

**MINUTES OF THE GROWTH, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT 7.00PM, ON
TUESDAY 30 JANUARY 2024
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Councillors Wiggin (Chair), S Allen, Ayres, Casey, JA Fox, Iqbal, Knight, Rush, Thulbourn, Warren and Independent Co-opted Members Parish Councillors Ormston and Young.

Officers Present: Rob Hill, Service Director: Housing and Communities
Charlotte Cameron, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Matt Gladstone, Chief Executive
Cecilie Booth, Executive Director of Corporate Services and S151 Officer
Simon Lewis, Service Director Commercial, Property & Asset Management
Terri Martin, Strategic Regulatory Officer - Licensing
Felicity Paddick, Head of Estates
Rob Atkins, Interim Head of Performance and Intelligence

Other Present Councillor Sandford, Mayor of Peterborough
Councillor Hogg, Leader of the Liberal Democrats

37. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jamil.

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

Parish Councillor Ormston declared that he would be candidate for Eye, Thorney and Newborough in the May election.

39. MINUTES OF GROWTH, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON

The minutes of the meetings held on 14 September 2023, 23 October 2023 and 14 November 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

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

No call ins were received.

41. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Chair introduced the report which included the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Executive Decisions containing decisions that the Leader of the

Council, the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the forthcoming month. Members were invited to comment on the plan and where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme.

There were no questions.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the current Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and **RESOLVED** to note the report.

42. PCC RESPONSE TO THE FOURTH INDEPENDENT IMPROVEMENT AND ASSURANCE PANEL REPORT

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee received a report in relation to the fourth Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel report.

The Chief Executive introduced the report and key points raised included:

This had been reported to Full Council in December and provided a response to key issues.

Officers were pleased with the progress being made and there had been cross part support. There was real momentum and the Council had been working hard to tackle issues. The financial resilience of the Council was much stronger, but this would continue to be monitored.

There was a need to pay off more debt and review the assets, which had started. The next phase would be transformation and the role of the council was changing significantly.

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

- The panel had met since the production of the report and the key headlines were that the overspend had been reduced from 7 million to 2 million.
- There was a national issue around the delivery of children's services.
- The new administration had handled the situation well and were making it work through good collaboration.
- Members were advised that the Council would need to rethink service delivery and focus on transformation.
- Members queried the cost of the extension of the panel and were advised that this had been minimal.
- Members were assured that the permanent post for the Service Director Education would be filled shortly.
- Since the November 1 Council meeting the council had progressed and there was continued collaboration.
- Members queried the evidence of how all out elections could alleviate financial problems and were advised that a change to the election systems would only be only part of the problem.
- Members noted that the focus needed to be on strategic events and moving away from personal politics. This had improved and the Chief

Executive praised cross party collaboration.

- The administration had changed the culture and there had been some good collaboration. There continued to be support for the new administration.
- Economic growth was key to reliving pressures across the system, particularly around Adults and Children social care.
- Members were advised that there had been an increase in the complexity of children's cases post covid.
- Members raised concerns about children who were placed outside of the city and the lack of sport and leisure support provided.
- Members queried the stability of the Council and were advised that there had been receptive cross-party collaboration. Everyone would have a role to play to serve the Council.

AGREED ACTIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Considers the fourth report of the Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel and agrees with the action to be taken as a result.
2. Reviews the report, PCC's response to it and the progress being made with the delivery of the Improvement Plan.
3. Endorses the report and the response PCC is taking to Cabinet.

43. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER TWO (2023/24)

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee received a report in relation to update to the Growth, Resources and Communities Committee and to provide the direction of travel on the council's corporate performance in line with our priority outcomes as set out in the Sustainable Future City Council Strategy 2022-25.

The Interim Head of Performance and Intelligence introduced the report and key points raised included that quarter 2 contained notable highlight from the performance frameworks.

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

- The Committee were impressed by the report and were pleased that it had been easy to understand. Members also thanked the Officers for addressing their previous comments.
- Members were concerned that there had been an increased trend in SEND needs and that there was no information on that within the report. The Officers noted that there had not been a notable change but would bring more context in the next report.
- Members asked that the next report include how the challenges identified were being addressed.
- The Officer would raise concerns on the rates of school exclusions with the Service Director for Education.

