

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT  
CAPITAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD IN THE BOUGES/VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL  
ON 15 OCTOBER 2013**

**Present:** Councillors N Arculus (Chairman), L Serluca, J Peach, D Over,  
JA Fox, N Thulbourn,

**Also Present:** Cllr Cereste, Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning,  
Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement  
Cllr Sandford, Leader of the Liberal Democrats  
Cllr John Fox, Representing Leader of the Peterborough  
Independent Forum

**Officers Present:** Simon Machen, Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering  
Services  
Andrew Edwards, Head of Growth and Development  
Gemma Wildman, Principal Strategic Planning Officer  
Jenny Harris, Lawyer  
Paulina Ford, Senior Governance Officer

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Maqbool and Councillor Martin. Councillor Over was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Maqbool.

**2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations**

There were no declarations of interest or whipping declarations.

**3. Call in of any Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Key Officer Decisions**

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

**5. Portfolio Progress Report for the Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement**

The Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update of the Growth Agenda for the city. The Cabinet Member invited questions from the Committee.

Questions and observations were made around the following areas:

- Members noted that the number of Prestige homes (Tax Band G and H) being built were relatively small and wanted to know if the plan had changed with regard to the number of Prestige Homes being built. *The Cabinet Member informed Members that the current policy was still to encourage the development of Prestige homes but developers could not be forced to build Prestige homes. Landowners and developers did not see this as economically viable. The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services also advised Members that there were several sites allocated in the Sites Allocations Document for Prestige Homes. There was planning consent in place for Prestige homes but they were not yet in the pipeline to be constructed.*
- Members were concerned about the loss of larger houses within the city to Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) or flats. Members referred to page 9 of the report and the

section on Heritage, parks and gardens and the number of buildings subject to Article 4 Direction Control. Were any of these blanket restrictions against houses going towards becoming Houses of Multiple Occupation? *Members were informed that it was not possible to have a blanket restriction in planning.*

- *Members sought clarification on the meaning of 'Growth'. The Cabinet Member informed members that his view of growth was more than just building houses it was a holistic view of the city e.g. housing, education, schools, university, employment, quality of life, sport, culture and entertainment. Growth was all of those things for the benefit of everyone.*
- *Members wanted to know how economic growth was targeted and measured. The Cabinet Member informed Members that the policy was to attract high quality investment into the city which included high quality and highly skilled jobs however this was only part of the answer. Peterborough had been attracting approximately 3500 new jobs net per annum for the last three years. Opportunity Peterborough the economic development organisation has a part in the delivery of growth and inward investment and targets skills and jobs. The Peterborough skills programme was considered to be the finest in the country with over a thousand companies involved.*
- *Members sought clarification on the data presented regarding Jobs on page 8 of the report and wanted to know why the information only went up to 2011 and there was nothing for 2012/2013. The Cabinet Member advised that the data he had received from Opportunity Peterborough had shown that in 2012 there had been a net increase of over 4000 jobs, in 2011 a net increase of just over 3000 and in 2010 a net increase of just under 3000 jobs in Peterborough. There seemed to be some disparity between the statistical data shown in the report and the data provided by Opportunity Peterborough and this needed to be understood. The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services advised that the data provided on employment in the report was correct but it was provided from a variety of different sources which were often out of sync. The Officer advised that he would look at the data in further detail with officers from Opportunity Peterborough and report back to the Committee with an explanation.*
- *Members sought clarification on how the Growth Agenda and economic development of the city worked together. Members were informed that this information could be provided by Opportunity Peterborough who would be reporting to the committee in January. The test of economic growth was the Gross Value Added of Peterborough relative to the national position. The factors that made people create jobs were skills and economic growth, marketing of the city, availability of land and property, good communications to the city, internal road networks, up skilling the workforce, supporting the existing cluster of businesses and a balanced housing supply. The Growth Agenda was about growing the population beyond the natural growth of Peterborough.*
- *Members queried whether there should be a reconsideration of the types of clusters of businesses in Peterborough and if more focus should be put on agriculture, heritage etc. Members were advised that existing clusters would be built on, an example of which was the food cluster. Peterborough had a very good heritage and this was also being developed. Members were advised that research provided by Queensgate had found that the population catchment area for Peterborough had increased from 230K to 940K in four years.*
- *Members commented that Peterborough was in the centre of one of the largest agricultural areas and yet there were no agricultural courses at Peterborough Regional College. Members suggested that the University Centre be approached to see if they could do more research and development with regards to food, food policies and food development rather than importing ideas and expertise from elsewhere. Members were informed that the Authority had just signed a supporting letter for the Regional College for their application for a Technical University.*
- *Members wanted to know if the Cabinet Member was satisfied that enough was being done to ensure that there were enough school places for the growing population. The Cabinet Member advised that the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University would be able to advise on the number of places available. Members were informed that from discussions held with the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University the Authority was holding its own but more needed to be done. There were plans for at*

