

**MINUTES OF THE GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT 7PM, ON
WEDNESDAY, 11 MARCH 2020
BOURGES / VIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Councillors C. Harper (Chairman), K. Aitken, R. Brown, C. Burbage, G. Casey (Vice-Chairman), A. Ellis, Judy Fox, J. Howard, H Skibsted, C. Wiggin, I Yasin.

Co-opted Member: Parish Councillor Keith Lievesley

Officers Present: Adrian Chapman, Service Director, Communities and Safety
Pete Carpenter, Acting Corporate Director of Resources
James Collingridge – Head of Environmental Partnerships
Richard Pearn – Head of Waste, Resources and Energy
Steve Cox – Executive Director, Place and Economy

Also Present: Councillor Steve Allen, Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Recreation
Peter Appleton, CEO of Vivacity

44. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

**46. MINUTES OF THE GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 JANUARY 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record, subject to the following amendments:

- Removal of the phrase ‘especially in rural areas’ in the second to last bullet point on page 8.
- Correction from ‘conversation area’ to ‘conservation area’ in the second last bullet point on page 9.
- Inclusion of Steve Cox – Executive Director, Place and Economy in the attendance list.

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

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

48. VIVACITY ANNUAL REPORT

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Recreation, the CEO of Vivacity, and the Service Director, Communities and Partnerships. The report provided an overview of the partnership, service delivery performance, challenges and opportunities.

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

- Members were pleased that a Cultural Strategy was under development and asked when this would be brought to the Committee. The CEO of Vivacity responded that the strategy was being developed by external consultants, supported by Peterborough City Council and the Arts Council. A draft might be made available after the 2020 Local Elections.
- Members requested further information on the Council's financial position regarding the extension of the Museum to host Must Farm findings. The CEO of Vivacity responded that a bid had been developed but this would have to be amended in light of the work on the Station Quarter development. A bid developed in 2018 was unsuccessful but had reached the final stage. Reasons for failure were the facts that heritage was not a risk and no public funding was being provided. The New Towns Fund meant that quasi-public money could be provided and the question of how the city would respond to funding would be more easily answered. The Council would be in a better position to pursue the work if New Towns funding was received. There would still be a funding gap but it created a better opportunity to fundraise.
- Members referred to section 4.7.9 on page 20 of the reports pack and stated they were glad that Vivacity was leading the work on developing Werrington Leisure Centre. Members requested further details of the project, who would be the future operator and the meaning of 'feasibility'. The CEO of Vivacity responded that a feasibility study involved engaging with consultants on the facility mix, design and affordability to ensure a return on capital investment. The facility mix had yet to be decided which created a challenge for the consultants. The Centre would need to have an operating surplus to reduce the management fee. This was based on Vivacity being a selected partner to deliver the project. Vivacity was a strategic partner of the Council which enabled the organisation to sustain itself. A 6 week turnaround would be required to appoint a consultancy team if requested immediately. Construction on the project would not occur for some time.
- Members sought reassurance that there would be no changes to the extent of library services. The CEO responded that there were no plans for rationalisation of the library estate or similar changes. Vivacity was working with Civic to reimagine libraries with Central and Thorney Libraries chosen to test this work. There were opportunities to utilise Library estates, that had no current benefit to the Council, for residential uses while still having a library service provided in that area.
- Members requested clarity of the meaning of the 'development opportunity' for the Regional Pool and asked if this meant there were plans to close the facility. The CEO responded that it would be preferable to close the facility if this was financially feasible. It was split over too many floors, was 40 years old despite only being intended to last 30 years and renewal would be required. The development of a University in Peterborough provided the opportunity to 're-purpose' and re-locate the pool. This would only take place if a business case was developed.
- Members commented the Regional Pool was one of the few pools in Peterborough that did not require a gym membership to attend and it would be unfortunate if the facility was lost. The CEO responded that the levels of accessibility and affordability would depend on the subsidy provided. Vivacity's leisure stock currently created a surplus that was re-invested in unprofitable services for which no funding was

provided. The pool would need to be able to operate profitably unless additional subsidy was received.

