

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT CAPITAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 6
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Report of the Executive Director of Operations

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ENVIRONMENT CAPITAL OVERVIEW

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report provides the Committee with an overview of the Environment Capital project and will give background information to enable the committee to comment on future work that has an impact on the council's aspiration to be the UK's Environment Capital.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the report and provide comment accordingly.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 This report directly contributes to the objectives and outcomes contained in the Sustainable Community Strategy and, in particular, the council's aspiration to be the UK's Environment Capital.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Peterborough's Sustainable Community Strategy contains four priorities: Creating Strong and Supportive Communities; Creating the UK's Environment Capital; Creating Opportunities, Tackling Inequalities; Substantial and Truly Sustainable Growth. Each of these priorities has four specific outcomes, beneath which sit a diverse range of actions and interventions to deliver lasting positive change for Peterborough.

By adopting the Sustainable Community Strategy, the council has committed itself to becoming the UK's Environment Capital, building on the longstanding experience as one of four Environment Cities in the UK. The "journey" from Environment City to Environment Capital is considered appropriate given the shift towards global environmental challenges such as climate change as well as the city's ambition to grow substantially and sustainably.

The Environment Capital priority has four key objectives, as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy:

- Making Peterborough cleaner and greener
- Conserving natural resources
- Increasing the use of sustainable transport
- Increasing the environmental business sector

- 4.2 During 2011/12, work has progressed across the four key objectives and successes include:

- EU funding of £300k awarded to work in Glinton and Peakirk communities to improve energy efficiency in the home and sustainable travel
- Successful award of a Sustrans grant for £50k to improve cycle infrastructure and remove barriers preventing sustainable journeys to school
- Award of £5m from Department for Transport following a successful bid to the Local

Sustainable Transport Fund

- Large scale street lighting, traffic light and illuminated signs and bollards project aimed at reducing carbon emissions
- As early analysis of the council's Carbon Management Action Plan suggests we are on track to meet the 35% reduction target (based on 2008 levels)
- Reduction in carbon emissions of 700kg per person (latest data shows emission per capita in the Peterborough area were 7.8 tonnes in 2008 and 7.1 tonnes in 2009)
- 92% of city schools actively participating in the Eco Schools or Sustainable Schools frameworks and 7 schools with the acclaimed Green Flag award
- First PowerDown fortnight held in 27 Peterborough schools – an impressive 70% of participating schools made savings of 10% or more on the Powerdown day (1110.3 kWh or 0.73 tonnes of CO₂)
- Launch of the Forest for Peterborough project with over 3000 trees planted to date
- Cranfield University and PCC form a partnership to develop education and research in renewable energy and bio-fuels to support future economic growth in the city.
- Installation of renewable energy projects - solar PV on Regional Pool, Town Hall and Freemans building and currently investigating installation of solar PV on schools and wind farms
- Council has set up Energy Services Company (ESCO) to enable it to produce green energy
- Construction of a new Welland Primary School commenced – work includes solar panels so that the school can generate its own energy
- Grant agreement with UK CEED to deliver the EnviroCluster Business Plan 2012/13 and gain European Commission accreditation for the EnviroCluster
- Winner of the 'Most Improved Bus Services' category at the National Transport Awards
- Golden Green Apple award for school's resource kit
- Two silver awards at the International Green Awards in the 'Best Green Media' and Best Green Government' categories
- Shortlisted for the Local Government Chronicle 'Low Carbon Council' award
- Hosted international government officials and senior business leaders (from China, India, Russia, Denmark) showcasing Peterborough's environmental attributes

In addition to the above, a successful Peterborough Environment Capital conference was held in February 2012. This was a first for Peterborough and Prof Hugh Montgomery of University College London was the keynote speaker. Over 160 delegates attended the conference and represented businesses and organisations across the city. In addition, 20 exhibitions stands were available and included Peterborough Environment City Trust, Nene Park Trust, Travelchoice and the Green Backyard. Delegates were asked to make 'environment' pledges to support the Environment Capital and over 60 pledges were received on the day and ranged from people committing to use sustainable transport through to installing solar panels on their property. Communication with the delegate list continues on a bi-monthly basis therefore maintaining the momentum that the conference has brought. An Enewsletter is being designed to ensure regular communication is maintained and is of a high quality.

4.3 Environment Capital has widespread support and is a key focus and unique selling point for Peterborough which has been achieved through clear political direction and the efforts of committed, cross-sector partnership working. Over recent months, work has progressed on the following key documents:

- Environment Capital Delivery Framework
- Environment Capital headline targets
- Environment Capital timeline
- A bespoke Environment Capital Enewsletter
- Action plan for current year
- Live Health Live Green Supplementary Planning document

The above documents will be presented to subsequent committee meetings for comment.

4.4 Previously, the Forum for the Future's Sustainable Cities Index has been used to benchmark Peterborough against 20 other sustainable cities across the UK. However, the Forum has reported that they are unable to produce the 2011 report as they have not received the financial backing to do so. Therefore alternative options are being considered and will be included in the headline targets to be presented at a future committee meeting. Consideration will be given to longer term targets to clearly set out the Environment Capital aspirations.

5. KEY ISSUES

5.1 Within the scope of this Committee's responsibilities, Members are asked to note the content of this report and the progress of Environment Capital to date. The documents listed in 4.3 above will be presented to this committee over the coming months.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 For the city to achieve its ambition of becoming the UK's Environment Capital, it must show a strong and evidenced track record of environmental achievement backed by a focus on addressing areas for improvement. The documents which will be presented to future committees will demonstrate the commitment to working towards achieving this ambition.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 The Environment Capital initiatives and projects outlined in this report have been subject to internal and partner consultation as part of their development and implementation.

8. NEXT STEPS

8.1 The following Environment Capital documents will be presented to the 12 July 2012 committee:

- Environment Capital Delivery Framework
- Environment Capital headline targets
- Environment Capital timeline
- Action plan for current year

It is hoped, following approval of the Environment Capital Steering Group, to launch the Environment Capital Enewsletter at the ET Green Awards on 2 July. This Enewsletter will be circulated to all councillors.

The Live Health Live Green Supplementary Planning document is subject to the planning consultation and approvals process and will be brought to this committee for comment as part of this consultation and approvals process.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

9.1 None.

10. APPENDICES

10.1 None

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