

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL
ON 15 MARCH 2017**

Present: Councillors Peach (Chairman), C Harper (Vice Chairman),
R Brown, H Fuller, D King, M Sims, A Ellis, R Ferris, E Murphy,
N Sandford, J A Fox

Also Present: Richard Clarke, Parish Councillor Co-opted Member
Keith Lievesley, Parish Councillor Co-opted Member
Councillor Janet Goodwin, Cabinet Member for City Centre
Management, Culture and Tourism
Councillor Graham Casey, Cabinet Advisor to the Cabinet
Member for City Centre Management, Culture and Tourism
(Culture and Recreation)
Kevin Tighe, Chief Executive, Vivacity

Officers Present: Simon Machen, Corporate Director, Growth and Regeneration
Annette Joyce, Service Director, City Services and
Communications
Lisa Roberts, Head of Culture and Leisure
Anne Keogh, Housing and Strategic Planning Manager
Andy Tatt, Head of Peterborough Highway Services
Graeme Clark, Prevention and Enforcement Service Management
Jo Morley, Democratic Services Officer
Paulina Ford, Senior Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Cereste and Councillor Jamil. Councillor Ferris attended as substitute for Councillor Jamil, Councillor Fuller attended as substitute for Councillor Cereste.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of interest or whipping declarations.

3. Minutes of Meetings held on 16 January 2017 and 8 February 2017

The minutes of the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16 January were approved as an accurate record.

The minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Scrutiny Committees – Budget Phase 2 meeting held on 8 February 2017 were 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. Portfolio Progress Report: Cabinet Member for City Centre Management, Culture and Tourism

The Cabinet Member for City Centre Management, Culture and Tourism introduced the report which provided an overview and progress of the key activities within the Portfolio.

The Cabinet Member for City Centre Management, Culture and Tourism accompanied by the Service Director City Services and Communications, Head of Culture and Leisure and the Chief Executive of Vivacity responded to comments and questions raised by Members. A summary of responses included:

- City centre management was concerned with such things as business performance, the cleanliness of general areas of the city centre and the schedule of events planned for the City Centre. City Centre management aimed to make the City a better place to live, visit, work and do business in.
- The Culture and Tourism brief was about making events and resources available to more people, more often.
- There was an emerging Sports Strategy that would guide the future provision of sport and sporting facilities in the City.
- The Music Hub had been set up to deliver musical programmes across the city's schools and through extra-curricular activities. It had a very high level of school participation and had been very successful.
- Vivacity delivered services in the following areas; Art, Heritage, Library and Archive and Sport.
- The operations budget for Christmas lights was £100,400. This included erection and dismantling of lights, repairs and storage as well as the cost of the event and the publicity. The annual costs depended on quotes received from contractors each year.
- The Visitor Information Centre had been moved to a much more commercially favoured city centre location but unfortunately this necessitated a closure of the service for two weeks in July at peak visitor time. The Council was disappointed with the timeline but if they had not moved when they did they would have lost out on a very good commercial offer for their old premises.
- The Bronze Age site at Flag Fen and Moss Park gave the City a unique opportunity to attract more visitors. A marketing strategy would be developed around these attractions.
- Funding from British Cycling for a velodrome to be built at the Embankment had been put forward but very late in the day they had stipulated that a 1.8 metre fence needed to be built around it. This would have prevented anyone from walking across the Embankment and therefore the initiative could not be taken forward.
- The Council was developing an Active Lifestyle Strategy which would replace the current Sports Strategy and would include an investigation into the water based facilities that the City needed.
- Members commented that there had been evidence to support the building of an Olympic sized swimming pool in the City before the Regional Pool had been built. Peterborough Children's Swimming Club despite being small in size was in the top 10 swimming clubs in the country and was excelling. The Regional Pool that they were currently using was 2cm short of 25 metres and therefore could not be used to hold events.
- Members were informed that at the time the Council had not known that the earmarked site was a waste site that prevented them from putting the pool in the ground. Prohibitive costs meant that only a 25 metre pool was built.
- The Council had collaborated with the Portuguese community and supported the Portuguese festival that had previously been held in the City Centre. The event had now grown too large for the City Centre and had been relocated to the Peterborough Rugby Club.

