

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT
CAPITAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE BOUGES/VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL
ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2013**

Present: Councillors N Arculus (Vice Chairman), J Peach, G Simons,
C Harper, JA Fox, N Thulbourn, Cllr Martin

Also Present: Ellie Jaggard, Youth Council
Councillor Eley, Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation and
Waste Management
Martin Raper, Enterprise Partnership Director
Rachel Huxley, Chief Executive, PECT

Officers Present: Simon Machen, Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering
Services
Mike Kealey, Interim Head of Human Resources
Karen Craig, Senior HR Consultant - Policy and Development
Dominic Hudson, Strategic Partnerships Manager
Charlotte Palmer, Climate Change Team Manager
Jonathan Lewis, Assistant Director Education & Resources
Israr Ahmed, Lawyer
Paulina Ford, Senior Governance Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Allen and Councillor Maqbool. Councillor Harper and Councillor Simons were in attendance as substitutes.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of interest or whipping declarations.

3. Minutes of Meetings held on:

- 12 June 2013
- 11 July 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2013 were approved as an accurate record.

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2013 were approved as an accurate record subject to the following amendment to page 17, second bullet point under Questions and Observations which read:

“Had a survey been conducted to establish how many people attend the current Dogsthorpe site either by walking or cycling? Members were advised that a survey had been conducted over a few days to see what mode of transport people arrived by and no one had arrived by cycle or by walking.”

The Waste Project Officer advised the Senior Governance Officer that the minute was inaccurate and he had responded as follows:

“Members were advised that a survey had been conducted to find out where people came from to use the site and in doing the survey he had not noted any one walking or cycling.”

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

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

5. Human Resources Monitoring Report

The Interim Head of Human Resources presented the report which provided the Committee with an update on council staffing and workforce matters. The report provided datasets for the following areas:

- Headcount and Turnover
- Absence
- Appraisals and Training activity
- Employee Relations
- Workforce Diversity

Members were informed that the headcount had reduced by half since March 2010 as a result of moving services out to third parties such as Serco and Enterprise and redundancies. Additional groups of people had also joined the council since then such as Adult Social Care and Public Health staff which had provided a variation of employment terms and conditions. This provided complexity for HR in providing advice and guidance. In the last twelve months 360 people had left PCC's employment. The council was currently running at 4.2% absence which was just above the national average of 3%. The main category for absence was for stress, depression, anxiety, fatigue and this accounted for 24% of absence. Days lost per employee over the last twelve months were 9.03. The next twelve months focus would be on driving down absence due to stress. Data on employee absence was gathered monthly for each employee and scrutinised. All employees across the council had received a PDR and been rated. Members were advised that in the last twelve months 25 disciplinary's had been addressed. Seven for breach of policy, two for fraud or financial reasons, nine for behaviour, six for unsatisfactory work performance. Twenty seven grievances had been handled.

Members were asked to note an inaccuracy in item 5 of the report. The graphs at 5.1 'Trends Compared with Benchmarks and Census 2011' had shown an incorrect date of June 03 and it should have read June 13.

Members were informed that 71% of the work force was female which was comparable with national benchmarking. It was noted that further work needed to be done with regard to the percentage of work force from Ethnic Minorities and Mixed Origins. 6.57% of the workforce was from Ethnic Minorities or Mixed Origins.

Questions and observations were made around the following areas:

- What are the Soulbury pay and conditions? *Members were advised that this applied to a small cohort of people including educational psychologists and educational improvement professionals.*
- Members were concerned that absence due to stress had increased and wanted to know what was being done to support employees who were covering the work load for people who were off work due to stress. *Members were informed that stress was on occasions used as a reason for absence and it was a difficult absence reason to challenge. Managers were required to look out for and support colleagues who were covering the work of their absent colleagues to make sure they could cope with additional work. There was also an employee's assistance programme available in Children's Services. The support of Occupational Health was essential when dealing with difficult absence cases.*

