

**MINUTES OF THE GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT 7PM, ON
WEDNESDAY 9 JANUARY 2019
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

- Committee Members Present:** Cllrs. Harper (Chairman), K Aitken, R Brown, G Casey (Vice-Chairman), M Farooq, D Fower, Judy Fox, A Joseph, S Martin, N Sandford, Parish Cllr. Keith Lievesley (Co-opted member)
- Also Present:** Cllr John Fox – Representing the Group Leader of the Werrington First Group
Cllr Christian Hogg – Member of the Task and Finish Group to Review Fly Tipping and Waste Policy
Parish Councillor Neil Boyce – Member of the Task and Finish Group to Review Fly Tipping and Waste Policy
Cllr. N Simons – Chairman of the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee
- Officers Present:** Richard Pearne - Head of Waste, Resources and Energy
James Collingridge – Head of Environmental Partnerships
Rob Hill – Assistant Director of Community Safety
Clair George – Acting Head of Service, Prevention and Enforcement
Chris Stanek – Strategic Planning Officer
Dave Anderson – Interim Development Director
Pete Carpenter – Acting Corporate Director of Resources

39. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillor Richard Clarke.

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of Interest or whipping declarations

41. MINUTES OF THE GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND JOINT SCRUTINY OF THE BUDGET MEETINGS HELD ON:

41.1 7 November 2018 – Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee

The Minutes of the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7 November 2018 were agreed as a true and accurate record

41.2 28 November 2018 – Joint Scrutiny of the Budget

The minutes of the Joint Scrutiny of the Budget Meeting held on 28 November 2018 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

42. CALL IN OF ANY CABINET, CABINET MEMBER OR KEY OFFICER DECISIONS

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

43. REPORT OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP TO REVIEW FLY TIPPING AND WASTE POLICY

The report was presented by the members of the Task and Finish Group: Councillor Judy Fox, A Joseph, R Brown, C Hogg, and Parish Councillor Neil Boyce.

Task and Finish Group Members were accompanied by the Head of Environmental Partnerships and the Head of Waste Resources and Energy.

The report was submitted to the Committee following a review of fly tipping and waste policy. The report asked the Committee to approve the submissions of the Task and Finish Group's recommendations to Cabinet.

The Growth, Environment and resources Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included;

- Members queried whether the £200,000 fly-tipping removal cost included private landowners and farmers paying for clearance on their own land.
- Some fly-tipping in rural areas originated from urban areas and was transported at night.
- The Group had taken into account the need for different strategies for urban and rural areas.
- One of the witnesses to the Task and Finish group had said that keep Britain Tidy had information on the different types of fly-tipping. Different communications strategies were needed in rural and urban areas.
- Members asked the extent to which 6 cameras would be adequate to address the scale of the fly-tipping problem. Officers responded that the cameras would be beneficial. Six cameras was not a large number but they were expensive, making a installing a large number of them unviable. The Group had identified that the means to identified offenders were limited and there was heavy reliance on covert surveillance. The cameras would make a significant difference as hotspots could be targeted for their deployment as part of the strategy.
- The group felt that the expense of the cameras meant that they had to pay for themselves. If they were successful, more could be deployed.
- Members suggested that there needed to be a greater focus on working with partners to reduce the amount of waste people produced, rather than just the enforcement and tackling of fly-tipping. Officers responded that the groups had had extensive discussions about the balance between education, enforcement and policy. While enforcement must be done well, this must not be the only focus.
- Members raised concerns that there were limited resources available to the Police and the Council to carry out the enforcement opportunities created by the cameras. Officers agreed that the number of officers investigating fly-tipping was lower than they would like and currently, only the council were

doing this work. The report proposed that this fact be acknowledged with help being sought from all partners.