- The Council now had a budget for the acquisition of North Westgate and was looking to drive commercial development in order to bring in revenue adopting the same approach that it had done with the Fletton Quays development. It was too early to say what shape that development would take.
- Promoters had not come forward with any plans to replace the Willow festival.
- The Council would look into the possibility of a traditional Christmas Market but wanted to be careful that the existing market and retail provision was not compromised and that they would not end up with the same offer as other local Christmas Markets.
- Vivacity, alongside other Council departments was stepping up to the challenge of increasing reading levels at KS2. There was a five year action plan in place which would be out for consultation in May which looked at extended library opening hours, improved reading schemes, a school library bus that would visit every primary school and ensuring that every child had a library card.
- Active Travel was an area within the Sports Strategy that looked at Walking, Cycling, Parks and other active green spaces. This covered all areas of the city including parishes and would therefore support and promote hiking and walking along the rural parish footpath network.
- Both rugby clubs in Peterborough (Lions RUFC and Peterborough RUFC) would be consulted with regard to the Sports Strategy and the funding for the two clubs would be unpicked and redistributed so that it was fair to both clubs.
- There was very little vacant office accommodation in the city centre as there was a shortage of office space and some existing stock was not fit for purpose and therefore was being redeveloped to provide additional housing.
- The Devolution deal meant that higher student numbers were anticipated and that more eating and drinking outlets would be needed for the city centre.
- Next year Peterborough Cathedral would be 900 years old and a group of stakeholders had already been meeting to look at how the city should be 'branded' in light of this fact.
- Vivacity delivered 1.8 million 'units' last year. A unit consisted of items such as a swim / a visit to the library/ a museum visit etc. many of which were free or low cost.
- The new mill development at Fletton Quays arose from the Cultural Strategy that was in place and would look to provide a multi-disciplinary creative and digital hub for the city. The arts organisation Metal which was supported by the Arts Council who had designated Peterborough as one of their strategic cities would make the Mill their new home and be the anchor tenant. The Council would no longer have to subsidise Metal as going forward they would be self-sustaining. The Council was aware that the new Mill site needed to attract new audiences rather than draw them away from existing sites such as the Key and the Embankment.
- The Peterborough Music Makers website featured an anti-clash diary where organisations advertise their events so that audiences could attend as many performances as possible and become cross-fertilised.
- The planning application for the Broadway Theatre had been refused but the applicants had come back with several modifications which would go back to Planning for consideration. The Council recognised that Broadway was an iconic venue but it was unable to intervene with the Planning process at this point in time.
- The Tour series cycling event would not be returning this year as there was no budget.
- There would be a Commercial Manager Post advertised shortly and part of the remit of the role would be responsible for seeking sponsorship for a lot of events in the city.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for City Centre Management, Culture and Tourism for presenting her report.

ACTIONS AGREED

1. The Committee noted the report and requested that the Service Director, City Services and Communications provide the following information to the Committee:
 - Visitor numbers to the City
 - A briefing note on the branding of Peterborough 900 which is being undertaken by the Cathedral and other stakeholders
 - List of events that are held in Peterborough
2. The Committee also agreed that the following items be brought to the Committee at a future meeting:
 - The Sports Strategy
 - The Culture Strategy
 - An update on the progress of achieving an Olympic Swimming Pool for the City and
 - An update on the progress of the Broadway Theatre planning application

6. Update on the Peterborough Housing Strategy 2016 to 2021

The Housing and Strategic Planning Manager introduced the report which provided the Committee with an overview of the outcome of the public consultation on the draft Housing Strategy. The purpose of the report was to seek comments from the Committee on the final version of the Peterborough Housing Strategy 2016 to 2021 prior to its consideration by Cabinet and Council.

The Housing and Strategic Planning Manager responded to comments and questions raised by Members. A summary of responses included:

- Some of the responses from the Public consultation were more Planning focussed but these had been redirected to that department.
- The reference in the strategy to the Shared Lives Scheme would be removed as the take-up had been very low and the decision had been taken not to expand the scheme and instead to re-direct efforts elsewhere.
- References to Zero Carbon housing will not be included in the emerging Local Plan because the Code for Sustainable Homes has been superseded by Building regulations. Achieving Zero Carbon housing would not be financially viable and ultimately the costs for it would come from the affordable housing allocation.
- Many Registered Providers were concerned that the Right to Buy programme for their tenants which would come into effect in 2018 would lose them money. Registered Providers also felt that this could mean that the housing stock which was sold would not be replaced in the same location by a property of the same size type or tenure.
- The Peterborough Housing Strategy was a continually evolving strategy because of the changes that occurred at a national level and as such it was unlikely that Councils would ever get to the stage where there was a fixed picture.
- Starter homes as a product had not been discarded but there was no longer a requirement to have 20% of schemes of a certain size as starter homes. The new proposed requirement for developers that has yet to be enacted, is that 10% of all homes on a new development should be an 'affordable home ownership' product.
- 29% of all new houses built in Peterborough over the last five years had met the statutory definition of affordable housing. This was a high percentage when compared to other Councils.