*least another ten primary schools and there was over £100M in the budget to deliver Primary school places. There were school places available at Secondary schools but if the planned growth continued this may be a problem in seven or eight years' time.*

- *Members were pleased to note that the household fuel poverty figures had reduced and more people were having cavity wall and loft installations fitted.*
- *Members referred to page 14 of the report and sought clarification on the statistics concerning 'Bus Punctuality' and the meaning of 'Decimal Minutes'. The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services advised that he would report back to the Committee with a full explanation.*
- *Members referred to Peterborough's Micro Renewable Energy on page 11 of the report and wanted to know why the statistics for installations was so small and in some cases showing a figure of zero. The Cabinet Member advised that he was unsure as to why there had been little progress with micro installations but that there had been a slight change in government policy which may have stalled industrial and community installations. There was however a view in the market place that photovoltaic on roofs did pay.*
- *Members requested an update on the micro installation on the Freemans building. Members were advised that the Freemans installation had been put right and was now working perfectly.*
- *Councillor Sandford commented on and referred to the Travel Choice Project and commented that the Cabinet Member had reduced the budget for transport by 40%. The reduction in budget for transport had indicated a support for the use of more cars. Councillor Sandford sought clarification on a recent comment by the Cabinet Member at a Council meeting stating that he personally would like no cyclists in the city centre. The Cabinet Member confirmed that he personally would prefer no cyclists in the pedestrian area of the city centre for the safety of pedestrians. The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services provided clarification for Members on what area the city centre covered and confirmed that it was the 'core' of the city centre, as defined in the council's planning documents, where the user hierarchy gave priority to pedestrians. The cycling strategy would have dedicated cycling routes around the city centre (core) and provide points to access the city centre.*
- *Members referred to page 4, paragraph 4.4 of the report regarding Neighbourhood Plans. Was enough being done to engage with neighbourhoods to encourage them to produce Neighbourhood Plans? The Cabinet Member commented that there would always be more that could be done to engage with neighbourhoods. Officers were engaging with particular neighbourhoods that had come forward with Neighbourhood Plans but there were more neighbourhoods who could have neighbourhood plans but had not engaged with the council.*
- *Why had only one Parish Council put a Neighbourhood Plan together? Members were advised that there were eight Parishes who had indicated their intention to put a plan together and compared to the national picture this was good. The issue of cost had put some Parishes off.*
- *Did having a Neighbourhood Plan in place affect CIL? Members were advised that CIL would be 25% in Parished areas with a Neighbourhood Plan rather than 15% without one.*
- *What support is the council giving to the urban areas of Peterborough that are not Parished to either become Parished or to form groups to enable them to be able to put a Neighbourhood Plan together. Members were advised that Neighbourhood Plans had to be community led and it was not up to the council to ask communities to provide a Neighbourhood Plan. Any community wanting to put in place a Neighbourhood Plan would be supported by the council. Putting a Neighbourhood Plan together required a lot of hard work and the community had to vote for it.*
- *Members sought clarification on the definition of a Neighbourhood Plan. Members were advised that a Neighbourhood Plan under the Localism Act was a Statutory Land Use Plan which was like a mini local plan for an area. The Neighbourhood Plan may have to go through a regulatory process and be assessed against, for example, the European*

