figure. The target of 50% by 2021 was challenging in light of the 'levelling off' of performance and the difficulty in influencing people's behaviour further. The Council was participating in a Government consultation on changing the environment in which councils do recycling, e.g. by simplifying consumer packaging to reduce the different types of plastic used and making recycling more straightforward for the Council.
- It was agreed that the Head of Waste, Resources and Energy would provide the Committee with the Council's recycling rates from 10 years ago for comparative purposes. The ultimate recycling rate target in the Waste Strategy was 65%. Part of the Council's Strategy was to recover value from landfill waste. Many of the aims of this strategy were being met, but performance did fall short of this in some areas.
- Members commented that the Council's recycling rate used to be 48%, considerably higher than at present and one of the best rates of all local authorities. The City Council's performance appeared to have declined to being merely average. Members asked what was being done to improve performance. Officers responded that a large educational campaign had been conducted, as evidenced by the positive reception to the '12 days of Christmas' song on social media. Aragon Direct Services had also committed to employing an education officer who would deliver presentations to groups educating them about how to

recycle and knock on doors in areas of known high waste contamination in order to improve the situation

- Members expressed scepticism about this approach and suggested that more could be gained by considering how other local authorities achieved better recycling rates. Members also commented that the Council's refuse vehicles were coming to the end of their lives and that other local authorities achieved better source-separation of recycling. Officers referred to section 4.5.6 of the reports pack which referred to work underway to respond collaboratively across local authorities in Cambridgeshire to the Government's Resources and Waste strategy under development. £120,000 had been received from DEFRA to undertake modelling work to unify practices across local authorities and develop a collective strategy.
- The Cabinet Member added that 30% of the black bin capacity in the City was taken up by food waste, which highlighted the importance of education in getting the public to recycle as much as they could.
- Members requested further information on whether food waste recycling performance was improving. Officers commented that additional funding had been received and work was under way with the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to reinvigorate food waste collection. Peterborough's food waste collection system performed well, with weekly collections, and compared favourably with Cambridgeshire's system of using garden waste bins. Funding would be released to educate residents to use food waste caddies. Using a caddy could help residents reduce their food wastage so lower collection rates could be a positive thing.
- Members commented that having to use food waste bags could discourage food waste recycling.
- The Cabinet Member stated that the Council was waiting for additional government guidance on recycling strategy before making any major changes to its recycling policies. The Council had been investigating providing additional bins to encourage greater source separation and it had been noted that this would produce 'cleaner' and higher value recycled products and would not be any more expensive for members of the public.
- Members asked if there was anything the Council could do to reduce food wastage by supermarkets, noting that this could be extremely high especially over Christmas. The Cabinet Member agreed that this was an issue due and praised the work of the charitable sector in making good use of unwanted food from supermarkets to help people in need while reducing wastage. The Cabinet Member also suggested that Peterborough's proposed Business Improvement District could help businesses take the initiative for reducing food waste. Officers added that additional education to residents on food preparation and proper disposal could be beneficial. The Government took this issue seriously and had appointed a 'food tsar' to investigate further. The energy footprint of the food supply chain was high and the government needed to be clearer with retailers that high levels of wastage were unacceptable.
- The Cabinet Member added that schools needed to provide better education about food preparation and disposal, noting the low prevalence of packaged ready meals in Italy. Some members suggested that a cooking competition between schools could be established.
- Members suggested that a campaign to reduce black bin usage might be needed, e.g. by lowering Council Tax for those who used it sparingly. It was agreed that the Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene and the Environment would consider the possibility of rewarding low black bin usage with a Council tax reduction, as a positive way of encouraging recycling.

