

**MINUTES OF THE GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT 7PM ON  
WEDNESDAY, 10 MARCH 2021  
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM**

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

**Officers Present:** Steve Cox – Executive Director Place and Economy  
Adrian Chapman – Service Director, Communities and Partnerships  
Charlotte Palmer – Group Manager, Transport and Environment  
Lewis Banks – Transport and Environment Manager  
Pete Carpenter – Corporate Director, Resources  
Sam Smith – Assistant Director of I.T. and Digital Services  
Sohail Illyas – Sustainable Travel Officer  
Sue Grace - Director of Customer and Digital Services  
David Beauchamp – Democratic Services Officer

**Also Present:** Cllr Mohammed Farooq – Cabinet Member for Digital Services and Transformation  
Cllr David Seaton – Cabinet Member for Finance  
Councillor John Fox – Representing the Group Leader of the Werrington First Group.  
Mark Sandhu – Operations Director, Serco  
Felicity Paddick – Manager - Estates and Valuation, NPS Peterborough  
Alex Gee – Chief Executive, NPS Peterborough  
Tom Hennessy – Chief Executive, Opportunity Peterborough

**36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

**37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS**

Pete Carpenter declared that he was a Director of NPS Peterborough Ltd.

**37. MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD ON:**

**37a. 11 November 2020 – Joint Meeting of the Scrutiny Committees**

The minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 11 November 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record subject to the following amendment:

- Attendance List - Replacement of 'Leader of the Labour Party' with 'Leader of the Labour Group'.

**37b. 13 January 2021 – Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee**

The minutes of the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 13 January 2021 were agreed as a true and accurate record subject to the following amendment:

- Item 31 (Culture and Leisure Services in Peterborough), bullet point 7 – Replacement of ‘cycling facilities in Southey Wood’ with ‘cycling facilities to Southey Wood.

**38. CALL IN OF ANY CABINET, CABINET MEMBER OR KEY OFFICER DECISION**

There were no requests for call-in to consider

**39. PORTFOLIO PROGRESS REPORT – FOR THE CABINET MEMBER FOR DIGITAL SERVICES AND TRANSFORMATION**

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Digital Services and Transformation accompanied by the Assistant Director of I.T. and Digital Services and the CEO of Opportunity Peterborough. The report enabled the Committee to scrutinise the work being undertaken under the Portfolio of the Cabinet Member.

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

- Members referred to page 30 of the reports pack and asked if Opportunity Peterborough was still eligible for E.U. funding, what the chances of this application being successful were and what the backup plan was if funding was not received. Officers responded that this application fell under the Structural Investment Plan which the U.K. Government had already contributed to with money needing to be spent by 2023. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) were currently appraising Opportunity Peterborough’s application and, if successful, the money would need to be spent within two years. It was hoped that funding agreements could be put in place by the end of March 2021. The funds would be spent on support for businesses and a grant funding programme for them.
- Members requested that the Assistant Director, I.T. and Digital Services investigates increases in spam emails since the transition to Office 365.
- Members noted the rollout of fibre broadband and asked if there were any gaps in provision. Officers responded that they would investigate this further outside the meeting and report back to the Committee. CityFibre was still rolling out Fibre to the Premises (FTTP), including in rural areas. Private sector provision was expanding in areas where it was commercially viable to do so with the public sector stepping in in other areas.
- Opportunity Peterborough (OP) were not providing support for the census. Digital Life was such a broad field that solutions and strategies would need to involve multiple stakeholders, not just OP which had a specific focus on economic development, skills and business.
- Members requested that the Corporate Director, Resources asks Tom Bardon to provide the Committee with information on work underway to ensure as many census returns were completed as possible.
- Members commented that there was a locally appointed census officer to achieve the above.
- Members requested that the CEO of Opportunity Peterborough provides the Committee with information on how residents who needed support in developing their I.T. skills would be identified. Officers responded that this was a good

question that was yet to be answered. Any approach needed to be multi-agency in nature and incorporate community organisations. Businesses that were adept at employing digital technology were often successful and vice-versa.

