

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH
ON
7 MARCH 2012**

Present: Councillors Todd (Chairman), S Day (Vice Chairman), G Casey,
C Burton, JR Fox, and M Jamil Cllr

Also Present: Ansar Ali Police Authority Representative
Councillor N Sandford Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
Kevin Tighe Chief Executive – Vivacity
Shelagh Smith Chairman – Vivacity
Pam Whitbread Head of Finance – Vivacity
Dan Vajzovic Superintendent
Bryan Tyler Disability Forum Manger – DIAL
Peter Godly Youth Council Representative
Niamh Kingsley Youth Council Representative

Officers in Attendance: Gary Goose Community Safety Strategic Manager
Ramnit Bassi Business Transformation Manager
Hayley Thornhill Senior Partnership Analyst
Jawaid Khan Cohesion Manager
Ian Philips Assistant Cohesion Manager
Paulina Ford Senior Governance Officer
Dania Castagliuolo Governance Officer
Adrian Chapman Head of Neighbourhood Services
David O'Connor-Long Legal Officer

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Simons. Apologies were also received from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation and Strategic Commissioning.

At this point in the meeting the Chair advised that an additional item had been added to the agenda as a matter of urgency and would be considered after item 8. The item was a report of Recommendations relating to Changes to Central & East Neighbourhood Committees.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services then advised the Committee that following recent information received he requested that the item be withdrawn for further consideration before presenting to the Committee.

The Committee agreed to the withdrawal of the report.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

Item 5 – Vivacity – Progress Report and Proposed Business Plan

Councillor Casey declared a personal interest in that his daughters worked as life guards for Vivacity.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2012

The minutes of the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18 January 2012 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. Vivacity – Progress Report and Proposed Business Plan

This report was presented to the Committee to enable the current performance and future targets for Vivacity to be considered as part of the delivery of its contract with the council.

A presentation was delivered and the following key points were highlighted:

- Vivacity's performance so far and delivery of the following projects:
 - Revitalise Flag Fen as a quality visitor attraction
 - Seek to re-open Woodlands Sports Centre
 - Deliver a single 'Passport to Culture' – one card, many opportunities in sport, libraries, heritage, and the arts
 - Refresh the Regional Pool Phase II
 - Double the number of volunteers
 - Enable Peterborough to celebrate its recent history – 40 years on
 - Complete work on a £3,000,000 redevelopment of the Museum
 - Conclude a business plan for a boat service to Flag Fen
 - Create a programme for the new studio at the Key Theatre
 - Expand the Festival to include a greater variety of arts events
- The business plan structure
- Future finance
- Sources of funding
- The business plan surplus/ (deficit)

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members congratulated vivacity on the work they had done with the Werrington sports centre and skate park.
- Members were concerned about the reduced opening hours at Werrington library and felt that this may be affecting attendance figures. Members asked if there were any plans to reduce the library open hours further or increase the hours with the use of volunteers. Was Vivacity still liaising with Friends of Werrington Library? *The Chief Executive confirmed that Vivacity was still in contact with Friends of Werrington Library and the plans were to extend the library opening hours using volunteers. He informed the committee that a pilot project had been started in Bretton in March.*
- Members queried as to whether libraries were involving the University of the Third Age (U3A) as this would be helpful towards learning and also a source of volunteers. *The Chief Executive advised the committee that this was already happening although he felt they could do more together.*
- Members wanted to know if the application for a grant had been successful for the Music Hub. *The Chief Executive informed Members that he believed it had been unsuccessful but he would need to check. He informed members that Vivacity would still like to move forward with the Music Hub.*
- Members complimented Vivacity on the work they had done so far although they were concerned that there had been no mention of Cricket. Members asked the Chief Executive to comment on the loss of Cricket facilities in Peterborough and what was