- What is the 'Two Ticks Scheme' referred to on page 27, bullet point 3 of the report? *Members were informed that it was an award that the Government gave to employers who were committed to employing disabled people. The symbol meant the employer was committed to employing disabled people and they would be guaranteed an interview if they met the essential criteria for the job. This award had been given to the Council for the past three years.*
- How do you recognise employees who have 100% attendance? *Members were informed that there was no formal mechanism in place to recognise such employees. This was something that could be looked into.*
- What action is being taken to increase the number of employees from Ethnic Minorities? Was there any best practice that could be used from the Two Ticks scheme? *The Interim Head of HR advised Members that he would look at the Two Ticks scheme to see if there were any elements that could be used in relation to increasing recruitment of those from an Ethnic Minority. Members were also advised that HR were currently working on a training programme that would raise awareness of diversity across the council. There was also a need to focus on recruitment practices to ensure that advertising was in the right place to ensure that candidates were being attracted from all different backgrounds. Applications were also being monitored to ensure that there was no discrimination.*
- Members congratulated the 375 members of staff who had not been absent due to sickness.
- What was the average time being taken off by the people who did take absence through sickness? Were there any comparative figures with other authorities? *Members were advised that Appendix 1, page 30 of the report showed "% of working days lost per employee" this covered all employees not just those who were off sick which was 9.03 days at 30 June 2013. The average number of days taken from the most recent comparisons / benchmark information with other authorities was 10.30 days. This indicated that the council were better than the average but the target was 7.00 days. The Interim Head of HR did not have the figure for average number of days off for only those people who were off sick but would look into this.*
- Members noted in the report that 4.06% of staff were on a temporary or fixed term contract and that only 1.6% of leavers were on a fixed term contract. Would it be more beneficial to the organisation to terminate those people on fixed term contracts than by voluntary redundancy? *Members were advised that people on temporary contracts often covered people who were on maternity leave or they may cover jobs that were in areas that had specialist roles and might be externally funded by EU Grants or National Government Grants. Temporary contracts would always be considered first in a redundancy situation before permanent employees to minimise the redundancy costs to the council.*
- Members noted that the PDR ratings were 1 to 5 and suggested that this be increased to 1 to 10 to enable Managers to score employees more accurately. *Members were advised that the PDR rating scheme had been looked at closely to ensure it was easier for Managers to score employees fairly and consistently. The ratings 1 to 5 made scoring much simpler and easier for managers.*
- Members sought clarification on the proposed policy of 'no pay for the first three days of sickness' and whether it would be an effective vehicle to reduce the number of day's sick leave. *Members were advised that the policy was presented as part of the budget reductions with the objective being to reduce the amount of sick pay being paid. Sick pay was part of the national terms and conditions and any change would require the support of the trade unions. As union agreement had not been reached the proposal had not been put in place. The intention had been that it would be a deterrent to those who had a high frequency of absenteeism of one or two days. The proposal was still being discussed.*

The Chair thanked the Interim Head of HR for an informative and well presented report.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommended that the Interim Head of HR investigate ways of rewarding employees who have recorded 100% attendance levels. Progress on this to be reported back to the Committee in the annual report April 2014.

ACTIONS AGREED

1. The Committee requested that the Interim Head of HR provide as part of the next annual report the following:
 - I. Look at the Two Ticks scheme to see if there are any elements that could be used in relation to increasing recruitment of Ethnic Minorities.
 - II. To provide data for the average number of days being taken off by those people who did take absence through sickness.
2. The Committee also requested that the Interim Head of HR provide the Committee with monthly statistics on the two highest categories of sickness: stress, depression, anxiety, fatigue and musculo-skeletal inc back and neck.

6. Environment Capital Update

The Climate Change Team Manager presented the report which provided the Committee with an update on key elements of work associated with the delivery of the Environment Capital core priority. A short presentation was given which covered the following areas:

- Aim – a sustainable, happier, healthier and more prosperous Peterborough
- Creating the UK's Environment Capital – what does it mean?
- What's happened over the last 12 months?
- How are we going to deliver Environment Capital?
- What is planned for the next 12 months?

Members were informed of the following local reasons for why the Environment Capital priority was important:

- a 9% travel shift was needed to cope with the city's growth plans
- 15.6% of Peterborough homes were in fuel poverty and in the Can-Do area this was approximately 30%
- There was a ten year life expectancy gap between residents in Castor compared with those in the Can Do area
- Residents and Business in Peterborough spend approximately £158m on energy annually, all of this leaves our local economy
- We are at risk from both drought and flooding

Members were advised of the impact of work that had been done so far highlighting the following key points:

- The Enviro cluster had created 5,900 jobs and £560m into the local economy
- Peterborough were 6th nationally in the number of schools taking part in Eco Schools. Evidence had shown that schools involved in this scheme performed better overall.
- If we captured 25% of the aluminium cans that currently going to landfill we could save approximately £160k
- 80% of our residents now had water meters, that means that they spend on average £200 less on water

- Fuel poverty, the energy Matters project saved an average £708 per household and visited over 900 people, saving 235tCO₂

Members were advised that a fact sheet had been developed that listed the different themes of One Planet Living and had a number of facts on a local and national scale that showed examples of the impact on the city. The Officer advised that the fact sheet would be distributed after the meeting.