- Members praised of Westcombe Engineering's commitment to employing disabled people.
- Members praised the Council's response to missed bin collections in Werrington due to cables being laid, noting that bins were always collected the following day.
- Members asked about the take-up of Lengthsmans by Parish Councils. Officers responded that three parish councils had appointed Lengthsmans with some of them also purchasing gluttons.
- Members asked how the Council was supporting communities to volunteer to collect litter or provide community litter bins. Officers responded that the Council was supportive of such schemes, e.g. by purchasing additional litter pickers for use by schools. The Council would designate particular spots from which bags of refuse would be collected. Officers encouraged anyone interested in volunteering to contact the Council.
- Members asked for information about the new FixMyStreet app and if a Peterborough-specific variant would be provided. Officers responded that the app was currently being used for highways issues with Aragon services set to transfer to the app in the next phase. It was agreed that the Head of Environmental Partnerships would provide an update to the Committee on the progress of rolling out the Peterborough-specific FixMyStreet app.
- Members praised Peterborough's new Household Recycling Centre (HRC) in Fengate and asked if the new facility was helping to improve recycling rates. The Cabinet Member responded that this was indeed the case, with a predicted HRC recycling rate of 73% to be achieved. The Centre was being run by the same people who designed and developed it which was highly beneficial to its performance. Customer feedback had been positive. Incidents of fly-tipping in the City had reduced by 25% and the Cabinet Member was aiming to establish if this was related to the performance of the HRC.
- Members enquired the introduction of new cleansing machine in the city centre that could remove chewing gum. The Cabinet Member stated that the hot wash machine was not specifically designed for chewing gum removal, though it did help in removing layers of gum from streets. The gum would eventually disappear after multiple passes. The Cabinet Member also highlighted the importance of stopping people discarding chewing gum inappropriately in the first place while acknowledging that this would be difficult to eliminate entirely.
- Members highlighted issues with communal bins in Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) and Social Housing not being collected due to being inaccessible and asked for an update on the issues being experienced in Hampton Vale in particular. The Cabinet Member responded that it was estimated that misused bin stores could cost between £300 and £1,000 to clean up. This was the responsibility of the Landlord, not the Council. The Cabinet Member suggested that better dialogue with landlords was needed and proposed the council could clear up bin stores for an additional fee. This would benefit everyone concerned.
- Members asked for information on how this sort of fly-tipping could be enforced and if landlords could be enticed to consider the issues caused by fly-tipping on private land. Officers responded that the Prevention and Enforcement (PES) team were engaging with landlords to clean bin stores and using their enforcement powers when bins were contaminated. Officers also visited HMOs to educate people about how to correctly use bins. It was common for bin areas to be cleared and then subsequently re-contaminated.
- Members asked how Parish Councils could arrange for collection of waste generated by litter picks, noting that skips had been used in the past. Officers responded that Parish Councils should simply inform the Council about the litter picking who would then arrange for collection.

- Members commented that litter picking on higher-speed roads could be dangerous and asked if this would be covered under public liability insurance. Officers responded that litter picking on roads with a speed limit of 40mph or greater required lane closures and traffic management to be put in place.
- Members referred to section 4.6.1 on page 39 of the reports pack, and praised Members' and Officers' response to Arson attempts in the Hallfields Lane biodiversity area. Members also praised the work of the Peterborough Environment City Trust to create wildflower meadows and woodland.
- In relation the above point, Councillor Sandford declared that he was a member of the Woodland Trust.
- Members requested that notifications to Councillors regarding the grass cutting, shrub cutbacks work etc. be re-established as they frequently received enquiries from the public about this.
- Members commented that Councillors used to attend ward 'Walkabouts' with officers which were beneficial and requested that these be re-established. This could be done as in collaboration with senior Aragon officers and the 'client team'.
- The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee therefore recommended that the Head of Waste, Resources and Energy re-established email notifications to alert Ward Councillors of the following:
 - Missed bin collections
 - Grass cutting and shrub cutback schedules
 - Ward 'Walkabouts'

This was UNANIMOUSLY agreed.

- Officers added that the call centre should already be notifying ward councillors when whole streets suffered missed bins, but not individual missed bins.
- Members commented that Councillors used to attend ward 'Walkabouts' with officers which were beneficial and requested that these be re-established. This could be done as in collaboration with senior Aragon officers and the 'client team'.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend that the Head of Waste, Resources and Energy re-establishes email notifications to alert Ward Councillors of the following:

- Missed bin collections
- Grass cutting and shrub cutback schedules
- Ward 'Walkabouts'

ACTIONS AGREED

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the contents of this report and for:

- The Head of Waste, Resources and Energy to provide the Committee with the Council's recycling rates from 10 years ago for comparative purposes.

- The Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene and the Environment to consider the possibility of rewarding low black bin usage with a Council tax reduction, as a positive way of encouraging recycling.
- The Head of Environmental Partnerships to provide an update to the Committee on the progress of rolling out the Peterborough-specific FixMyStreet app.