- going to be done about Woodlands as this could be a potential facility for the sport. *The Chief Executive informed Members that Vivacity did not manage many green spaces as these were generally managed by Enterprise. He advised them that Vivacity wanted to open Woodlands as a sports facility but it was not part of their portfolio.*
- Members asked the Head of Finance how she envisaged the £50,000 Partnership Funding would be spent. *The Head of Finance advised Members that this was an area where Vivacity would need to provide a framework but this had not been done yet. She informed Members that this would be developed over the next year and brought back to the Committee.*
 - Members felt encouraged by the map they had seen during the slideshow as it demonstrated that volunteers came from all different parts of the city. Members wanted to know if Vivacity held information on the users of their services and whether they were from different ethnic backgrounds. *The Chief Executive advised members that at present they were unable to provide this information, this was an area they were working on and hopefully this time next year they would be able to provide information on who was using their services and facilities.*
 - Members asked the Chief Executive whether the libraries were well resourced for minority languages. *The Chief Executive informed Members that Vivacity had ring fenced a sum of money for resources to the libraries and he would be surprised if this was not the case.*
 - A representative of the Youth Council wanted to know if there would be a Youth Stage at the Peterborough Festival this year. *The Chief Executive advised that he was not sure and would find out and respond within 24 hours.*
 - Members endorsed the earlier comments regarding the Cricket facilities and commented that it would be good to get some high class sport back in Peterborough. Members congratulated Vivacity on its plans to provide a bus service to Flag Fen.
 - How would Vivacity implement the savings as part of the council's revenue budget. *The Chief Executive informed Members that the £1.2m of savings that was talked about previously was all being reinvested in to the community.*
 - Had any thought been given to the type of image that was being conveyed when during Vivacity's events people were going round with plastic buckets collecting money? People generally did not realise that Vivacity were separate from the council and the impression would be that the council were collecting money. *The Head of Finance advised Members that fundraising was very important for Vivacity as they were a charity and it was only a period of time before people understood that Vivacity were separate from the council and were working for the people.*
 - Members queried as to why Vivacity had decided to spend half of the £100,000 granted for the Olympics on performers from overseas instead of showcasing local performers. *The Chief Executive advised the Committee that they would be showcasing local people and the performers from overseas were there to give Peterborough some world class performances. He informed the committee that they have commissioned a song for Peterborough involving one of the local schools and local people.*
 - Would Vivacity continue to pursue to reopen Woodland Sports Centre? *The Chief Executive advised that Vivacity would continue to pursue the matter.*
 - A Member of the Committee who was a volunteer for Vivacity commented that she had been to several Vivacity run facilities and events. She had noted that all the staff that she had spoken to were enthusiastic about what Vivacity were doing. Members of the public had also given her positive feedback. She added that Vivacity had done some really good work.
 - Members felt that information should be made available at all Vivacity venues about the other venues and that staff should be trained to give advice on other facilities and events
 - The Chair congratulated the Chief Executive on the progress that had been made and asked for a further progress report to come back in 12 months.

ACTION

The Committee noted the report and the progress made since reporting to the Committee in March 2011.

The Committee requested that:

- A report on progress to be brought back to the Committee in one year.
- The Chief Executive to find out if there will be a Youth Stage at the Peterborough Festival this year and advise the Youth Council Representative.

6. Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan

The report presented to the committee the 2012 draft version of the Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan (2011 – 14) ahead of its presentation to cabinet.

The key issues were highlighted as follows:

- The Crime and disorder Act 1998 was revised by the Police and Justice Act 2006 requiring that the Community Safety Partnership published an annual Partnership Plan.
- The priorities within the Partnership Plan were agreed following a Strategic Assessment which considered the performance in the past twelve months and took in to account the concerns of the public.
- The Peterborough Partnership had agreed one single target for the three year plan which was to reduce victim based crime by the end of March 2014
- The priorities set out in the plan were
 - Reducing crime
 - Tackling antisocial behaviour
 - Building stronger and more supportive communities