Councillor Ellis joined the meeting.

- Members felt that while leisure and recreation facilities were doing well in the City, sport was in decline and more sporting opportunities needed to be offered, such as an Olympic size pool. Members also expressed concern about the competitiveness of Vivacity's fitness centres. The CEO responded that it was difficult to define 'good' but the offer should be about redeveloping the leisure estate. If it was accepted that the Regional Pool was inadequate then investment would be required to avoid a loss of market share. Public provision required re-investment. Keeping the existing pool running would require funding so redevelopment was beneficial.
- Members raised the prospect of theatrical competitions and suggested different stakeholders should be working together to improve the arts in Peterborough, rather than focussing on particular facilities and asked if this was taking place. The CEO responded that the Key Theatre was operated by Vivacity, with no funding received from the Arts Council or the City Council. It was a medium sized 300 seat theatre which was to undergo improvements next year. Holding pantomimes would not attract new audiences. There was no one currently stepping forward to provide additional subsidy.
- Members commented that there was a £100,000 gap between Vivacity's income and expenditure. While noting that it was positive that Vivacity was delivering a wide range of services, Members asked if the CEO agreed that the City Council needed to provide additional funding, e.g. to develop an arts strategy, limit the decline in sport and to have a good quality pool. The CEO responded that the Council would not provide further funding unless a return on investment could be demonstrated. Work had been done in partnership with the Council to develop more creative ways of investing in the leisure estate to achieve the outcomes mentioned by Members. Current operating losses were not sustainable. Vivacity would always welcome additional funding but the organisation could not afford to take on additional ventures to generate a surplus.
- Members criticised the lack of reference to veterans in the report and asked if Vivacity had considered granting them a discount to encourage them to join gyms while on leave. The CEO responded that he would investigate this.
- Members noted that the Lido was a listed building and it would be a shame if it had to close and asked if there was any way to adapt it, e.g. so it could be used during the winter. The CEO responded that the Lido operated at a deficit with support from the Council required. Although it made a profit one year, this was at the expense of the Regional Pool. While it could potentially be used for something else, this was challenging due to the cost base of re-inventing it. It was suggested that if the Regional Pool was relocated, it could be connected to the Lido although this could be difficult due to the Lido's listed status.
- Members praised the fact that the Vivacity was providing £60m of social value to the city, especially in light of culture and leisure services being seen as easy targets for cuts. Members asked if this figure was considered good in comparison with other areas and if it would be possible to increase in the future. The CEO responded that this figure could change in the future. If a person who was already healthy used services, little social value would be added compared with someone who had greater scope to improve their fitness. Figures could be broken down by service areas if required, e.g. libraries, or leisure. Investment would be required to see improvements. Currently, Vivacity could deliver added value via surpluses, e.g. health services, for which the organisation received no additional funding. This was unsustainable and these were not the ultimate responsibility of Vivacity but cutting these services would result in higher costs in the healthcare system. A modest investment would save money elsewhere.

- Members asked what opportunities the development of the University and the growth of the City's population created for Vivacity. The CEO responded that Phase 1 of the University would have little impact due to the low numbers of students, and this was the only phase that was funded currently. Phases 2 and 3 would change this dynamic considerably. Possibly opportunities could include re-purposing the regional pool if phases 2 and 3 resulted in more people coming to Peterborough, but this would be a long-term aspiration.
- Members raised concerns regarding parking by Council employees making it difficult for people to park by the Key Theatre. The Service Director, Communities and Safety responded that these issues had been discussed and a trial undertaken of parking restrictions by the riverside. It was not appropriate to reveal further information at this stage but it was known that there was a shortage of car parking on the Embankment, which could worsen with the opening of the new Premier Inn. A practical solution involved changes to the Riverside Car Park and additional provision was being worked on and officers were confident this would resolve the issue.
- Members wished officers success with the Great Eastern Run and asked for an update on the event and social media work undertaken to promote it. The CEO responded that a large amount of preparatory work had been undertaken but there remained concerns about cash flow and delayed entry due to Coronavirus. There was some risk attached to the event and work was underway with the Council to share this risk in the future. There was confidence that the event would be a success. There were two milestones to achieve: 1st - That there was no cost to the Council and 2nd – that a surplus would be generated.
- The Chairman congratulated Vivacity on its Community Leisure award.

