

STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 6
19 NOVEMBER 2013	Public Report

Report of the Cabinet Member for Environmental Capital and Neighbourhoods

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PORTFOLIO PROGRESS REPORT FROM CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT CAPITAL AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Members with a progress report from the Cabinet Member for Environmental Capital and Neighbourhoods in relation to matters relevant to this committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to scrutinise the progress made on the Cabinet Member's Portfolio by providing challenge where necessary and to suggest ideas and initiatives to support improvements in performance.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy aims to deliver a bigger and better Peterborough, through improving the quality of life for all. The portfolio held by the Cabinet Member for Communities and Targeted Services covers those aspects that fall within the Strong and Supportive Communities priority of the Strategy.

4. BACKGROUND

The responsibilities held by the portfolio holder relevant to this committee are for Neighbourhoods Support, including strategic long term problem solving and operational community issues.

5. KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 The team has seen some changes following the cessation of Neighbourhood Committees and subsequent staff restructures. There remains however a very strong commitment for the newly named communities and targeted services team to drive forward and embed the principles of Localism across the breadth of the council's services. An over-arching citywide approach is now in place that ensures a continuity of service to all communities which provides a here and now focused response for local concerns as well as a strategic approach to forward planning on community infrastructure requirements.

5.2 Supporting Local Communities

The Cabinet Member has been driving the new approach to ensure that the calls for service from residents, community groups, partner agencies and elected members are effectively processed, actioned, monitored and resolved. Monthly 'Mystery Shops' on calls for service have recently commenced the results of which will be provided to Managers for action as appropriate as well as identifying potential staff training needs. The focus here is to identify and plug gaps in service and promote new and efficient ways in which to work not just across the local authority but also with our external partners in both the statutory and voluntary sectors. Quality of life issues and improved customer service are also at the forefront of this work the aim of which is to ensure action and responses to local issues are appropriate, timely and robust.

Another area of importance is the identification and proactive management/resolution of trends that may emerge. Identifying solutions will take on many forms including utilising expertise at Neighbourhood Delivery Teams, building upon flexibility under the Localism Act, and researching how other local authority areas have addressed matters of local importance. Another key element in identifying local solutions to local problems will be by working with key local community groups especially within the Micro-beat (high needs) areas of the city. This work has commenced with the likes of MANERP and will continue to be taken forward in the coming months.

Work to identify Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for certain areas of the business is underway and the calls for service activity is an integral part of this. Joining up these two pieces of work is paramount if a coherent way forward is to be identified.

It is anticipated that very soon the required systems will be in place to provide monthly update reports to all ward members to inform them of service requests in their ward and would typically cover such detail as the volume and type of service requests. As time moves on it is planned that the information provided will expand so that members have a much greater feel for activities in their ward.

5.3 Operational Partnership Co-ordination

To continue the successful partnership arrangements in place with the Safer Peterborough Partnership teams, each sector has a dedicated multi agency Neighbourhood Delivery Team (NDT) which will convene on a monthly basis to run in line with the Neighbourhood Panel meetings. These meetings are Chaired by the communities and targeted services team with the aim to:

- function as a programme task & finish team for Micro-beat (high need) areas: Operation CANdo / WWRAP / HALO
- oversee the delivery of the police Micro-beat action plans
- problem-solve panel priorities and other issues of operational concern on a 3-month rolling cycle in line with the police led public panel meetings
- co-ordinate partnership participation in area activities (Neighbourhood Panel priorities, days/weeks of action, street surgeries, walkabouts)
- oversee strategic growth and development for the area via future & live project updates
- utilise information/trend data from service request analysis to identify & problem solve local issues

The NDT's are accountable to the Safer Peterborough Partnership Board and highlight day to day concerns that may require a more intensive form of intervention.

The multi-agency nature of the NDT's is a key factor to the successful resolution of local issues and its constant evolution and ability to adapt to the changing nature of life in Peterborough is crucial if it is to remain at the forefront of helping to make the city a safer, cleaner, greener and stronger place to live and work. This can only be achieved through robust stakeholder management and regular activities take place to forge and maintain the types of relationships

required to make the NDTs a continued success.

5.4 **Community Infrastructure Planning**

The planning gain holding balances for S106/POIS are updated by planning officers in preparation for a cross-departmental officer review which is held on a quarterly basis. In turn the Neighbourhood Manager will review the balances to undertake an assessment of funding available within each ward.