Members were asked to approve the 2012 draft version of the Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan and recommend it to Cabinet for approval.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members wanted to know how many Community Crime Fighters the city had and how they were getting on. *The Superintendent was unable to give exact figures. He commented that Community Crime Fighters had not been replaced but there were also other voluntary organisations in place that supported the police like Street Pastors and Street Champions. They all did very good work in supporting the vulnerable, the police and the partnership. The superintendent advised the Committee that the number of Special Constables was also rising.*
- Members were concerned that the accident statistics with regard to David's Lane and Staniland Way shown on page 93 of the report did not seem accurate. There were actually somewhere between 100 to 150 accidents at those locations each year. *The Community Safety Strategic Manager responded that the statistics in the report were from 2010 and the difficulty was that they could only report on accidents recorded and reported to the police. He would raise the matter with the road safety team who were available to undertake surveys in certain areas. Awareness could also be raised at Neighbourhood Committee and Panel Meetings.*
- A member of the Youth Council advised the Committee that the Youth Council were starting some work on looking at reducing antisocial behaviour in young people. He asked if he could be provided with figures on antisocial behaviour by young people. *The Community Safety Strategic Manager requested a meeting with the youth council to discuss their interest further. He informed the Committee that young people only represented a small portion of the community involved in antisocial behaviour.*

- Members commented that fly tipping had risen 13% and they suggested that the only way this would stop was if the council stopped charging for collecting bulky waste.
- Members quoted incidents of neighbourhood disputes where the police had been called in the early hours of the morning to an incident but on arrival had advised the caller to contact the council. Members queried as to what could be done about Police Officers duty of care. *The Superintendent informed the Committee that their job was to keep people safe in their own homes. He advised members that reports of such things as loud music was not a crime but more was needed to be done to get officers to explain to residents what the police could and could not do in these cases.*
- Councillor Todd commented that the Police Community Support Officers in her ward were very good.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee:

- (i) Endorsed the Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan 2012 Priorities; and
- (ii) Recommended the approval of the Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan 2012 Priorities to Cabinet

7. Community Cohesion

The report was presented to the Committee for them to scrutinise the impact of the implementation of the Community Cohesion Strategy and make any recommendations.

The key issues were highlighted as follows:

- The 2011/12 action plan and the identified broad themes
 - Improving educational attainment and parental engagement through an innovation programme of ESOL delivery
 - Targeted work to reduce hate crime
 - Supporting the work of the Disability Forum to give disabled people a voice in the city
 - Providing opportunities for communities to discuss community hot topics in an open and safe environment
 - Providing one to one support and group sessions for deprived community members
- Key projects from the action plan were highlighted as follows:
 - Building better mutual understanding between communities through ESOL and family learning
 - Strengthening voices of the disabled community and their interface with all partners
 - Improving mutual understanding among community groups and enhance pride in Peterborough through cultural services

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members asked the Cohesion Manager if he was a member of the Safer Peterborough Partnership. *The Cohesion Manager advised members that he was one of the advisors for the Safer Peterborough Partnership.*
- Members commented that they had attended Neighbourhood Panel meetings and felt that only certain sections of diverse communities attend which seemed quite segregated. They were also concerned that they did not see young children from diverse communities mixing together much as a lot of the activities in the city were segregated. *The Cohesion Manager advised members that cohesion was difficult to measure as it was usually only demonstrated when it did not take place. He advised that he felt the only way forward*

would be to concentrate on integration. He informed the committee that their aim was to make sure people from different communities attended their Neighbourhood Panel and Committee meetings and took part in influencing decisions.