- Members praised the recommendations in the report, especially the idea of putting crime scene tape around cases of fly tipping. Members did however feel that this would only be effective if perpetrators were conscious of enforcement work taking place. The Group added that the idea of using crime tape was a suggestion from the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign and helped to reassure members of the public that reported incidents of fly-tipping were being investigated. The tape would also discourage people from fly-tipping in the first place and instead dispose of their waste appropriately.
- Some members were keen to ensure that the tape was cleared away after being used as regular police tape was often left behind.
- Cameras would help to combat fly-tipping in all weather conditions.
- Some Members felt that the police tape would not be effective, claiming that the severe examples of fly-tipping occurred under 'No Fly-tipping' signage. Members also asked if the Group had spoken to any fly-tippers and if discussions had taken place with the Police and Crime Commissioner to allocate officers to tackling the problem. Members of the group responded that the police had given evidence to the group. They did not get involved in fly-tipping issues but the group would want them to. Officers added that the group had not had discussions with the Police and Crime Commissioner but officers had discussed the issue with him previously. He was keen to provide support on a county level. Officers were keen to engage with the local police on this and set up a joint strategy.
- The Council only had a small number of officers allocated to fly-tipping and any additional staffing would be good.
- Officers felt that any prosecutions that took place must be promoted to the public.
- Some Members felt that some people genuinely did not know about fly-tipping rules but some genuinely did not care. Some people did not understand their responsibilities.
- There was not just one solution to the problem of fly-tipping and it was yet to be seen which was the most effective.
- Members referred to prosecution figures in Appendix A, Annexe 3 and asked why there appeared to be no prosecutions between April 2018 and the present despite 1,967 investigations.

Clair George, the Acting Head of Service – Prevention and Enforcement joined Officers and Group Members to Answer this question.

The Acting Head of Service – Prevention and Enforcement responded that the fact that there were no prosecutions did not mean that the team P.E.S. had not sent cases through to legal services. Members then asked how many cases had been sent to legal. It was agreed that the Acting Head of Service Prevention and Enforcement and the Assistant Director of Community Safety would provide the committee with a briefing note detailing how many cases were sent to legal services for prosecution from April 2018 to the present and an explanation of the prosecution process and why it could be difficult to secure convictions.

- Members raised similar concerns, suggesting that the courts should be contacted to understand the low prosecution rate further, stated that enforcement action should not stop when people were caught by the police, and asked for an explanation for the differential between investigations and prosecutions. Officers responded that the level of evidence required to secure a prosecution was very high. Case details were sent to the Legal Department who acted as a gatekeeper and decided if a prosecution was possible. If a

witness dropped out, a prosecution might not be viable. Other enforcement tools could be used such as cautions and warnings.

- Members asked if a 'prosecution' in Annexe 3 was a prosecution being bought by the council or a case being taken to court. It was clarified that it was the former. Some members felt that this indicated that the issue of low prosecutions was an internal council issue.
- Some members felt that Education was an important part of tackling fly-tipping as some people thought the waste would be automatically taken away if dumped. Members again praised the police tape idea, noting that when a person fly-tips, this often encourages others in the area to do the same and the tape could help to discourage this.
- Most wards in the city had fly-tipping hotspots. As soon as fly-tipping was cleared, more was deposited.
- Some members felt that cameras should be used to catch, prosecute, publicise offenders and make them pay for clean-up costs.
- Members stated that CCTV was not a new initiative. It needed to be made clear that people were being caught and convicted in order to make an example of them, as was the case with seatbelts and breathalysers.
- Members felt that cameras needed to be smaller and more covert to avoid them being known by perpetrators. Officers stated that camera technology had improved and they were confident the cameras were discreet and would blend in both urban and rural environments.
- Some members felt that £6,000 of funding was insufficient and a cost benefit analysis should be conducted to investigate the possibility of increasing camera funding if the scheme was successful.
- Members stated that some members of the public thought it was acceptable to dump green waste in the countryside which highlighted the importance of education.
- A stringent process had to be followed to deploy surveillance camera. This was covered the Regulatory of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA). Sign off was required and this could be provided by the Assistant Director of Community Safety. Justification was needed about why cameras were needed in a particular location.
- Members felt that the Council were sometimes blamed for fly-tipping.
- It was noted that the Council operate a free bulky waste collection service was operated by the Council which was well received by residents although it was unclear if this was helping to tackle fly-tipping. Officers responded that Community Skips were always well received, perpetrators of fly-tipping had no inclination to follow legitimate disposal routes and the bulky waste collection service was good value at £23.50.
- Members raised a variety of points:
 - Facebook could be a good way for residents to contact councillors
 - Lots of photos were received from residents although their location had to be checked in for the fly-tipping to be reported.
 - Councillors had received three photos of discarded mattresses and a door kicked in.
 - Communication needed to take place with landlords when evictions were taking place to put in place procedures to deal with dumped household goods. Members asked if the £23.50 service could be offered for house clearances and eviction processes.
- Officers stated that landlords could not take advantage of the bulky waste collection service as this was classed as commercial waste.
- Members asked if the group had given consideration to providing free or easier to obtain permits to contractors to help combat fly-tipping. Group

members responded that that they had examined the bulky waste and commercial waste collection services for cost effectiveness although legislation restricted the work that could be done in this area.