- £70 million of the £170 million grant allocated as a result of Devolution had been ring fenced for Cambridge City housing, however the Council had bid into the process and Peterborough would still get housing delivery out of the remainder of this grant.
- It was noted that while the issue of homelessness forms a key strand of Priority Two within the Housing Strategy, there is also a separate Homeless Strategy which provides a more in depth analysis of the issues and actions identified for Peterborough.
- Although Developers complained that they were making very little profit, they were not being excused their contractual obligations to provide affordable housing, although alternative options had been agreed. For example, in regards to the hospital site the Council received two acres of land for a new primary school which was then discounted from their 30% affordable homes requirement.
- The Housing Strategy was set as a high level over-arching strategy that remained in place for five years but that was reviewed regularly. There were other strategies that sat underneath the overall Housing Strategy that gave a greater level of detail into specific areas such as the Homeless Strategy.
- Medesham Homes is the name of the new housing joint venture with Cross Keys homes and the first 200 homes would be coming through the pipeline shortly.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee endorse the Peterborough Housing Strategy 2016 to 2021 and recommend to Cabinet for approval and adoption by Council with the inclusion of the following amendments as tabled by The Housing and Strategic Planning Manager at the meeting:

- 1) Additional text to be added to priority 4 on page 16 of the Housing Strategy on the housing needs of people who are offenders or who misuse drugs and alcohol. This to be as follows:

Adults with chaotic lifestyles due to offending and drug and alcohol misuse

Peterborough's residents like all cities, include people that experience a combination of problems such as drug and alcohol misuse, mental health problems and offending. These issues can lead to difficulty in maintaining accommodation and significantly increases the risk of becoming homeless.

The Council provides funding to Peterborough NACRO (National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders) to provide housing related support to prolific and persistent offenders and those at risk of becoming persistent offenders due to drink, drug or substance misuse. They support individuals in maintaining their tenancy as well as re-engaging in education, training and employment. As part of this role, NACRO has established a successful working partnership with local registered providers that enables them to work with their tenants who have been given a short custodial sentence, to maintain their tenancies to return to after completing their sentence. NACRO has also formed links with a bank of private landlords operating in the City and work closely with them to address the issue of finding and maintaining accommodation.

NACRO recognises the importance of a flexible approach to providing their services. They provide outreach service at Peterborough Aspire Drug Treatment Service, Council offices, the library and local coffee shops in an effort to engage with an often hard to reach client group.

- 2) Update the strategies and policies listed in the diagram under the heading Local Context on page 7 of the housing strategy to reflect very recently adopted documents.

Remove the Aids and Adaptations Policy and Repairs Assistance Policy and replace them with the Housing Renewals Policy 2017-19 and update the Empty Homes Strategy 2012-15 with the dates of the newly adopted strategy which spans 2017-19

- 3) Remove bullet point 6 under the actions for priority 4 on page 18 to reflect the decision that the initiative relating to expansion of the Shared Lives Scheme will no longer be pursued.

7. Report of the Verge Parking Working Group

The Head of Peterborough Highway Services introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update on the progress made by the Verge Parking Working Group (VPWG) following a request to re-establish this group at Full Council following a motion from Councillor Murphy on 13 July 2016.

The Head of Peterborough Highway Services accompanied by the Prevention and Enforcement Service Manager responded to comments and questions raised by Members. A summary of responses included:

- The Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) covered the whole unitary area including parishes. In order to be activated at a local level the Council required evidence that the verge and pavement parking TRO was desired by a sufficient number of affected residents.
- Parking Charge Notices (PCN) could be issued and covered all council land and Highways. PCN's could not be issued however for a moving traffic offence e.g. driving over a verge to get to a drive.
- Members expressed concern that a response rate of 50% of properties affected and then a 70% level of those who responded being in favour of an introduction of a verge and pavement parking ban for their area was an extremely high threshold for activation.
- Persistent offenders could not be prosecuted without a Traffic Regulation Order being in place.
- Some wards had planted trees to prevent cars being parked on verges. This policy improved the environment as well as maintaining the grass verges.
- The Council were talking to the legal team to see what enforcement solutions were available to them in order to tackle the problem of large vehicles that were parked for a long period of time on verges and used for advertising purposes.
- The costs associated with putting the Traffic Regulation Order in place were approximately £1000 which covered the blanket order and the administration around it, for example the petitions that came in. Additional costs such as overtime would be incurred by the PES team who would need to enforce it. The revenue from the PCN's (Penalty Charge Notices) issued would help to subsidise these costs.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee endorse the Verge and Pavement Parking Policy Document as attached at Appendix A of the report for approval to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment Capital with the following additional recommendations:

1. That the '*response rate of 50% of properties affected or above is achieved*' is changed to '***the percentage response rate of properties affected is lowered***' (this level to be considered further by officers and subject to Legal Advice) and that "***once that percentage is achieved enforcement would then be based on a simple majority of those who responded.***"
2. That any budget requirements associated with implementing the policy be given priority.
3. That consideration be given to innovative ways of protecting the grass verges.

4. That the creation of other types of parking areas be looked into. This to be considered by the 2018/19 Cross Party budget working group.

8. Forward Plan of Executive Decisions

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's 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 forthcoming month. 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 Forward Plan of Executive Decisions.

9. Draft Work Programme 2017 - 2018

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2017/18 and agreed to wait for the Annual Work Programming meeting to decide which items should be brought before the committee for the new municipal year.

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 9.29pm

CHAIRMAN

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