AGREED ACTIONS

It is recommended that the Growth, Resources and Communities Committee notes the Corporate Performance Report for Quarter Two, 2023/24

44. **CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY REVIEW/REVIEW ROAD LAYOUTS (MOTIONS FROM CLLR HUSSAIN)**

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee received a report in relation to a carriage and private hire licencing policy review and a review of road layouts, following a motion from Councillor Hussain.

The Strategic Regulatory Officer - Licensing introduced the report and key points raised included:

Members were made aware of an error in section 4.4 where the date should be 31/12/2029 and note 31/12/2019.

The Council had declared a climate emergency in 2019 and committed to becoming net zero carbon by 2023. In line with this, the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing policy was reviewed, updated and subject to consultation in 2022. As detailed in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

Following a meeting of the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee, the pathway to net-zero for the city would now work towards a 2040 target.

The recommendation was therefore to allow the licensing team to continue to licence Euro 6 vehicles, in line with the current taxi and private hire policy, with officers extending the licence period for 1 year beyond policy, if the vehicle continues to meet required standards.

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

- The reference to road layouts in the motion had been brought to the attention of the Highways Department as this was outside of the remit of the licensing team.
- Members were advised that the licensing policy and the climate policies would need to align.
- Members were supportive of the change to the net zero target to 2040 but asked for a briefing note on how that impacted the licensing policy.
- Members requested a further briefing note that detailed the road layouts and highways regulations in relation to Hackney Carriage Taxi's as well as Private Hire taxis.
- Members were advised that taxi drivers supported the move to low and zero emissions but that it would need to be funded by grants.
- Members requested further information on the rules and restrictions in place on the bus lanes for hackney Carriage Taxi's as well as Private Hire taxis.

A vote was taken on the recommendation put forward by the Officer, that the Committee allow the licensing team to continue to licence Euro 6 vehicles, in line with the current taxi and private hire policy, with officers extending the licence period for 1 year beyond policy, if the vehicle continues to meet required standards, and it was **UNANIMOUSLY** agreed.

AGREED ACTIONS

It is recommended that Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee determine whether the Licensing Committee should consider the motion and or that the Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee should recommend:

1. That the licencing team continue to licence Euro 6 under the current policy which allows for age limit extensions.
2. A Review of the entire Taxi policy prior to the intended date for review as currently planned for late 2024/2025 earlier than that proposed date, and, to further align with the Councils' Climate Change Policy potential impact on implementation date changes and timelines.

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee requested that Officers provide them with a briefing note on the following:

- How the licensing policy aligns with the City-Wide Action plan including an explanation of why the 2040 net zero target could impact the policy.
- The road layouts and highways regulations in relation to Hackney Carriage Taxi's as well as Private Hire taxis.
- The rules and restrictions in place on the bus lanes for hackney Carriage Taxi's as well as Private Hire taxis.

The Committee also requested that Officers confirm who has the responsibility for road layouts.

45. LOCALITIES ASSETS REVIEW - UPDATE

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee received a report in relation to the Localities Review of Council property including community buildings, leisure facilities and libraries.

The Service Director Commercial, Property & Asset Management introduced the report and key points raised included:

The Officers had returned to scrutiny with an update on the initial phase of engagement. It was empathised that it was important to control how information was shared and that Officers had and would continue to engage with all parties.

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

- Members were assured that the comments made at Full Council that related to the Eye Community Centre would be considered at Cabinet.
- There was an intention that each site would have a work programme and a continued dialogue with each stakeholder.
- Members referred to phase 2 and agreed that it had been a good idea to look at schools separately. Officers confirmed that academies and maintained schools were treated the same.
- Members requested that Officers report back to scrutiny at the same frequency as Cabinet.
- Members asked Officers to not sell both of the Southfields and Stanground sites and were assured that until there was a plan in place for both, nothing would be done.