- While praising the report, members felt that the report lacked certain 'specifics', e.g. the cost of expanding enforcement and improving education.
- Group members responded that education had been mentioned in the report. For example, people sometimes noticed that fly-tipped mattresses were sometimes collected the following day leading people to think this was acceptable behaviour. Education was needed to help them understand they could not do this.
- Group members raised a further issue; litter pickers often left their waste in a designated space for collection. Other then put their waste besides this knowing that it would be picked up. Keep Britain tidy suggested using lockable boxes for litter-pickers to alleviate this problem.
- Members praised the report but felt that the terms of reference for the fly-tipping group (page 52 of the reports pack) needed to be revisited and greater emphasis given to possible policies changes. For example, what would it cost for small scale contractors to be allowed to use the tip legitimately? Other issues raised included:
 - Disposal of domestic waste from vans and trailers
 - Working with the traveller community on waste disposal issues
 - Disposal of waste from selective licensing
 - Revisiting commercial waste policies
 - Bulky waste collection from homes.

The Leader of the Council had wished to see policy proposals and there was cross party consensus for this.

- Group members responded that this had been looked at. The Household Recycling centre could only be used for household waste, not trade waste. Waste left by a tenant became trade waste for the landlord. Some members felt that that this was unfair on landlords. The Council could be challenged if they did not follow this rule. There were some things that could be done
- Members requested additional clarity about whether this was the law or a Peterborough City Council Policy. The potential issue of a contractor not being able to dispose of household waste using a commercial van was also raised.
- Group Members responded that they had identified that the current permit system was unwieldy and they were keen that this should be made electronic only. It was unsatisfactory that a user had to request a permit several days in advance.
- It was clarified that the Scrutiny Committee could modify and add to the recommendations in the report to encompasses issues such as the disposal of domestic waste in commercial vehicles.
- There were some things that could be done to improve the disposal of domestic waste in commercial vehicles, such as introducing a new I.T. system. It was noted that the new Household Recycling Centre used an electronic system. Group members felt that a proposal to tackle this issue could be added to the report with the guidance of the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee.
- Members raised anecdotal evidence of inconsistency in bulky item collection between flats and houses.
- Group members mentioned plans for the Household Recycling Centre which include helping people with mobility issues and introducing a lit indoor centre so that opening hours could be extended. These changes were not

mentioned in the task and finish group report because they were already taking place.

- It was noted that Peterborough Ltd. were taking over services previously operated by Amey, putting the Council in a position to examine its commercial waste provision and potentially offer a special service that was less expensive than other commercial waste solutions. It was too early for these discussions to take place however.
- Some members felt that specific reference should not be made to travellers in the committee's recommendations.
- Some members felt that caution should be exercised before adding additional recommendations to the report, as the existing recommendations were already good and others responded that they felt nothing should be added to the report. Instead it should be considered an 'interim report' with the group to undertake further work on policy changes.
- Group members added that medium and long term actions had been included in the report related to the concerns raised, such as improving access to Dogsthorpe Tip.
- Some felt that the split between household and trade waste should be examined. Conversations with landlords should take place regarding last minute evictions.
- Members ask if the Kingdom P.E.S. enforcement work could take place in areas outside the city centre. Officers responded that this would be considered.
- Members asked if the proposed cameras would be active and monitored during the weekend. Officers responded that a 7-day culture was needed and staff numbers were currently reduced at the weekend.
- Members asked why the communications strategy incurred a cost when the Council had its own communications team. Members also suggested that social media incentivisation and 'gamification' should be used to reward residents for accurately reporting fly tipping.
- There was general consensus that this the task and finish group report should be submitted to Cabinet as an interim report to avoid slowing down the implementation of the recommendations. The task and finish group would undertake additional work on policy going issues forward.
- The committee unanimously agreed to endorse the report and recommendations as interim documents for submission to Cabinet on 4 February 2019.