It is hoped that the system and processes developed by the Neighbourhood Manager will become embedded with members and the cross-departmental officer group and ultimately adopted as an accepted corporate approach to ensure there is a mechanism in place that is responsive to the local needs. To ensure this is as robust as possible all systems have been aligned to planning processes which the Head of Planning supports.

Meetings will be held with all members and Parish Councils as required to strategically plan and prioritise needs in the ward. To gain a full understanding of the growth and regeneration needs in each area, established local groups, such as Parish Councils, are being urged to undertake community needs assessments to identify priority issues to target resources. For those areas not choosing to develop a Neighbourhood Plan this will be an effective way to influence how resources are targeted towards issues of most need.

5.5 **Community Infrastructure Project Management**

Officers in the communities and targeted services team co-ordinate activities for a variety of projects. These projects are funded by a range of core budgets, Section 106, former neighbourhood committees or external funds. The teams key involvement ensures that comprehensive consultation with local stakeholders is undertaken and that there is a joined up and holistic approach to local initiatives.

The following demonstrates the range and volume of initiatives the team are currently involved with:

Arts & Culture	1
Asset Transfers	9
Community Assets	9
Engagement	1
Infrastructure Planning	5
Sports & Leisure	0
Training	0
Environmental Crime	0
Gating	1
Highways	7
Lighting	3
Parking	3
Parks & Open Spaces	22
Recycling	1
Verge Improvements	4

The major schemes/projects currently involve:

- New primary school development in Gladstone and dual use agreement with the adjacent community centre (Central ward)
- Hampton Skate Park (Orton with Hampton)
- Hampton Community Park (Orton with Hampton)
- Cardea Community Pavillion (Stanground Cental)
- Conneygree Road Verge Improvement (Stanground Central)
- Regeneration Plan for Eastfield/Eastgate (East)

- Paston Housing Development (Paston)
- Orton Waterville Village Hall Improvements (Orton Waterville)
- Westwood Environmental Improvement Plan
- Community Asset Transfer Programme

The team are also one of the key contacts within PCC for improvements in parks and open spaces. This is in recognition of the intelligence gathered via community engagement and partnership working which can influence the decisions for what is required or needs to be prioritised. Working closely with the client team and Enterprise Peterborough a Green Open Spaces Implementation Plan (GOSIP) has been developed as a means of managing and improving the city's open spaces.

Phase 1 of the GOSIP programme is now underway and the following parks and/or open spaces are to initially benefit:

- Horseshoe Park
- Eye & Thorney Open Spaces
- Mountsteven Recreation Ground
- Bishops Road
- Stanley Recreation Ground
- Oakdale Avenue Play Area

Early discussions are now underway with Enterprise and the client team regarding the development and implementation of a wider landscaping maintenance programme

5.6 **Community Asset Management and Community Asset Transfers**

The Neighbourhood Manager continues to work closely with colleagues in Strategic Property (Serco), Enterprise, Children's Services, Growth & Regeneration, Planning and Legal Services to co-ordinate the management responsibilities of PCC's community assets. There are currently 52 community facilities Monthly meetings are chaired by the Neighbourhood Manager to bring these parties together to jointly assess progress on extension, refurbishment, governance or general repairs and maintenance issues.

Community organisations have owned or managed buildings or land for many years. In Peterborough this includes buildings owned and managed by the civil society sector as well as community buildings owned by the council and leased or licensed to local organisations. The council is committed to extending this much further through a proactive work programme on community asset transfer (CAT) over the next 5 years where it brings benefits and added value to communities, whilst contributing to the council's aims and priorities. The key drivers for this approach are the Localism Act which encourages community empowerment and council commitment to protect many locally valued community based facilities through community asset transfer.

The Asset Transfer Strategy was approved by Cabinet in September 2013. It was also agreed to extend the revenue budget for the assets currently in scope for transfer until the end of the financial year. The assets in scope involve the 8 former play centres that were declared surplus as part of budget cuts from April 2013.

Driven by a passion to not see valued community assets close, new and existing local groups have stepped up to declare their interest in taking on the management of these centres.

Since April there has been significant progress on developing the capacity of these groups. Working closely with CanDo Communities (an independent charity who work nationally but are based locally in Peterborough to support 3rd sector groups) have been provided with advice, guidance and training on issues such as governance, business planning.