- The Head of Neighbourhood Services commented that the best example of cohesion he had seen was through the 'Can Do' project where a group of residents were brought together to discuss and tackle a set of issues within a community.
- Members commented that there was evidence that segregation within communities made situations worse, encouraging people to come together and learn about each others cultures and interests was the way to have a harmonious society. *The Cohesion Manager advised the committee that neighbourhoods and schools were the best places to work on this issue as there were children from diverse backgrounds that came together on a daily basis. He explained to the committee that they were doing work with ESOL (English Speaking for Other Languages) throughout schools and there were plans in place to bring this work in to the bigger Academies. The second part of the cohesion grant would be launched shortly and although it would only be a small sum of money for each community group this would give them the opportunity to organise events and demonstrate how they would bring people together from diverse backgrounds.*
- Members commented that there were lots of Community Associations managing community centres and suggested it would be a good idea to encourage people from diverse backgrounds to join the management committees. This could be an opportunity to bring people together.
- Councillor Todd commented that PCSO's were doing some excellent work in organising events and bringing young people together from diverse backgrounds who speak different languages.

ACTION

The committee noted the progress on delivery of the Community Cohesion Strategy.

8. Neighbourhood Committee Implementation Task and Finish Group – Interim Report

This report identified a key recommendation from the work of the Task and Finish group that, if adopted, would have constitutional implications, therefore it was being brought to the Committee ahead of Annual Council to enable full discussion and debate through the appropriate democratic process.

The Recommendations were as follows:

- That there are seven Neighbourhood Committee chairman, one for each Neighbourhood Committee
- The Chairman of each Neighbourhood Committee represents a ward from within the area covered by that Neighbourhood Committee.
- The total Special Responsibility Allowance budget for chairmen of Neighbourhood Committees remains at its current value, but is divided equally amongst all seven chairmen.
- These changes to take effect from the start of the new Municipal year 2012.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members were pleased with the progress that had been made with the Neighbourhood Committees and agreed with all of the recommendations. However they did feel that the Chair of each Neighbourhood Committee should be someone who was familiar with the area of that committee and suggested it would be a good idea for the committee to choose its own chairman. *The Senior Governance Officer explained to the Committee that the recommendation around the appointment of the chairs for the Neighbourhood Committees remained with Full Council as stated in the constitution under Part 2, Article 4, Section 4 – Functions of the Full Council.*

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee endorse the recommendations as listed and recommend that they go to Full Council for adoption. The recommendations being that:

- There are seven Neighbourhood Committee chairman, one for each Neighbourhood Committee
- The Chairman of each Neighbourhood Committee represents a ward from within the area covered by that Neighbourhood Committee.
- The total Special Responsibility Allowance budget for chairmen of Neighbourhood Committees remains at its current value, but is divided equally amongst all seven chairmen.
- These changes to take effect from the start of the new Municipal year 2012

9. Member Referral

This report was presented to the Committee at the request of Councillor Sandford who had made a referral to the committee in accordance with Part 4, Section 9, Paragraph 8.1 of the constitution – Scrutiny committee and Scrutiny Commission Procedure Rules.

8.1 Any member may require the Proper Officer to place an item relevant to the functions of the committee or Commission on the agenda for the next meeting. On receipt of such a request the Proper Officer will ensure that the item is included on the next agenda. The item will be discussed by the committee or Commission and it will only be pursued if the Committee or Commission agree to do so.

The referral was in regard to the consultation which had recently taken place in respect of the trees in Bridge Street and Long Causeway. Councillor Sandford requested that the Committee consider and seek an explanation for the way in which the Cabinet and officers had carried out the consultation process.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members agreed with the objective of having the item come back to the Committee but felt that revisiting the specific consultation of the trees in Bridge Street and Long Causeway was not appropriate. Members felt that it would be much more relevant to look at the council's consultation and engagement strategy.
- The Head of Neighbourhoods confirmed that Peterborough City Council had now employed an officer to deal with the consultation process and he was in the process of drafting a new strategy. Members requested that the consultation and engagement strategy be put on to the work programme for the next municipal year.

ACTION

The Committee request that the Consultation and Engagement Strategy be brought to the Committee for scrutiny at a future meeting.

10. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

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

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the Forward Plan and agreed that there were no items for further consideration.

The Chair thanked the Governance Officers and Lead Officers for the support given to the Committee over the past year.

The meeting began at 7.00 and ended at 9.24 pm

CHAIRMAN