What had happened over the last 12 months:

- Environment Capital survey
- Engagement – newsletter and boundary signs
- £3m investment – Future Cities Demonstrator
- Involved in the Sustainable Food Cities Network
- Established a Sustainable Cities Network
- ‘Powerdown’ campaign involving schools has engaged approximately 11,000 pupils

An Environment Capital Action Plan will now be developed based on the concept of the One Planet Living Ten themes. This will be presented to the Committee in November.

Questions and observations were made around the following areas:

- Members commented that it would be good to try and get more than 80% of people on water meters. *Members were advised that PCC did work proactively with Anglian Water and that was why Peterborough had one of the highest number of water meters. The council were undertaking an exercise to baseline all of its own water consumption and to understand how it could save water from its own estate. This would include making sure the council was on the right tariff.*
- How does the Environment Capital aspirations of growing our own food locally fit with the council's proposal to put wind and solar farms on good agricultural land? *Members were informed that one of the pieces of work that would be done was to look at all the targets and how they interrelate with each other to ensure the right decisions were being made on behalf of the city. One of the first targets on the action plan was to understand what potential there was to produce more food locally.*
- What are the next steps to achieve the Environment Capital goals? *Members were informed that there were different theme leads across each of the areas from cross cutting organisations across the city who had developed the first set of targets for the plan. There had also been a workshop led by an external organisation linked to the Future Cities Demonstrator work where the work that had already been done was scrutinised and this provided challenge to ensure the targets are robust. There would be a public consultation on the plan in December.*
- Members commented that there was another issue in that people also wasted purified water. People needed to be educated about wasting water, electricity, gas and household waste. *Members were advised that there were already several initiatives in place to try and educate people. An example was the Powerdown Campaign which raised awareness amongst young people about how precious resources were. There was a need to increase the recycling rate and therefore a need to increase engagement with residents. Other partners such as Anglian Water did a lot of work to raise people's awareness around water issues.*
- Members commented that setting the goals had been a huge step forward but were concerned at how the goals could be measured and if they would be taken into consideration when decisions were being made by the council. *Members were informed that Environment Capital was about a lot of competing different interests and that there was no simple answer to the question. Embedding Environment Capital across the organisation was very important. An example of this was the new Highways Services Contract where the ten One Planet Living themes had been used as part of the competitive dialogue process. This had never been done before.*

- How is Opportunity Peterborough encouraging businesses coming to Peterborough to be part of the Environment Capital goals? *Members were informed that a good example of what was being done was at the new Great Haddon employment area. There was approximately 41/2Msqft of new employment floor space that would have to be built to 10% above current building regulation standard in terms of environmental standards. Peterborough had been recognised nationally and internationally for its environmental standards.*
- Has the council considered adopting a Green Leasing Policy? *Members were advised that this had been recently discussed at a Strategic Property meeting and would need looking into further.*
- The Youth Council representative wanted to know if any money could be put towards promoting people growing food themselves to keep the money in the local economy and reduce the food miles. *The Climate Change Team Manager advised that the council were keen to promote local food use and 93% of allotments had been taken in Peterborough. The Greenback Yard project in the city also showed people how to grow their own food. PECT support a lot of this work and show people how to grow, cook and preserve their food.*
- Members commented that a few years ago Peterborough was scanned with a thermal imaging camera to see which houses had the most heat loss. Had this information been used? *The Climate Change Team manager confirmed that a thermal study was carried out and people accessing the data had been high.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that the Climate Change Team Manager investigate Green Leasing with a view to the council adopting it as a policy and reports back to the Committee.

ACTIONS

1. The Committee requested that the Environment Capital Action plan be presented at the 7 November meeting.
2. The Climate Change Team Manager to send to all Committee Members the Environment Capital Fact Sheet.

7. Enterprise Peterborough Partnership Performance Report

The Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation and Waste Management introduced the report which provided an opportunity for the Committee to question officers and the Partnership Director on the review of the current set of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). The new permanent Partnership Director, Martin Raper was introduced to the Committee. Members were advised that the KPI's were being worked through and the points that had been raised at previous meetings of the Committee had been taken into account.