ACTIONS AGREED:

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to scrutinise the contents of the report.

49. NPS PETERBOROUGH LIMITED 2018-19

The report was presented by the Acting Corporate Director, Resources, which updated the Committee on the performance of NPS Peterborough during 2018/19.

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

- Members requested a definition of 'external market presence' on page 25 of the reports pack. The Acting Corporate Director responded that this referred to estate services provided to other Councils. A Local Authority Trading company could trade up to 20% of the Councils turnover with external clients.
- Members were glad young farmers were taking on farms and asked for a progress update, e.g. on farms being converted into an education centre. It was noted that there were derelict buildings en route to Spalding with potential to use in collaboration with the City College. The Director responded that he had undertaken a visit with Bridget Slade – Rural Estates Manager but would chase this up further.
- The Committee requested that the Acting Corporate Director, Resources provides the Committee with a briefing note on educational programmes for farmers and the possible conversion of derelict farm buildings to an education centre.
- Members noted that the Council had 11 operational buildings and requested information on future plans for these buildings. The Director responded that the Council was always looking for ways of using assets better. Work would take place

to investigate this further to see if rearranging the use of buildings could result in them being used more effectively.

- Members noted that part of Sand Martin House was let to the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and asked if there were further plans to rent out office space. The Director responded that there were two possible outcomes. One was to rent out further office space as Sand Martin House was the most marketable office space in the town and the CITB had proved to be a good partner. This option would be enhanced by the development of the Gin Distillery and Hilton Hotel. The second option was to locate all Council staff within Sand Martin House. It was noted that there were no buses that stopped at Sand Martin and the current close proximity of Cross Keys Homes, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Council's Contact Centre on Bridge Street worked well.
- Members commented that the Passport Office was relocating to the Fletton Quays Development in a Government Hub building and raised the prospect of the Council using its floor space to reduce costs. The Director responded that this was under consideration.
- Members requested an update on success and progress of the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) programme. The Director responded that it was key for communities to run services for themselves. The programme was proceeding slower than expected and some community groups had not been set up as expected. The Council had existing leases and agreements which might not be beneficial for community associations if they agreed to waive them. The Council wrote to the associations in September expressing a wish to progress the CAT scheme. If the existing operators were not able to take on the centres then the Council would find others who could. The CAT scheme had some momentum and the halfway point had been reached.
- Members felt it was important to support community groups through the CAT process.
- The Committee requested that the Acting Corporate Director, Resources provides ward councillors with an update on the progress of the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) of Copeland Community Centre in South Bretton.
- Members asked if the CAT process would help the Council to balance its budget. The Director Responded that this was the case. Community Groups would take ownership of assets but the Council would ensure community groups were in a good position to run centres.
- Members commented that the Council had a large budget deficit and asked if there were plans to reduce this and if CAT played a role in this. The Director responded that CAT cost £180,000 from the budget, a small amount.
- It was agreed that Democratic Services Officer would place an agenda item regarding Rural Estates and Farming on the Work Programme for 2020/21.

ACTIONS AGREED:

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

1. Note the contents of this report

2. Request that the Acting Corporate Director, Resources provides the Committee with a briefing note on educational programmes for farmers and the possible conversion of derelict farm buildings to an education centre.
3. Request the Acting Corporate Director, Resources provides ward councillors with an update on the progress of the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) of Copeland Community Centre in South Bretton.
4. Ask the Democratic Services Officer to place an agenda item regarding Rural Estates and Farming on the Work Programme for 2020/21.

50. SIX MONTHLY REVIEW – OUTCOMES OF TASK AND FINISH GROUP TO REVIEW FLY-TIPPING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT.

The Report was introduced by the Head of Environmental Partnerships and the Head of Waste, Resources and Energy which updated the Committee on the progress of items arising from the report of the Fly Tipping and Waste Management Task and Finish Group.