The committee unanimously agreed to request that the Task and Finish Group undertakes further work on developing detailed policy proposals, namely;

- Bulky waste Collection Policy, including examining the following: price, price banding, number of items per collection, times and days per week. Scheduled community collection events with Parish Councils etc.
- HRC Restrictions on van and trailers, opening hours, trade waste ban, DIY waste limits/charging, electronic permit application and/or use on site (e-permits) neighbouring authority policies, legal restrictions and financial implications.
- Some group members were concerned that commercial waste policies could not currently be changed as the Council did not have the facilities to do so. Once the Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo) was established, this would change.
- There was a discussion about the when the LATCo would be establish and when they could start influencing commercial waste collection. Other

members responded that there was insufficient time to suggest these changes before the next Cabinet meeting. The report would be submitted as an interim document with further work to continue on policies.

ACTIONS AGREED:

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to

1. Consider and comment on the Task and Finish Group report at Appendix 1
2. Request that the Acting Head of Service Prevention and Enforcement and the Assistant Director of Community Safety provided the committee with a briefing note detailing how many cases were sent to legal services for prosecution from April 2018 to the present and an explanation of the prosecution process and why it could be difficult to secure convictions.
3. Request that the Task and Finish Group undertakes further work on developing detailed policy proposals, namely;
 - Bulky waste Collection Policy, including examining the following: price, price banding, number of items per collection, times and days per week. Scheduled community collection events with Parish Councils etc.
 - HRC Restrictions on van and trailers, opening hours, trade waste ban, DIY waste limits/charging, electronic permit application and/or use on site (e-permits) neighbouring authority policies, legal restrictions and financial implications.

To include where possible detail on legislative restrictions, neighbouring authority policies and cost estimations for consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee endorsed the report and recommendations as interim documents for submission to Cabinet on 4 February 2019.

44. MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN – FURTHER DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

The report was presented the Strategic Planning Officer which gave the committee the opportunity to consider and make comments on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local plan prior to considered by Cabinet on 4 February prior to the next round of consultation

The Growth, Environment and resources Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included;

- Of the nine mineral sites to be allocated, three were in Peterborough.
- The report mostly related to Cambridgeshire.
- An interim consultation had taken place although only Thorney Parish Council had responded.
- Members asked officers to highlight those sections relevant to Peterborough. Officers responded that the first 50 pages of Appendix 1 (the draft plan itself) were the most relevant. The remainder of the document generally related to Cambridgeshire. The Block Fen / Langwood Fen Master plan could be found

as one of the sub-appendices. The other sub-appendix was a detailed design guide. These two documents were currently adopted supplementary planning documents as part of the current adopted plan. The City Council did not want to keep these documents as part of the joint working with Cambridgeshire. The City Council had not had much input into these appendices.

- The supplementary planning documents had been bought into the plan. Peterborough had not had an input into the sub-appendices within Appendix 1.
- Members asked officers for the three most important things within the report that should be noted. Officers responded with the following:
 1. There would be a steady and adequate supply of minerals of the planned period to meet the needs of construction and other industries. Sites were allocated to meet requirements for sand and gravel.
 2. A network of waste management facilities sufficient to deal with demand up until the end of the plan period in 2036.
 3. Minerals and Waste Policies were sufficiently robust, allowing development management officers to deal with minerals applications effectively.
- Members raised concerns that the size of the document and its technical nature prevented them for conducting effective scrutiny. Members mentioned that such documents used to be examine by a scrutiny working group to look through it in detail with officers.
- Members referred to Policy 20 on page 197 of the reports pack, and expressed concern about its wording in relation to habits of local and principle importance. Members felt that the new National Planning Policy framework had increased protection for ancient woodland, trees and replace habitats to only allow development in exceptional circumstances, rather than when the needs of the development outweigh the negative environmental impacts as written in the Minerals and Waste Strategy (NPPF). Members felt that this potential discrepancy with NPPF could result in challenges by the Planning Inspectorate and asked if officers had checked the Minerals and Waste Strategy and NPPF for consistency.
- Officers acknowledged this point, stating that the NPPF had been revised and was focussed on traditional local plans, housing and open space. There was a chapter within it on minerals planning. Minerals could only be worked they could be found, and while some harm could be caused there could also be positive net impacts from mineral extraction. Not being able to extract elsewhere would count as an 'exceptional circumstance'.
- Members suggested that this information should be contained within the report. Members restated their concerns about inconsistency with the NPPF. Officers responded that there was supporting text saying that minerals could only be worked where they were found. The Minerals and Waste Plan was not intended to repeat national policy and a planning officers would use it alongside the NPPF. If a proposal came forward that would result in the loss of an irreplaceable habitat, the wording of the NPPF would be sufficient to refuse an application on these grounds.
- Members understood that repetition between the Plan and the NPPF was not necessary but felt that they could not contradict each other. In response, officers referred to the phraseology of 'Exceptional Circumstances' in policy 20, stating that there might be situations in which it might be acceptable to

impact on priority species and habitats for the duration of extraction provided that a restoration scheme was in place.