39. REPORT OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP TO INFORM THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AIR QUALITY AMBITION STATEMENT ACTION PLAN

The report was introduced by the Members of the Task and Finish Group (Cllrs. Aitken, Sandford and Howell) accompanied by the Principal Regulatory Officer, Environment and Pollution, the Senior Environment and Pollution Officer and the Group Manager, Transport and Environment. The purpose of this report was to seek the Committee's approval for submission of the recommendations contained with the report to Cabinet on 13 January 2020

Councillor Sandford, the Chairman of the Task and Finish Group made the following points:

- The report had taken a long time to complete. The Task and Finish Group's work had brought additional issues to light which needed to be included in the report.
- Thanks was expressed to other members of the group and supporting officers.
- It had been important to ensure that the recommendations were rooted in evidence and developed by the councillors on the group themselves.
- Evidence had been heard from a variety of sources, for example Stagecoach and the Campaign for Better Transport.
- It had become apparent that there was overlap between the work of the group and the Council's work on the climate emergency.
- It was important that recommendations achieved more than one benefit. Cost efficiency to the Council was also an important factor.
- There were many legal thresholds for levels of various pollutants such as Nitrogen Oxide. Peterborough did not currently exceed any of them. However, the City was expanding rapidly so there was a risk of exceeding these thresholds in the future.

Councillor Sandford then summarised the 9 recommendations of the Task and Finish Group's report.

Councillor Howell added that although a key message of the report was that there were no legal exceedances of air quality limits, it was also true that there were no safe levels of pollutants. Encouraging behavioural change was key to improving air quality such as encouraging people to move away from entrenched car use.

Councillor Aitken echoed the comments of Councillor Sandford and encouraged the Committee to endorse the proposed recommendations

Councillor Sandford commented that the Road Haulage Association had only been able to provide limited evidence and group members had wished to cover this area in more detail.

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

- Members expressed concern regarding Recommendation 2 and commented that the cost and range limitations of electric cars might make it difficult for people to transition to using them in the short term, especially in rural areas.
- Members expressed support for Recommendation 5 but commented that tramways were expensive to install, up to £40m/km based on knowledge of the expanding the tram systems in Birmingham and Edinburgh, and asked if the Combined Authority would be a position to fund mass transit in Peterborough. The Chairman of the Group responded that trams in Nottingham had been funded by introducing a workplace parking levy and this could be considered in Peterborough. Officers responded that the Combined Authority had funded a study about residents' travel needs and how these journeys could be made more efficient. This work was not focussed on trams or mass-transit systems in particular but was instead focussed on identifying the most suitable solution with the highest cost-benefit ratio in order to build a business case for it. This could result in bus improvements for example. The work was not yet at the stage where funding would be sought or identified.
- The Chairman of the Group referred to the January 2020 meeting of the Health Scrutiny Committee, where a report had been received on parking issues at the City Hospital. Providing improved public transport to the hospital could be explored as well as the proposed additional car parking space, which could link the work of the Task and Finish Group. Additional parking spaces alone would not fix the hospital's transport issues.
- Committee members asked if the group had considered the potential positive impacts of Peterborough's new university conducting research into environmental issues in the future. The Chairman of the group responded that conversations had been had regarding the university in relation to its environment aspects, such as its role in building a 'circular city'.
- The Chairman of the Group commented that the idea of a department at the University focussed on environmental issues was a good one and this naturally built on Peterborough's cluster of environmental organisations such as the Environment Agency and Natural England.
- Members commented that the report should have explored options for park and ride and water taxis in the City.
- The Chairman of the group commented that he supported a northern railway station for Peterborough.
- Officers added that the Combined Authority had powers over passenger transport and had expressed the intent to consider introducing bus franchising as one of many options to reduce the number of cars on the roads and support active modes of travel over a 30 year period which would have a positive impact on air quality.
- Councillor Aitken commented that water taxis were being discussed by Board of the Nene Park Trust.
- The Chairman of the Group commented that there was no safe level of particulates. If the City was to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030, a variety of options including tramways, park and ride etc. would need to be employed, not just one.
- Members commented that one of the proposals for park and ride would not be suitable due to being located in a conversation area and being subject to a high flood risk. Another member commented that there was a site to the north that did not have these issues.