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

- It was noted that Councillors Aitken and Judy Fox, members of the Task and Finish Group, were in attendance at the meeting.
- Members asked if the Task and Finish group had come to an end, noting that the City continued to experience issues with Fly Tipping. Officers responded that four Key Tasks were the main output of the Task and Finish Group. Progress had not stopped but there were currently insufficient funds to progress the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group due to the additional costs they would incur, e.g. discounted bulky waste services. It was noted that the Group's recommendations could remain in place as there might be other ways of delivering them in the future, e.g. via the operators of the Household Recycling Centre (HRC).
- Aragon Direct Services was examining the issues around commercial waste and considering actions such as fleet renewal where new vehicles would include on-board weighing equipment to get accurate tonnage data to collect different types of waste (e.g. landlord and household waste) as part of the same collection.
- Members felt that than fly-tipping was worse in the townships and asked for an update on an event for the urban fringe. Officers responded that an event had been organised across the Recycling in Cambridge and Peterborough (RECAP) area. RECAP was a group of Councils working together on fly-tipping. It was recognised that Peterborough's urban fringe was unique and a specific event would be organised for it.
- Members felt that the Council had a duty of care to tackle this issue and noted the importance of installing covert cameras. Officers responded that there had been a restructure in the Prevention and Enforcement (PES) team and the roll out of the cameras had been delayed. Both overt and covert cameras had now been obtained however. It was important to ensure the associated signage was correct. The PES team would utilise the cameras going forward.
- Members recognised that there was insufficient funding to roll out bulky waste collection across the entire city and asked how many Parish Councils undertook this work instead. Officers responded that three parishes did so regularly. Members felt that this demonstrated that similar schemes could be rolled out to other Parish Councils
- Members requested that the Head of Environmental Partnerships provides the committee with a Briefing Note containing a ward-specific analysis explaining how bulky waste collections influence fly-tipping.

- Officers felt that local bulky waste collections did not significantly reduce fly-tipping and these services were used by residents who would be likely to already dispose of waste responsibly. This assertion was challenged by some Members who praised the success of certain schemes and felt that the absence of a bulky waste collection might make a situation worse. Officers responded that monthly fly-tipping figures did not indicate significant reductions due to bulky waste collection. Some members wished for further justification for the officer's assertion.
- Members noted that report indicated that the tonnage of fly-tipping was reducing and asked if it was possible to identify reductions in fly-tipping in particular areas. Officers responded that while the tonnage of fly-tipping was coming down, incidences were not. This coincided with the opening of the Household Recycling Centre (HRC) due to it being easier to use.
- Members commented that incidents in particular parishes were likely to be caused by people from outside the parish.
- Members asked how the CCTV cameras would be targeted to particular locations. Officers responded that the PES team were managing the cameras. Feedback from Councillors was key.
- Members asked what was being done to educate the public on how to dispose of waste and recycle responsibly. Officers responded that Aragon Direct Services now employed a full time Education Officer to organise workshops, roadshows, and regular social media campaigns across the city.
- Members suggested that information leaflets could be sent out with Council Tax letters. Officers responded that leaflets and city-wide bin stickers had been deployed but this sort of communication was costly.
- Members asked how many prosecutions had been completed for fly-tippers and if changes to the PES team had impacted on their ability to tackle fly-tipping. It was agreed that this information would be distributed to Members in the form of a briefing note.
- Members asked if HRC permits could be sent out via email to save money. Officers responded that while electronic permits would be beneficial, their use made it difficult to ensure users of the HRC lived in the City and these issues had been reported in other local authorities. This could lead to escalating costs. Issuing permits by posts helped to limit this issue.
- Members enquired if the Council had the ability to tackle the contamination of bins in Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs). Officers responded that if contamination was reported at an address, intelligence was built up and stickers placed on the bins. The second stage would be for the Council to send an Education Officer to the premises, after a single collection of the contamination by the Council.
- Members commented that bin contamination could escalate into a report of fly-tipping and attract even attract more waste. Could this issue be proactively prevented earlier? Officers responded that they could indeed pass on fly-tipping reports which were enforceable when the incident was located on a public highway. The agent of the property was ultimately responsible for tackling the issue however.
- Members asked how the issue of fraudulent Environment Agency Waste Carrier Licences was being tackled. Officers responded that the Government were working to make this fraud more difficult. It was now possible to verify the authenticity of a licence on the Environment Agency's website. The Task and Finish Group had

recommended digitising permits and licences to improve security and the Environment Agency were considering digitising Waste Carrier Licences across the country.