- It was agreed that the Head of Sustainable Growth Strategy and the Strategic Planning Officer review the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and ensure that it is consistent with the revised National Planning Policy Framework, especially in relation to areas containing wildlife habitats.
- Officers stated that Natural England had responded to the consultation in May / June 2018. Their policies been fed into the document and they were happy with the way this section was worded. Members stated that the previous NPPF was in force when this consultation was taking place.
- The Interim Development Director added that the purpose of the NPPF was to guide development and Minerals and Waste Policy was concerned with mineral extraction and waste facilities.
- Some members felt that there was nothing new within this Minerals and Waste Strategy.
- Some members felt that the Minerals and Waste Local Plan should include reference to the nature reserve near the Maxey gravel extraction site and the fact that the existing reserve would be enhanced.
- Members asked why Peterborough did not have an HGV route network, unlike Cambridgeshire. Officers responded that Peterborough's highway infrastructure meant that HGV traffic was less intense in small villages.
- It was agreed that the Strategic Planning Officer to provide the committee with a briefing note explaining why Peterborough City Council did not have an HGV route network, unlike Cambridgeshire.
- Members raised concerns about waste sites being located too close to the edge of housing developments and asked who decided how far away these waste sites were from developments. Officers responded that that all proposed waste sites had consultation area boundaries. The limit was usually 250m and 400m for Water Recycling Area. The 200m limit was a standard part of the NPPF and the 400m limit was determined by Anglian Water. An explanation was given in the Waste Needs Assessment (WRA) to be published alongside this consultation.
- Members thanked officers for presenting their report.

ACTIONS AGREED:

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to

1. Consider, and make comments as it saw fit, in respect of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan - Further Draft and associated draft Policies Map (as attached at Appendix 1 and 2 respectively), prior to its scheduled consideration by Cabinet on 4 February 2019. Comments were:
 - The Head of Sustainable Growth Strategy and the Strategic Planning Officer should review the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and ensure that it is consistent with the revised National Planning Policy Framework, especially in relation to areas containing wildlife habitats.
 - The Minerals and Waste Local Plan should include reference to the nature reserve near the Maxey gravel extraction site and the fact that the existing reserve will be enhanced.
2. Ask the Strategic Planning Officer to provide the committee with a briefing note explaining why Peterborough City Council did not have an HGV route network, unlike Cambridgeshire.

45. SHARED SERVICES UPDATE

The Acting Corporate Director of Resources introduced the report which gave the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to review progress made on Shared Services across both Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members noted that the sharing of services was an ongoing process that was gradually expanding and understood that this could have financial benefits for the Council involve.
- Members asked if there was a limit to how far the Shared Services Programme would expand raising the possibility of shared I.T. systems are a complete merger as had happened in some areas. Members stated that Peterborough was underfunded for Adult Social Care before becoming a unitary authority and were therefore concerned at how far the sharing of services would go. The Officer responded that he had previously worked for the Tri-Borough councils and there was no dedicated legislation to do shared services. Each council had to demonstrate sovereignty over their own transactions.
- It was noted that Suffolk was transitioning from 6 to 2 Councils.
- Efficiency savings were needed for the Council to stay within its means. Sharing services would help with this by providing economies of scale.
- Members stated that the sharing of services always seem to be with Cambridgeshire and expressed concerns that this might eventually lead to a merger. The Officer responded that this was not going to happen and there was nothing stopping the Council working with other authorities. For example, shared legal work had been undertaken with East Leicestershire and East Cambridgeshire Councils, property work with South Kesteven and joint planning work with Fenland District Council.
- People and Communities work took up 64-75% of the budget of most upper tier Councils so most efficiency savings could be found in this area.
- Members asked if pension contributions for shared staff were shared between the two authorities and if pension payments would be shared upon retirement in all cases. Officers responded that this was not the case. Pension provision depended on past service at different authorities
- The LGPS moved from final salary to career average in 2014.
- Members asked about if there was correlation between the proportion of pension paid and the time spent at each Council for shared staff. Officers responded that the finance protocol for this could be found in the Cabinet papers. Appropriate splits are established when a service is shared, with one figure for officers and another for managerial staff. Many different ratios were used and neither side should be treated unfairly. Payments for the top tier of senior officers were split 50/50.
- Members asked how the 50/50 split had been arrived at given that Cambridgeshire employed more people, had a greater population, a larger area etc. The officer responded that strategic roles would have the same workload at both councils.
- The committee requested that Acting Corporate Director of Resources to provide information on how the 50/50 cost split between Peterborough and