- Members were pleased that the report had been made public and felt that it had been easier to discuss the report.
- The decisions that were less controversial would be taken via a Cabinet Member Decision Notice. (CMDN). Members requested assurance that the controversial sites in Paston and Eye would be decided in a public forum.
- Members requested that Officers provide them with a monthly progress report on the Locality Asset Review.
- Members could see the merit in negotiating a contract with that allowed the use of the Walton Community Centre to continue.
- Members referred to the structural issues at Paston Farm but emphasized that there were two crucial community services that used the site.
- Members noted that the Town Hall had note made the list but was dysfunctional and asked Officers to consider investing in the building.
- Officers acknowledged that the condition of the Town Hall was poor and advised that further work would need to be undertaken.
- The Community Ownership Fund would be discussed to enable those who run the Orton Wistow Community Centre to purchase the property.
- There had been a potential buyer for the Matley Community Centre and conversations were ongoing.
- Members suggested that libraries be placed in better building using capital investment.
- Members noted that the Eye Youth Centre and Library was a unique building and requested that it be looked at as a unique situation.
- The inspectorate of libraries would hold the Council accountable to any decisions made.
- Members were advised that there may be investment for Manor Farm Community Centre to enhance capacity and to enable services from Eye to relocate.
- Members raised concerns regarding the retention of adequate youth services and Officers advised that any money made from the sale would be put back into Eye.
- Members suggested that Bedford Hall may be a better place to accommodate the library in Thorney.
- Members queried why a site like 30 Cromwell Road would be disposed of if it was generating an income. Officers advised that the Council received no income from this site.
- Members were assured that as soon as the information on further sites could be shared in the public domain, it would be.
- Members were advised that plans for the Regional Pool would be taken to a future cabinet meeting.
- Members queried if the Council had applied to government investment opportunities for youth centres. Members were advised that Officers were harnessing all the possibilities that they could.

The Chair permitted a member of the public, Mr McKean, to address the Committee. Mr McKean had submitted a petition to the Council that asked:

We call on the Council to not close Eye Youth Centre Building and use the grants available from the Governments £75M fund for Youth Clubs and Buildings Renovation to upgrade the building in time for the Councils reopening of Senior Youth Club by 2025. And for the continuation of the current Junior Youth Club, Brownies, Rainbows and Girl Guides use of the building along with the library.

Mr McKean emphasised points around the:

- History of the Youth Centre
- Levels of engagement at the Centre
- Dedication of volunteers
- Impracticality of a move to Manor Farm
- Housing growth in Eye
- Government grants for youth funding.

The Chair thanked Mr McKean for his time.

The following recommendation was proposed by Councillor Wiggin and seconded by Councillor Knight, that the Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee recommended to Cabinet that they ask for a commitment from the Thomas Deacon Education Trust to provide community out of hours provisions at the Walton Community Centre, should they purchase the site.

A vote was taken on the recommendation from Councillor Wiggin and was **UNANIMOUSLY** agreed.

AGREED ACTIONS

It is recommended that Growth Scrutiny Committee:

1. Notes the Localities Assets Review's initial findings and recommendations to Cabinet for each of the sites highlighted in Phase One as shown in Appendix 1 and provides any comments.
2. Notes that Directors will continue to provide regular, quarterly updates to Cabinet on the progress of these sites.
3. Notes the proposal to focus on the Council's education sites under Phase 2, where officers will work with Academies and Maintained Schools to investigate opportunities to improve community usage across buildings, to repurpose surplus properties and to divest of surplus land if deemed appropriate. The expectation is that a report on Phase 2 will be brought back to Growth Scrutiny Committee in the Summer.

The Committee also requested that Officers provide them with a monthly progress report on the Locality Asset Review.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee recommended to Cabinet that they ask for a commitment from the Thomas Deacon Education Trust to provide community out of hours provisions at the Walton Community Centre, should they purchase the site.

46. MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

The Senior 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.

The SDSO confirmed that the item that related to Cllr Fenner's motion on adaptive housing noted Councillor as the Cabinet Member as he had been in post at the time of the housing workshop.

AGREED ACTIONS

It is recommended that the Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee:

1. Considers the responses from Cabinet Members and Officers to recommendations made at previous meetings as attached in Appendix 1 to the report and provides feedback including whether further monitoring of each recommendation is required.

47. WORK PROGRAMME 2023/2024

The Senior Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which looked at the work programme for the municipal year 2023-2024 to determine the Committees priorities. Members were invited to make comments and suggestions.

- The Committee requested that the Skills Strategy be tabled into the work programme.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the Work Programme for 2023/2024 and **RESOLVED** to note the report.

48. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee was noted as being the 19 March 2024.

CHAIR

Meeting began at 6:00pm and ended at 8:16pm