



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT
CAPITAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE BOUGES/VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL
ON 13 JANUARY 2015**

Present: Councillors N Arculus (Chairman), C Harper, Y Maqbool, Iqbal, JA Fox, M Fletcher, N Thulbourn,

Also Present: Councillor JR Fox, Group Leader, Werrington First
Councillor Sandford, Group Leader, Liberal Democrats
Councillor N North, Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment Capital
Councillor Eley, Cabinet Member for Street Scene, Waste Management and Communications
Steve Bowyer, Interim Chief Executive, Opportunity Peterborough

Officers Present: Simon Machen, Director of Growth and Regeneration
Jonathan Lewis, Assistant Director for Education, Resources and Corporate Property
Jo Gresty, Farms Manager
Mark Speed, Transport and Infrastructure Planning Manager
Richard Mayes, Principal Passenger Transport Contracts and Planning Officer
James Collingridge, Enterprise Partnership Manager
Dominic Hudson, Strategic Partnership Manager
Paulina Ford, Senior Governance Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Brown. Councillor Harper was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Brown.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

Councillor Sandford in attendance as Group Leader for the Liberal Democrats declared that he worked for the Woodland Trust and this had been mentioned in the report at item 6, Draft Strategy for the Councils Farms Estate – Final Report of the Task and Finish Group. There were no further declarations of interest or whipping declarations.

3. Minutes of Meetings held on

- 16 October 2014
- 6 November 2014
- 2 December 2014 – Call-in
- 3 December 2014 – Joint Meeting of the Scrutiny Committees and Commissions – Budget – Phase 1

The minutes of the meetings held on 16 October, 6 November, 2 December and 3 December 2014 were all 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. Opportunity Peterborough Annual Report

The report was introduced by the Interim Chief Executive and provided the Committee with a review of the draft Economic Action Plan development, a review of Opportunity Peterborough activity 2014 and an economic snapshot for December 2014.

Questions and observations were made around the following areas:

- If Peterborough were to increase its marketing budget do you think there would be a short to medium term return on investment? *Members were informed that an increased marketing budget would not provide a good return on investment. The reputation and profile for Peterborough had grown over the past few years and investment inquiries were coming in and therefore it was not necessary to undertake a big marketing campaign. There were different ways of raising the profile now.*
- Have you commissioned any independent research which has compared Peterborough's profile with other cities like Milton Keynes? *Members were informed that no reports had been commissioned and to do so would be costly.*
- What business sectors were being targeted? *Members were informed that Opportunity Peterborough (OP) were promoting Peterborough as a good place to do business. The key elements that businesses looked for when deciding where to locate their business were: can they set up the business easily, can they trade well, and was there a good local infrastructure and good business networks. Members were also advised that during Qtr. 4 and Qtr. 1 of the new financial year OP would be targeting digital sector companies. Manufacturing and food and drink sectors were also strong sectors in Peterborough.*
- With such a broad brush approach to targeting sectors how could the council invest and put the correct infrastructure in place. *The Interim Chief Executive responded that OP had not taken a broad brush approach and that there were strong sectors in Peterborough such as manufacturing, environmental and digital. When companies made enquiries OP contacted the local colleges and schools to make sure the skills would be in place for those companies. OP meet with University Peterborough to make sure the courses on offer met the skills required by the incoming companies.*
- Members noted that all local schools had signed up to the Skills Service and over 1100 businesses had pledged their support. Was the Careers Festival which was held in the summer a one off event or would it be held annually? *Members were informed that this was the second year that it had been held and it had grown in success from the previous year. It would be held again in 2015 and the offer would be broadened.*
- Was there something that Peterborough was not offering which had deterred some businesses from coming to Peterborough? *Members were informed that the main things businesses looked for when considering where to locate their business was could they do business there and then could they recruit locally. The city scored very highly for manufacturing, distribution and engineering. One thing that the city was lacking was the fact that Peterborough was not a university city but could not say that this was a contributing factor to deterring companies from moving to the city.*
- Recognising that having a university was a key priority why did this not feature more prominently in the action plan. *Members were informed that having a university would feature more prominently in the action plan going forward. Members were reminded that Peterborough did have a university centre though.*
- Was there anything more the council could do? *Members were advised that it was important that the profile of the University Centre Peterborough was raised and supported to ensure success.*
- Members requested that a standard set of statistics be provided so that historical data and trends could be shown. *Members were informed that the statistics could be put in*

graph format to show trends. Work was being done by the Economic Development Officer on an up to date economic report. The Chair suggested that the Interim Chief Executive contact Councillor Thulbourn to discuss a format for presentation of statistics going forward.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee noted the report and requested that the Interim Chief Executive of Opportunity Peterborough take the following actions:

1. Contact Cllr Thulbourn to discuss a format for presentation of statistics and information.
2. Provide the Committee with a comprehensive set of data and statistics when available.
3. Report back to the Committee in one year.