Questions and observations were made around the following areas:

- Members commented that there had been a request for the KPI's many times and they were still not complete. *The Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation and Waste Management sympathised with the delay in providing the KPI's. The delay was in part due to the takeover of Enterprise by Amey and the delay in appointing a permanent Partnership Director. It was important that the new Partnership Director was part of the process and since his appointment progress had been made and the KPI's had been reduced from 106 to 50 and were much more targeted. The Cabinet Member invited Members of the Committee to be part of the discussion in setting the KPI's.*
- Members commented that residents of the city were reporting that there was a lot of litter on the streets. Members were not convinced that new KPI's would make a difference. The perception was that the city was dirty.

- Martin Raper introduced himself and advised that it was his second week in the position. He had applied to come to Peterborough and had a wealth of experience in this service area. The people of Peterborough had a perception of Peterborough and he wanted to ensure that this was changed so that they had a positive perception. KPI's were important and provided a measure.
- The Cabinet Member sought nominations from Members of the Committee to attend a meeting with the Strategic Partnership Manager to work on drafting the new KPI's to present back to the Committee in November.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee noted the report.

The Chairman requested that the Senior Governance Officer email all Members of the Committee to seek nominations from Members to work with the Strategic Partnership Manager to draft the new KPI's for presentation at the 7 November meeting.

8. Community Asset Transfer Strategy

The Assistant Director for Education and Resources introduced the report. The report informed the Committee about the Community Asset Transfer Strategy. The strategy would provide a necessary policy framework to guide the current and future processes for working with community led groups that may wish to take on the management responsibilities of a community asset. Members were advised that it was an important policy due to the change in Government Legislation and the council in terms of the Localism Act and the role of the Local Authority, its assets and the community and how they access those provisions. The policy set out an effective process that would be put in place when dealing with community groups who wish to access council assets and the process of transferring those assets to them. The strategy would provide a transparent and fair process to how community assets were assessed and managed and ensure that the delivery of the assets and use were monitored.

Questions and observations were made around the following areas:

- Does the strategy extend to the councils agricultural estate e.g. farmland that was no longer in use. *Members were informed that the strategy was mainly aimed at community centre type assets.*
- Will it be compulsory for community groups to undertake the community asset transfer or can they opt out. *Members were advised that it was not compulsory but as each asset became available the strategy would be applied.*
- Members sought clarification on what happened if the community asset was transferred and it did not work. Some community associations were concerned that the transfer would not be underwritten by the council in the event something went wrong. *Members were informed that each community asset transfer would be different. They would be closely monitored to ensure they delivered what they had set out to do when taking over the community asset. The intention of the policy was not to put people off but to ensure there were sound arrangements in place for passing the community assets over to the community.*
- Members noted that the policy was not just about leasing community assets but also about Freehold Disposal. Were there any assets that the council were intending to dispose of below the market value and if so when would it occur? *Members were advised that currently there were no assets available to dispose of and the council were solely looking at leasing of community assets on long term leases of approximately 25 years. A full list of community assets would be published in the medium term financial plan. The policy stated that if there were any assets available for disposal then the first option would be to realise a value however if there was a strong community need this would be considered alongside financial implications to the council.*

- Are the roads part of the council's assets? *The Chairman responded that the council did not own the roads.*

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee requested that the Community Asset Transfer Strategy be brought back to the Committee at a future date when fully developed.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee endorsed the Community Asset Transfer Strategy and recommended the Strategy to Cabinet for approval.

9. Notice of Intention to Take Key Decisions

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Notice of Intention to Take Key Decisions, 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.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee noted the Notice of Intention to Take Key Decisions and requested further information on the following decisions:

- Amendment to the Affordable Housing Capital Funding Policy – KEY/04OCT13/02 – Group Manager Strategic Planning & Enabling to provide a briefing note.
- Bourges Boulevard Improvement Scheme: Bright Street to Crescent Bridge – KEY/04OCT13/04 – Members sought clarification on this decision. The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services advised that the decision was about bringing the funding of the project forward and confirmed that it was already budgeted for in the current medium term financial plan.

10. Work Programme 2013/2014

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2013/14 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

ACTION AGREED

To confirm the work programme for 2013/14 and the Senior Governance Officer to include any additional items as requested during the meeting.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 15 October 2013 – Extraordinary Meeting
Thursday, 7 November 2013

The meeting began at 7.06pm and ended at 9.45pm

CHAIRMAN