- Members commented that Stagecoach had offered a 15% discount for hospital staff and asked if this could be considered by the City Council. Officers responded that the Council were investigating tactical improvements to bus services and incentivise their use, e.g. via better timetabling, subsidy and family tickets though nothing had yet been agreed. The Chairman of the group added that he hoped that Council investigate bus discounts for Council staff. Although Agile Working had reduced car journeys, use of public transport had not increased. Public transport use in the city appeared to be declining which put some services at risk that the Council were unable to subsidise.
- Members suggested that trees be planted around major roads to act as environmental screens.
- Members asked if Councillors could be involved in work to improve bus services. Officers responded that the Combined Authority had recently completed a bus survey and was currently analysing the results, The Council also had a cross-party bus working group which met on a regular basis.
- Members commented that Stagecoach had previously stated that they were unable to provide orbital routes due to limited demand. The cost of two individual fares to travel via the city centre (e.g. from Hampton to Bretton) was extremely high. The Chairman of the Group responded that this issue had been discussed at the January 2020 meeting of the Health Scrutiny Committee. Day rider tickets could make these journeys reasonable. All options needed to be explored. The Introduction of bus franchising by the Combined Authority could enable these problems to be overcome.
- Members raised concerns regarding Recommendation 9 that pollution might increase around the Whittlesey Brick Yards if the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) was removed. Officers responded that large companies now required permits to operate and air quality would be factored into whether these would be granted. At the time that the AQMA was imposed, sulphur emissions were not regulated by the European Union (E.U.) but now were.
- Members asked what would happen if pollution increased and what action would be taken as a result. Officers responded that one of the two sites had closed down. For one to re-open the kilns would have to be rebuilt. This would require the company to apply for a permit change. The Council were happy with pollution levels and the AQMA was being removed upon the advice of DEFRA.
- Members commented that they still receive complaints regarding pollution in this area and expressed concern about how this would be monitored in the future. Officers responded that acceptable pollution levels had never been exceeded. Brick making was a cyclical process and the initial AQMA modelling assumed that emissions would be produced from four stacks all of the time. Attempting to measure exceedances was problematic as it was difficult to identify the spots at which the monitoring should be conducted.
- Some members felt that work to improve air quality in the City should be based around incentivisation instead of penalisation. Some workers might require a diesel vehicles for work for example and should not be penalised for this. Officers responded that Recommendation 2 would take account of many different scenarios. Difficult decisions would be required to determine the way forward to achieving a zero-carbon City by 2030 but officers would pass on the members' comment to relevant officers to take into account.
- Some members expressed doubt that it was feasible for an average resident to become Carbon-neutral in 10 years.

- Members expressed the importance of achieving net-zero Carbon emissions by 2030 and addressing air quality now under the umbrella of the climate change emergency.
- The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group commented that there were a large number of problems that contributed to poor air quality. Therefore solutions needed to be explored that addressed multiple problems such as tree planting. For example, when the Peterborough Development Corporation designed its estates, 'shelter belts' were installed for block out the sound of roads and also provide a screen to air pollution.
- The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee endorsed the report and recommendations for submission to Cabinet on 13 January 2020. This was agreed UNANIMOUSLY.
- The Chairman thanked members of the Task and Finish Group for their work and hoped substantial progress could be made.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to endorse the report and recommendations for submission to Cabinet on 13 January 2020.

ACTIONS AGREED:

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to consider and comment on the Task and Finish Group report at Appendix A.

40. 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.

41. 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.

In response to a member's query, the Democratic Services Officer clarified that the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group to review fly-tipping had been adopted by Cabinet in full and that this Committee would receive 6 and 12-monthly

reports on the implementation of the Group's recommendations and these were on the work programme.

ACTIONS AGREED:

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

42. WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the item which gave members the opportunity to consider the Committee's Work Programme for 2019/20 and discuss possible items for inclusion.

Members stated that the next group representatives meeting for this Committee appeared to clash with another meeting. It was agreed that the Democratic Services Officer would look into this after the meeting.

It was noted that the Labour group substitute for this committee was Councillor S. Qayyum.

ACTIONS AGREED

The committee noted the work programme for 2019/20 and it was agreed that the Democratic Services Officer would investigate the clash raised by Members after the meeting.

43. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

12 February 2020 – Joint Scrutiny of the Budget

11 March 2020 – Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Chairman
7pm– 8.36pm