#### **ACTIONS AGREED:**

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

1. Requested that the Assistant Director, I.T. and Digital Services investigates increases in spam emails since the transition to Office 365.
2. Requested that the CEO of Opportunity Peterborough establishes if there were any gaps in the roll out fibre broadband and report back to the Committee.
3. Requested that the Corporate Director, Resources asks Tom Bardon to provide the Committee with information on work underway to ensure as many census returns are completed as possible
4. Requested that the CEO of Opportunity Peterborough provides the Committee with information on how residents who needed support in developing their I.T. skills would be identified.

#### **40. E-SCOOTER REVIEW**

The report was introduced by the Transport and Environment Manager and the Sustainable Travel Officer accompanied by the Group Manager, Transport and Environment. The report provided an overview of the e-scooter trial currently underway in Cambridge to enable the Committee to make an informed recommendation as to whether or not Peterborough City Council should participate in the trial.

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

- Members stated that they were not against E-Scooters in principle as they were a green means of travel. Comparisons were drawn with mobility scooters which were limited to 4 or 8mph, unlike E-scooters.
- Members asked what the requirements and rules for e-scooter use would be. Officers responded that a category Q licence would be needed; covered under a moped or car licence. E-scooters must not be ridden on the pavement; only roads and cycle paths but excluding motorways. Insurance was required and would be provided by the companies providing trial e-scooters.
- Members asked if any accidents had occurred in trial areas and expressed concern that the 15mph limit was too fast. Officers responded they would provide this data outside the meeting. There was no mention of accidents in the most recent reports from Cambridge, only dangerous riding. The Department for Transport (DfT) would release detailed reports containing this data after the trials.
- Members requested that the Sustainable Travel Officer provides them with data on accidents involving e-scooters that had occurred in trial areas, and Cambridge in particular.
- Members requested information on how the theft of dockless bikes would be prevented. Officers responded that although there was no physical parking infrastructure, GPS geofencing was used to prevent bikes from being left in unsafe locations or parked outside designated places.
- Members requested that the Sustainable Travel Officer includes the Walking and Cycling Working Group in e-scooter consultations and attends the next meeting of the group.
- Some members expressed support for having an e-scooter trial in Peterborough

due to the control measures in place.

- Members asked how dangerous riders would be prevented from accessing the scooters by the Ambassadors. Officers responded that users were required to submit a picture of their driving licence before hiring a scooter and the hire company could track the location of scooters. Warnings could be issued for poor riding using a 'three strike' policy.
- Members requested that the Sustainable Travel Officer asks Voi for additional information on the numbers of ambassadors that would be introduced in Peterborough and the number of hours they would work.
- Noting that the trial e-scooters would be branded to differentiate them from illegal e-scooters, some members felt that there was currently little enforcement of illegal e-scooter use and asked how this would be improved in the future. Officers responded that any use of e-scooters outside the trials would be illegal. This was the responsibility of the Police who were not currently enforcing illicit e-scooter use. It was hoped that further Police and Council enforcement powers could be introduced at future stages of any e-scooter scheme.
- Members asked if there was a record of anti-social behaviour complaints about e-scooter and bike use in Cambridgeshire. Officers responded that the scooters had been positively received but there had been some complaints. This would need to be confirmed with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA).
- Members asked how vulnerable residents, including those who used mobility aids, would be impacted by an e-scooter trial. Officers responded that pavement riding was illegal and should be tackled via enforcement. It was important to educate riders and it was ultimately their responsibility to be considerate.
- Members requested that the Sustainable Travel Officer provides information on the insurance coverage for e-scooter rentals. It was confirmed that the company were liable.
- Member asked if there was any information available on the likely demographics of e-scooter users. Officers responded that the national report on the outcome of the trials would contain this information, but it would likely include commuters undertaking multi-modal journeys involving public transport. Officers agreed to find out if any further demographic data, e.g. age was available from the trial in Cambridge.
- Trial e-scooters could not be used if stolen due to GPS tracking, making theft unlikely.
- An app would provide users with guidance on where they were allowed to ride and would educate users on the importance of following the rules of the road. All the rules that applied to cyclists would also apply to e-scooters. There would not be any specific signage or guidance to other road users but this could be considered in the future. If the trial went ahead, a media safety campaign could be undertaken.
- Trial e-scooters would have lighting similar to that found on bicycles.
- Trial e-scooters would be charged by Voi every evening.
- As with bicycles, helmets would likely be recommended but not compulsory.
- Members expressed concerns regarding safety and enforcement and felt that the Council should therefore wait before allowing the use of e-scooters in the city, although they would like to see them in use eventually.
- Councillor Burbage, seconded by Councillor Fox, proposed that the Committee recommends that Cabinet awaits the outcome of the trials that are happening nationally before deciding whether e-scooters should be introduced in Peterborough. A vote was taken (10 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention) and the recommendation was therefore AGREED.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend that Cabinet awaits the outcome of the trials that are happening nationally before deciding whether e-scooters should be introduced in Peterborough.