*habitat assessment regulations. It was also subject to an environmental appraisal. Some communities had a Village Design Statement but that was not a Neighbourhood Plan under current legislation. There were also Community Plans in place which were about the day to day operational elements of a part of the city or a village e.g. frequency of grass cutting, new street signs, repairing pathways.*

- *Members sought clarification on the amount of money being held from 106 contributions. Members were advised that there was approximately £10M being held from contributions of which a large portion of that amount went to schools on the provision of education. The money has to be allocated against specific infrastructure projects and could not be used for anything else.*
- *Members referred to information on 'Accessible open space' on page 9 of the report and noted that there was no information available. Members were advised that historically it had not been measured and therefore there was no baseline to work from but it could be calculated going forward. The data sets in the report had been presented for the first time and would be improved on going forward.*
- *Members requested an update on the Community Stadium. Members were advised that the contract had been let to Kier and work would commence during November.*

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement for a comprehensive and informative report.

### **ACTIONS AGREED**

1. The Committee noted the report and requested that the Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services provide the following information:
  - a. Provide more up to date information on jobs and why the statistics are different in the report to those being provided by Opportunity Peterborough.
  - b. Provide clarification on the statistics concerning 'Bus Punctuality' and the meaning of Decimal Minutes.
  - c. Clarification to be provided on the percentage figures provided in the report with regard to transport statistics concerning 'Modal shift to sustainable transport modes'
  - d. Future reports to ensure all data sets provided show the same time periods for each section if they are available.
2. The Cabinet Member for Growth, Strategic Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Business Engagement to provide a further portfolio progress report to the Committee in one year.

## **6. Peterborough City Centre Development Plan Document**

The report provided the Committee with the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on the Peterborough City Centre DPD (City Centre Plan) before being presented to Cabinet on 4 November 2013. The Principal Strategic Planning Officer introduced the report and explained that extensive public consultation had already taken place on the emerging City Centre Plan and after the proposed version had been considered by Cabinet it would go to Full Council for approval. If Full Council approved the City Centre Plan it would then be published for six weeks public consultation in early 2014 and then submitted to the Secretary of State where a public examination by an independent inspector would take place. The independent inspector would provide a report with recommendations. The plan would then be adopted in late 2014 or early 2015. Maps indicating the area the city centre plan covered were handed out to Members at the meeting. Members were advised that the plan had been written as a planning document and a marketing tool to try and attract inward investment into the city centre. The plan set out the council's long term vision and covered the following key themes:

- retail
- leisure
- office development and employment
- housing
- historic environment
- open space
- transport and other infrastructure

Members were informed that a new section had been included on drainage and flood risk.

Questions and observations were made around the following areas:

- The Chair advised that he was a Commissioner for the Nene Washlands and also sat on the Internal Drainage Board for the North Level District. The Chair commented that the Drainage Board for that area regarded the drainage of water into the counter drains and the drains maintained by the Internal Drainage Board as a sustainable method of drainage. This view conflicted with the council's planning policies which provide for onsite drainage of surface water. It was a concern to the Internal Drainage Board that the water was being allowed to stay on site in areas that did not naturally drain rather than feeding into the drains and counter drains. *The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services advised Members that Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) was national policy not just council policy. Defra guidance on the surface water consent regime had not yet been issued. Peterborough was a leading authority in influencing the policy direction for SUDS. SUDS was mainly about managing the discharge of water from sites not necessarily keeping it on site in perpetuity.*
- How many people had responded to the public consultation? *Members were advised that just over 400 people had responded.*
- Members commented that Priestgate had a range of historic buildings and sought clarification on what plans were in place for revamping Priestgate. *Members advised that the policy approach regarding Priestgate was that of sensitive refurbishment and renewal. It was not seen as a comprehensive redevelopment area due to it being one of the most historic streets in the city centre.*
- Members noted that in the City Centre Plan document under section 5.5 Riverside South Policy Area, paragraph 5.5.4 the Greenback Yard had been referred to as 'community allotments'. Members had understood that it had been nominated as a 'community asset' and this had been agreed. *The Officer responded that she was aware that an application had been made to become a community asset but had not been aware that it had been agreed. The wording in the plan could be amended to reflect the change in status.*
- Members commented that more use could be made of the river and suggested a boating marina. *Members were advised that one of the tests on examination of a plan was deliverability. The plan was flexible and therefore the suggestion of a boating marina could not be ruled out. Various comments had been received through the public consultation regarding the proposal of a boating marina and the plan had therefore been amended to include under Policy CC8 – Fengate South Policy Area the following reference:*  
*"If proposals come forward for the development of a marina on this site, these will be supported in principle by the council, provided that it is demonstrated that the scheme is deliverable, taking into account the criteria listed above (to the extent that they apply to marina development)."*
- Members were pleased to see mention of the possibility of a new 50 metre swimming pool.
- Members were pleased to note that further retail development in the city centre primary shopping area had been mentioned and felt that the retail offer needed enhancing in the city centre. *The Cabinet Member informed Members that the market had improved and good offers were coming forward with particular interest around the market square.*
- Councillor John Fox referred to 6.1.9 in the plan which referred to "Accessibility:

*“The city centre should be as accessible as possible for all. “The council will consult with DIAL, the RNIB and other local and national organisations on city centre and city core proposals to ensure that the maximum benefit to disabled people can be incorporated into schemes”.*

Members requested that the wording DIAL be changed to Disability Forum.

- Members congratulated the council on striving to gain better accessibility to the city for those requiring disabled access.
- The Cabinet Member invited Councillor John Fox to meet with the Principal Strategic Planning Officer to ensure all accessibility needs were covered.
- Members sought clarification on what was happening with the Market area. The City Centre Plan was not specific with regard to plans for the Market. *The Cabinet Member confirmed that the council was definitely working on a solution for the Market. The Market would need to be an integral part of a development scheme. There was an expectation that a planning application would come forward soon which would include the Market.*
- Members referred to the section in the plan on “Transport” and were encouraged with regard to the proposals for Bourges Boulevard as mentioned in section 6, paragraph 6.1.6.

*“Bourges Boulevard will no longer act as a barrier to movement. It will be transformed to give greater priority to pedestrians, with additional pedestrian crossing points created, including a new landmark entrance from the railway station to the city core. Phase by phase, the number of non-stopping vehicles using Bourges Boulevard will fall.”*

Members sought clarification on how this would be achieved and how the traffic would be managed. *The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services informed Members of the plans for Bourges Boulevard and how this would be achieved.*

- Members noted that within the section on “Transport” under 6.1.6 there was mention of *“transformation of car parking provision....based on the principle of relocating car parks out of the city core towards the edge of the city centre”.* Members commented that a lot of cities provided a free city bus service to take people to various attractions and wanted to know why had this not been included in the plan. *Members were advised that the plan was a land use planning document not a transport document. Members were also advised that Park and Ride was part of the vision for 2026.*
- Members noted that the City Centre boundary was set and would not be reviewed for another five years. Members requested that they should be involved in any future discussions when resetting the boundaries.

The Committee congratulated the Principal Strategic Planning Officer on producing a well thought out, informative and well-presented document. It was also noted that the video that is presented with the City Centre Plan had been entered into the Royal Town Planning Institute Awards and had been shortlisted for the East of England category. The video had been placed as runner up to the winner.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Committee endorsed the Peterborough City Centre Development Plan and recommends it to Cabinet for approval.
2. The Committee also recommends that the following amendments be made to the Plan prior to submission to Cabinet:
  - a) The reference to the Greenback Yard as a ‘Community Allotment’ should be changed to the wording ‘Community Asset’.
  - b) The reference to the Council consulting with ‘DIAL’ regarding accessibility should be changed to consult with the ‘Disability Forum’.

**11. Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday, 7 November 2013

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 9.04pm

CHAIRMAN

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