6. A Draft Strategy for the Council's Farms Estate - Final Report of the Task and Finish Group

The report was introduced by the Assistant Director for Education, Resources and Corporate Property on behalf of the Task and Finish Group. The report provided the Committee with the outcomes of the Task and Finish Group which was tasked to review and develop a strategy for the Council's Farms Estate. The strategy was presented to the Committee for comment and review. Councillor Harrington and Councillor Murphy who were members of the Task and Finish Group also addressed the Committee and spoke about the work of the Task and Finish Group and the context and background to the development of the strategy.

Questions and observations were made around the following areas:

- Members sought clarification from the Farms Manager whether the council had a legal duty to provide an agricultural estate. Members had understood that if the council held a farms estate then the council had a legal duty to make it available to new entrants but that there was no obligation as a local authority to hold a farms estate. *The Farms Manager responded that as a small holdings authority the council had a duty to try and make small holdings available to new entrants. However the government has said that it would not legislate to enforce this legislation. A lot of small holdings authorities had sold their estates.*
- How many of the small holdings were let to new entrants in to the agricultural sector. *Members were informed that one small holding had been let to someone about five years ago who was a tenants son but a new entrant. The Assistant Director advised that there had been interest from land agents who had people interested in starting as new entrants in the agricultural sector.*
- What is the cost of borrowing £3M's worth of capital at the council's current cost of capital and is the £275K income figure net of that cost of capital. *Members were informed that the rate of borrowing was approximately £70K a year to borrow £1M, therefore approximately £210K to borrow £3M.*
- Members commented that the report was good in content but did not include other options as a comparison. This would have provided further evidence for the Committee to understand how the conclusions had been reached by the Task and Finish Group. *Members were informed that other options had been considered by the Task and Finish Group.*
- Members requested that the other options considered should be included within the report.
- Did the Task and Finish Group explore if the best option was to make the Farms Estate available to new entrants. *Members were informed that this was considered and the Task and Finish Group had also looked at how allocation to new entrants would be made.*
- Would the council need to subsidise new entrants to encourage them rather than letting the land at a market rate. *The Farms Manager responded that a direct subsidy would not be applied but part of the strategy would be to let some land to Agri businesses for a*

period of time to maximise the rental opportunity. A new entrant would be expected to pay a good rent.

- If Peterborough were to gain University status would it be possible to have a University working farm and would there be any demand for this. *The Farms Manager responded that he had had several meetings with the Regional College who recognised that there was considerable demand from students for an agricultural and environmental syllabus.*
- Members asked if the land could be built on. *The Director for Growth and Regeneration advised that this was not possible as all of the land was in a high flood risk area.*

Councillor Thulbourn seconded by Councillor Arculus put forward a recommendation that the Task and Finish Group continue and redraft the strategy to include additional information such as financial information and alternative options considered. The strategy should then be brought back to the next meeting on 17 March 2015 for further consideration. The recommendation was put to the vote and agreed. (6 in favour, Cllr JA Fox did not vote as she was a Member of the Task and Finish Group, 0 against)

The Chairman commended the work of the Task and Finish Group and thanked the Officers supporting the Task and Finish group for the work done so far.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommend that:

1. The Task and Finish Group should continue until the Strategy has been represented to the Committee at its next meeting on 17 March 2015.
2. The Strategy is re drafted to include additional information to evidence other options that had been considered and further financial information that had been considered by the Task and Finish Group when drafting the Strategy.
3. The Strategy to include the mention of any possible educational opportunities.
4. The final draft of the Strategy to be brought back to the Committee on 17 March 2015 for endorsement before going to Cabinet for approval.

7. Brown Bins Review

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Street Scene, Waste Management and Communications and provided the Committee with an update on the chargeable garden waste collection service which was introduced on 27 May 2014.

Questions and observations were made around the following areas:

- Was it the intention that the charge for the brown bin service would just cover the costs of the service or was it the intention to make a profit? *Members were advised that the council were not allowed to make a net profit as it was against the rules of Local Government Finance and any surplus generated had to be reinvested back into the service and cover the costs of the service.*
- One Member advised that they were not in agreement with the charge for the brown bin service and the take up had been relatively low with people putting garden waste in the black bin. This was not helping Peterborough towards its objective of being an Environmental City. *The Cabinet Member responded that unfortunately there was a deficit and ways had to be found to deliver services. There had been no choice but to introduce the charge. Garden waste was being put into black bins but the increase had been less than 10% since the introduction of the charge for brown bins which had been less than anticipated.*
- Members commented on the amount of waste going into the black bin which could be recycled or could have gone into the brown bin. *Members were informed that there was still a large amount of residual waste going into the black bin which needed to either go to recycling or food waste and some of that was garden waste.*