Cambridgeshire of employing senior joint directors was determined and what the rationale was for this considering Cambridgeshire's greater size and population and the higher levels of staff employed in the form of a briefing note.

- The £20m budget gap meant that redundancies could not be ruled out as a result of sharing back office functions. The most effective delivery methods and services needed to be found.
- A robustness statement had to be published as part of the Budget to say if the council's estimates were robust if they were sustainable over time
- Concerns were raised the Council-owned property in Peterborough could be sold in order to fund Cambridgeshire. Officers stated that this was linked to the next agenda item and again noted that sovereignty of transactions must be demonstrated when sharing services. The two councils had differing financial requirements. An asset base was required to sustain the operational buildings and to develop the city centre.
- Members requested more information on the work of the Combined Authority and suggested that efficiency savings could be gained by working with them via a statutory instrument. Officers responded that that the Combined Authority and Elected Mayor were the result of result of public sector reform but this was still in its infancy. A pilot bid with the Combined Authority and all Cambridge Councils had been attempted. For the Adult, Education and Transport items, money was currently sent to the Combined Authority and then returned to Peterborough City Council. Delays in some of the implementation were caused by the legislation not being in primary form.
- Officers spoke to the Combined Authority every few weeks. There was a combined response to the budget consultation which included Fenland district Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. The Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority was different to others such as Manchester and Birmingham as it did not have a large amount of its own primary legislation.
- Members raised points regarding the 'consolidation and rationalisation of Amazon Web Services':
 - Clarification of what was being consolidated and rationalised.
 - Peterborough was ahead of Cambridgeshire in terms of using cloud storage rather than traditional servers.
 - The Council had previously used a significant amount of storage space.
 - Not rationalising meant that duplicate copies of things kept for too long, with data protection implications.
 - Standard procedure was to back up at least once a month for 1 to 3 years.
 - Servers had been optimised and rationalised.
 - Some Councils use cloud storage, others used servers.
 - Cambridgeshire were moving towards using Cloud Storage but still had some servers.

The officer responded that 'Consolidation' was a poorly judged word. Currently things were being saved multiple times and this was a learning process.

- Some members felt that discussing the Combined Authority was not a good use of the committee's time.
- There had been articles in press regarding the Combined Authority's feasibility studies.
- Members asked if the committee could discuss the work of the Combined Authority. The Democratic Services Officer advised that this was not within the

terms of reference of the committee and the Combined Authority had their own Scrutiny Committee.

- The committee asked the Democratic Services Officer to establish if the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee could place an item on its agenda regarding the Combined Authority.

ACTIONS AGREED:

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to

1. Note the progress on Shared Services across both Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.
2. Ask the Acting Corporate Director of Resources to provide information on how the 50/50 cost split between Peterborough and Cambridgeshire of employing senior joint directors was determined and what the rationale was for this considering Cambridgeshire's greater size and population and the higher levels of staff employed.
3. Ask the Democratic Services Officer to establish if the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee could place an item on its agenda regarding the Combined Authority.

46. COUNCIL ASSET STRATEGY

The report was introduced by the Acting Corporate Director of Resources which allowed the committee to comment on the draft updates to the strategy to be included in the 2019/20 Medium Term Financial Strategy. The committee were also asked to note and provide comments on the Asset Acquisition and Asset management Plan so that these could be incorporated in these plans which were approved at Audit Committee in February 2019 and then Full Council in March 2019.