Six of the eight play centres have so far been successful with their applications to Central Government for pre-feasibility grants of up to £10,000. This will allow for the next stage of the asset transfer work to be undertaken and will include funding of independent building surveys,

legal works, consultation events and business planning sessions.

The key challenge for each local group taking on these centres will be the demonstration of their understanding and ability to convert their enthusiasm into the practical, viable and sustainable management of the assets.

5.6.1 **Charteris Centre / Dogsthorpe & Welland Neighbourhood Partnership:**

- A successful summer programme of events has been run in conjunction with Families First
- Have now received confirmation of pre-feasibility funding
- CanDo Communities will be working with the group to develop detailed business plan and carry out a building survey
- City College have agreed to take the tenancy at will whilst longer term lease options are explored.
- This community led group will develop and manage the former play centre but also act as a steering group for other local assets (John Mansfield Centre and Focus Centre) to ensure the wider community benefits from a needs based approach in this ward – thereby acting as a ward wide community asset management group.

5.6.2 **Chestnuts Centre / Norman Road Community Association**

- Intention to apply for pre-feasibility funding, however no application yet made.
- No further work can take place with CanDo Communities until the community group have the funds.
- The Community Association managing the adjacent community centre intend to extend their existing lease to incorporate responsibility for the former play area
- This location is an area to benefit from large sums of S106/POIS as a result of nearby development and the centre and its grounds are in scope for an improvement plan

5.6.3 **Copeland Centre / Copeland Community Association**

- Copeland community association has agreed to take on the tenancy at will & longer term lease as an extension to their existing arrangement for the adjacent community centre.
- No application for pre-feasibility funding has been made as the group feel they can be self-sufficient in managing the centre based on their track record of managing the community centre

5.6.4 **Crofts Corner / Bretton Parish Council**

- Pre-feasibility funding application now approved
- Bretton Parish Council have signed the tenancy at will and negotiating lease terms will now commence
- The building is likely to continue running play activities for children
- A successful summer programme of events has been run in conjunction with Families First

5.6.5 **Paston Farm Adventure Play Centre / Paston Farm Enterprises**

- Pre-feasibility funding approved
- Building survey has now been completed, a number of issues have been identified for the council to consider rectifying
- An open day has been held to consult with local people on the future use of building
- Quotes are being obtained to provide separate pedestrian & vehicle access points and additional parking

- Residents from the new Paston developments are utilising the centre for meeting space following the development of a new resident group as that area has no community facility yet.

5.6.6 **The Spinney / Little Miracles**

- Pre-feasibility funding approved.
- Little Miracles will take on the tenancy at will
- BBC DIY SOS TV show has demolished the existing building and rebuilt a new, purpose built facility at no cost to PCC or Little Miracles.
- The show will be broadcasted as part of this year's Children in Need campaign.
- Little Miracles will work with a community led steering group to ensure the centre is accessible for wider community use

5.6.7 **Thistle Drive Centre / CANdo Communities**

- CanDo Communities have agreed to take the tenancy at will / lease
- Pre-feasibility funding has been successfully received
- Building survey has now been completed, a number of issues have been identified for the council to consider rectifying.
- Emergency roof repairs have recently been approved

5.6.8 **The Tunnel / Orton Community Association**

- Pre-feasibility funding approved
- Significant enhancement to number and range of activities now taking place at the centre
- Uncertain regarding the future viability of the asset but will continue to work in close partnership with OCA in securing the continuity of this local provision

5.7 **Parish Liaison**

A new schedule of meetings is in place for the Parish Liaison Committee and its Sub Group which oversees and progresses on matters such as agenda setting for the committee quarterly meetings, parishing pilots, ward boundary reviews and planning for the annual conference.

This year's annual conference is scheduled for 26 November and will be held at Bedford Hall in Thorney.

It is intended that these meetings enable a meaningful networking opportunity to encourage peer engagement and collaboration with and between parished communities.

The Neighbourhoods Team supports both groups and aims to see the network become self-sufficient and offering on-going peer support

6. **IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 It is anticipated that the Scrutiny Committee will comment on and make recommendations relating to the updates provided in this report in order that delivery potential is maximised for the benefit of our communities.

7. NEXT STEPS

7.1 Comments and recommendations made by Scrutiny Committee members will be considered as part of the ongoing development and delivery of specific business areas.

8. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

8.1 Community Asset Transfer Strategy

9. APPENDICES

None

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