- Members asked if the Council would direct people to the Environment Agency's website to verify the authenticity of carriers and noted an issue in a particular ward involving a fraudulent licence. It was also asked if people could be educated to check this themselves. Officers responded that the PES team already did this, e.g. by informing people of the correct procedure if fly-tipping issues were posted on Facebook. This work was also done across RECAP. The Council was putting together a list of legitimate waste companies operating in Peterborough who held a Waste Carriers Licence.
- Some Members felt that fines given to fly-tippers were too low. It was suggested that publicising a case involving a large fine would be beneficial.
- It was agreed that a Briefing Note would be provided to Councillors outlining the number of cases taken through the courts.
- Members asked how the team became aware of fly-tipping incidents if these were posted in closed Facebook groups. Officers responded that the Council would try to join groups if invited but it could be difficult for the Corporate Body of the Council to join these groups.
- Members commented that there were 60 Councillors and many of them were members of these Groups and could disseminate information.
- Members requested that the Head of Waste, Resources and Energy adds information to the Council's website or social media pages on correctly dealing with waste issues that Councillors might share in Facebook groups
- Members felt that the price of the Bulky Waste Collection Service was reasonable.
- Members requested that the Head of Waste Resources and Energy provides the Committee with a Briefing Note containing information on:
 - The number of fly-tipping prosecutions made
 - How many of these prosecutions were successful
 - A breakdown of the levels of fines issued
 - The cost to the Council of pursuing a prosecution and if this acted as a deterrent to initiating prosecutions
 - How changes to the Prevention and Enforcement (P.E.S.) team had influenced their ability to tackle the issue of fly-tipping.
 - Whether the fines for fly-tippers were decided by standardised guidelines or by magistrates
- Members requested that the Head of Waste, Resources and Energy provides the committee with a list of legitimate waste collection service operating in Peterborough.

ACTIONS AGREED:

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

1. Note the contents of the report
2. Request that the Head of Environmental Partnerships provides the committee with a Briefing Note containing a ward-specific analysis explaining how bulky waste collections influence fly-tipping.

3. Request that the Head of Waste Resources and Energy provides the Committee with a Briefing Note containing information on:
 - a. The number of fly-tipping prosecutions made
 - b. How many of these prosecutions were successful
 - c. A breakdown of the levels of fines issued
 - d. The cost to the Council of pursuing a prosecution and if this acted as a deterrent to initiating prosecutions
 - e. How changes to the Prevention and Enforcement (P.E.S.) team had influenced their ability to tackle the issue of fly-tipping.
 - f. Whether the fines for fly-tippers were decided by standardised guidelines or by magistrates
4. Request that the Head of Waste, Resources and Energy adds information to the Council's website on dealing with waste issues that individual councillors may share in closed Facebook groups.
5. Request that the Head of Waste, Resources and Energy provides the committee with a list of legitimate waste collection service operating in Peterborough.

51. 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.

It was noted that the Corporate Strategy was still under development but would not be approved until the next municipal year. The Strategy would return to Scrutiny in September or November 2020. Members had also been sent an update on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) recommendation.

It was clarified that the Corporate Strategy was separate to the Opportunity Peterborough Business Plan.

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.

52. 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.

Members requested a briefing note on the Forward Plan Item – 'Approval of funding for the provision of accommodation to reduce homelessness' - KEY/14OCT19/01. If the Member felt further attention by the Committee was required, this request could be submitted via their Group Representative.

ACTIONS AGREED:

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to consider the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and requested that the Acting Corporate Director, Resources provides a briefing note containing further information on the

forward plan item 'Approval of funding for the provision of accommodation to reduce homelessness – KEY/14OCT19/01.

Chairman

7pm – 8.42pm