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members referred to the ministerial guidance which distinguished between Councils that were taking on debt to meet local objectives and those that were doing so purely to get a return on investment. Members asked if this was assessed on a geographical basis.
- Peterborough City Council had to conduct its investments within 40 miles of the city. The government or auditors would challenge anything beyond this. Any investment returns must benefit the City, not to generate a profit. Investments could be made slightly outside the City boundaries, in Cambridge for example.
- Members asked how a 'contribution to the city's objectives' could be demonstrated if investing outside the city. Officers responded that, as part of the Asset Management Plan and an overall property strategy, consideration needed to be given to what the council did and did not need to hold on to and what was needed for investment or regeneration.
- Regeneration could be expected several years in the future, with the gradual purchasing of North Westgate properties being an example.
- The Council could invest for employment purposes, e.g. investing in an office centre near the station to take advantage of 37-minute trains to London. This would be allowable despite not counting as 'regeneration'
- Property could be purchased for operational uses, for investment purposes within defined limits or for regeneration.

- Members stated that half of the Town Hall was unoccupied and asked what impact this had on asset calculations.
- Officers responded that Peterborough City Council staff had been out of the building for three months. The refurbishment and renting of the South Side of the building was a useful learning experience. If this had not been let, the Council would have had to pay itself empty building rates. The letting of the building would have positive impacts such as bring additional footfall back into the town centre increasing parking revenue.
- Members expressed concerns that the council might be disposing of valuable assets to pay for day to day processes rather than long term alternative investments. Officers responded that the council had had a policy for the last 2-3 years of using the proceeds from capital receipts to fund the minimum revenue provision on a yearly basis, to pay off debt. Therefore, capital receipts were indirectly paying for properties that had already been purchased. The Council's in-year debt costs were approximately £30m. 50% of this was interest and 50% was minimum revenue provision. Up to £15m worth of capital receipts could offset this.
- There were some concerns about the erosion of the Council's property portfolio. Officers responded that the portfolio was not particularly large. The officers had a meeting scheduled for later in January with the Interim Development Director and Norfolk Property Services (NPS) to check that all town centre assets were being used and opportunities for the town centre were looked at in the correct way. For example, many surface car parks were underutilised and it could be asked if this was the best use for the land. This was a long-term process.
- £15m of the capital programme was being used with Medesham Homes. This funding came from Right to Buy receipts. £10m had been put aside to buy 40-50 properties. Although Peterborough did not currently have a Housing Revenue Account (HRA), up to 200 properties could be purchased before reaching the threshold where the approval process for this would be required. The Council needed to consider setting up an HRA due to the availability of Government funding.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note this report and provide comments on the Asset Acquisition and Asset Management Plan so that these could be incorporated in these plans which are approved at Audit Committee in February and then Full Council in March.

47. MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which enabled the committee to monitor and track the progress of recommendations made to the Executive or Officers at previous meetings.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the responses from Cabinet Members and Officers to recommendations made at previous meetings as attached in Appendix 1 to the report.

48. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which invited members to consider the most recent version of the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and identify any relevant items for inclusion within the Committee's work programme or to request further information.

Points raised were as follows:

- Their needed to be more meetings of the committee per year with less items on each agenda.
- Some members felt that the terms of reference were too large, limiting its ability to conduct effective scrutiny. It was noted that the terms of reference used to be covered by two committees.
- Members requested that the following forward plan items be discussed at the next Group Representatives Meeting for possible inclusion on a future agenda or for additional information be requested:
 - IT Strategy - KEY/3SEP18/01
 - Disposal of freehold in Centre of the City - KEY/12JUN18/01
 - University delivery Vehicle - KEY/3SEP18/02
 - Amendment to Loan Facility - KEY/12NOV18/05

ACTIONS AGREED:

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to consider the current Forward Plan of Executive decisions and requested that the following items be discussed at the group representatives meeting for possible inclusion on a future agenda or for additional information to be requested:

- IT Strategy - KEY/3SEP18/01
- Disposal of freehold in Centre of the City - KEY/12JUN18/01
- University delivery Vehicle - KEY/3SEP18/02
- Amendment to Loan Facility - KEY/12NOV18/05

49. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the item which gave members the opportunity to consider the Committee's Work Programme for 2018/19 and discuss possible items for inclusion.

There was a general consensus that no additional items should be added at this stage and this would be discussed again at the next group representatives meeting.

ACTIONS AGREED

The committee noted the work programme for 2018/19.

50. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

12 February 2019 – Joint Scrutiny of the Budget

13 March 2019 – Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee

CHAIRMAN

9 January 2019
7pm – 9.13pm

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