- Members sought clarification with regard to table 5.3.1 and the composition analysis comparing food waste, dry recycling, garden waste and black bin waste and wanted to know if the figures were post brown bin scheme. *Members were advised that the figures were post introduction of the scheme. There was a composition analysis completed in 2010 which showed 5% garden waste going into the black bin and 41% food waste in the black bin which was pre the food waste collection scheme.*
- Members commented that more work needed to be done with regard to the food waste service. *The Cabinet Member responded that research and analysis was being carried out with regard to looking at making the food waste collection service easier and also introducing the service to people who lived in flats.*
- Members commented that there was still a number of communities that did not understand what waste needed to go into which receptacle. *Members were informed that under the Green and Clean Campaign target areas were being looked at where it was thought people did not understand how to use the various receptacles to give them guidance in using the correct receptacle.*
- Members were concerned about the items that were not going into both the black or brown bins and where they were being tipped. How was this being addressed? *Members were informed that Amey who collect the fly tipping had not reported this as a significant issue and the volume of fly tipping had decreased since last year. Members were advised to report all fly tipping issues to ensure Amey were aware of the scale of the issue, if they were not made aware then the issue could not be addressed or recorded.*
- The organisation WRAP recommend that the best way for local authorities to boost the recycling rate was to have separate containers in the bins e.g. glass, plastic, food etc. Is this something that Peterborough have considered? *The Cabinet Member responded that he sat on a Board called Recycle for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (RECAP) and there were representatives from the District Authorities, Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough. This suggestion had been looked at but other authorities which had this in place had not achieved any better results.*
- Members noted an error in paragraph 5.1.3 which stated that collections were being made at Elton which was outside of the Peterborough authority. *Members were informed that it should have read Etton and this would be changed.*
- Shredded paper cannot be put in to the green bin. Why? *Members were informed that the equipment in place to deal with recycled matter could not accept shredded paper as it blocked the equipment. Shredded paper should be put in the black bin.*

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee noted the report.

8. Local Transport Plan Programme of Works 2015/16

The report was introduced by the Transport and Infrastructure Planning Manager. The report provided the Committee with an opportunity to consider the proposed Local Transport Plan Programme of Works for 2015/16 and to comment on the programme prior to submission to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Services.

Questions and observations were made around the following areas:

- Members asked if a comprehensive survey of all roads was carried out as it appeared that not all roads were listed that were in a bad state and in need of repair. *Members were informed that there were highway inspectors that had certain areas to cover and new those areas well. The assets were surveyed but not every asset was surveyed each year. If Members knew of areas that were in bad repair that were not on the list they should inform the Transport and Infrastructure Planning Manager and a survey would be conducted.*

- Members noted that a scheme of work to paint Oundle Road footbridge cost £77,500 and asked why it was going to cost so much. *The Transport and Infrastructure Planning Manager offered to circulate further information on this item to members of the Committee.*
- Are cycle ways part of the list of assets? *Members were advised that they were.*
- The Director of Growth and Regeneration informed Members that the Local Transport Programme of Works was operated on an asset condition based approach to maintaining the highway asset. Many requests were received from councillors and members of the public and these were logged. Maintenance was based on the condition of the asset first and foremost and the amount of use the asset received. Safety was also an important consideration.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee noted the report.

9. Report on the Impact of Subsidised Bus Services Cuts

The report was introduced by the Transport and Infrastructure Planning Manager. The report outlined for the Committee the impact of subsidised bus service cuts following the changes implemented on 1 October 2013. Also contained within the report was a comparison regarding certain key performance indicators (KPI's) and set out potential further steps as part of an ongoing review process.

Questions and observations were made around the following areas:

- Have you had any feedback from Stagecoach as to whether the new routes are viable? *Members were informed that the council would not be subsidising the routes if they were commercially viable. The council were not provided with the exact passenger usage figures from Stagecoach but from the numbers that the council have they were not commercially viable.*
- Members queried why officers were unable to obtain the exact passenger numbers from Stagecoach especially as the council subsidises them. Did the council challenge Stagecoach? *Members were advised that the council did subsidise all of the city routes through a voluntary partnership to run additional night time and some weekend services. Figures could be obtained on the subsidised routes. Regular meetings were held with Stagecoach and challenge was provided at those meetings.*
- Members commented that urban areas such as Fengate had been particularly hit by the cut in the bus service. At the Joint Scrutiny Committee Budget Meeting in December a recommendation was made to Cabinet that £150K be found from the savings in Phase 1 of the budget to reinvest in a further bus route in Peterborough. Members asked why Cabinet had not taken the recommendation forward. *The Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment Capital responded that the £150K was not additional money and was part of the savings within the budget. If the £150K was put back into the budget there would have to be a saving from another service.*
- Members commented that the Community Link service was an excellent service and should be promoted more.

The Chair thanked officers for the work completed on the report and answering questions from the Committee.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee noted the report.

10. Forward Plan of Executive Decisions

The Committee received the latest version of the Forward Plan of Executive 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 month. Members were invited to comment on the Forward Plan and where appropriate identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's work programme.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee noted the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions.

11. Work Programme 2014/2015

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2014/15 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

The Senior Governance Officer informed the Committee that some Councillors had requested that the Scrutiny in a Day – One Year On event which had been scheduled for 27 February in the afternoon should be moved to an evening event to allow more people to attend. As the event would only run for three hours this would be possible. The Senior Governance Officer sought the committee's views on this.

Members were also reminded that there was another Joint Scrutiny Meeting of the Budget on 9 February.

ACTION AGREED

To confirm the work programme for 2014/15 and the Senior Governance Officer to include any additional items as requested during the meeting.

12. Date of Next Meeting

17 March 2015

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 9.40pm

CHAIRMAN

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