## **ACTIONS AGREED:**

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

1. Request that the Sustainable Travel Officer provides Cllr Judy Fox with data on accidents involving E-scooters that have occurred in trial areas, and Cambridge in particular.
2. Request that the Sustainable Travel Officer includes the Walking and Cycling Working Group in e-scooter consultations and attends the next meeting of the group.
3. Request that the Sustainable Travel Officer asks Voi for additional information on the numbers of ambassadors that would be introduced in Peterborough and the number of hours they would work.
4. Request that the Sustainable Travel Officer provide additional information on the insurance coverage for e-scooter rentals.
5. Requested that the Sustainable Travel Officer establishes if any demographic data on the use of e-scooters was available from the trial in Cambridge, e.g. age.

41.

## **PORTFOLIO PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE CABINET MEMEBR FOR FINANCE, SERCO ANNUAL REPORT UPDATE AND NPS ANNUAL REPORT UPDATE**

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Finance accompanied by the Corporate Director Resources, the Chief Executive - NPS Peterborough, the Operations Director - Serco and the Manager- Estates and Valuation - NPS. The report enabled the Committee to scrutinise the work being undertaken under the Portfolio of the Cabinet Member and the delivery undertaken by Serco and NPS.

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

- The Cabinet Member praised staff for their good work.
- Members requested a progress update on the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) of Community Centres. Officers responded that negotiations were either at the final stages or going through the legal process. Some community organisations were not in a position to take on centres. It was not yet clear how this issue would develop over the next 5 years.
- Members asked how the demand for office space would change due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Officers responded that the office market would change but it was not known how large this effect would be. The effect would be better known within the next six months.
- The Cabinet Member stated that the adoption of agile working practices at the City Council had been beneficial to its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Cabinet Member praised improvements to the processing time for benefit claims.

## **ACTIONS AGREED**

The Growth Environment and Resources Scrutinise Committee **RESOLVED** to note the

report.

#### **42. 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.

It was UNANIMOUSLY agreed to mark the recommendation from 22 February 2021 as complete.

#### **ACTIONS AGREED**

The Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the responses from Cabinet Members and Officers to recommendations made at previous meetings as attached in Appendix 1 to the report.
2. Mark the recommendation from 22 February 2021 as complete.

#### **43. 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.

It was noted that item 20. Approval of City Parking Strategy would be progressed through Cabinet Policy Forum (CPF) and on to this Scrutiny Committee.

It was noted that a briefing note had been provided to the Committee on St. Peter's Arcade and a full report would be brought to this Scrutiny Committee before any decision to close the Arcade was taken.

#### **ACTIONS AGREED:**

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

CHAIRMAN

7pm – 8.41pm