

**MINUTES OF THE GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT 7PM ON
WEDNESDAY, 13 JANUARY 2021
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM**

Committee Members Present: Cllrs C. Harper (Chair), K. Aitken, R. Brown, C. Burbage, G. Casey (Vice-Chair), A. Ellis, Judy Fox, J. Howard, H. Skibsted, C. Wiggin, I. Yasin
Co-opted Member: Parish Councillor Keith Lievesley

Officers Present: Steve Cox – Executive Director Place and Economy
Adrian Chapman – Service Director, Communities and Partnerships
Charlotte Palmer – Group Manager, Transport and Environment
Nick Harding – Head of Planning
David Beauchamp – Democratic Services Officer

Also Present: Keith McWilliams – Contract Manager, Skanska
Howard Bright – Principal Development Manager, Peterborough Investment Partnership
Councillor Peter Hiller – Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Commercial Strategy and Investments
Councillor Steve Allen – Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Recreation
Councillor John Fox – Representing the Group Leader of the Werrington First Group.

26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

No declarations of interest or whipping declarations were received.

28. MINUTES OF THE GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 NOVEMBER 2020

The minutes of the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10 November 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

29. CALL IN OF ANY CABINET, CABINET MEMBER OR KEY OFFICER DECISION

There were no requests for call-in to consider

30. PORTFOLIO PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING AND COMMERCIAL STRATEGY AND INVESTMENTS

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Commercial Strategy and Investments, accompanied by the Group Manager - Transport and

Environment, the Head of Planning, the Principal Development Manager – Peterborough Investment Partnership and the Contract Manager – Skanska. The report updated the Committee on the progress of items under the responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Commercial Strategy and Investments.

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

- Members requested more information on the challenges posed by the Planning White Paper and the Environment Bill. The Cabinet Member responded that there had been initial concerns that an algorithm would require higher levels of provision although these plans had since been backtracked. The Council wanted to build houses but not according to forced targets and the associated issues with predatory applications. Officers added the new planning proposals would radically alter the planning process. The Local Plan would pre allocate areas for development and any compliant applications in these areas would automatically have permission for development. A new system of ‘growth’, ‘renewal and ‘protected’ zones might be introduced.
- Members raised concerns regarding how new sites for housing would be determined under the new system and how the consultation process would work.
- The Government was keen to make the planning process more accessible, with an emphasis on electronic formats.
- The Cabinet Member welcomed the prospect of greater engagement in planning consultations.
- Member raised doubts about how a three-tiered zoning system would function in rural areas.
- The Committee requested that the Group Manager – Transport and Environment provides the Committee with a briefing note on the number of roads adopted by the Council during 2019/20.
- It was noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had not significantly impacted highway works and adoption with site visits continuing. The Cabinet Member stated that the Council would only adopt roads that had been finished to an acceptable quality as the Council took on liability for these roads after adoption.
- The Highways team had had undergone significant change. Members requested that the Group Manager – Transport and Environment provides the Committee with details of key officers within the Highways Team.
- Members asked what measures had been put in place to improve performance on fixing category 2 defects. Officers responded that a comprehensive review had been undertaken and performance then improved during the summer. Issues had been experienced again recently due to staff sickness. However, the situation was still improved overall.
- The most recent data from sensors indicated that traffic in the city was at 64% of pre-pandemic levels.
- Members queried whether the Council’s plans to replace the Regional Pool were sensible in light of current financial challenges and if the decision could be postponed. The Cabinet Member responded that it was indeed financially prudent to do so and it provided an opportunity to regenerate Pleasure Fair Meadows. Officers also stated that the current facility fell short of modern expectations, was at the end of its life and would require significant investment to continue operating. A new pool, including a café, sauna, steam room, sports hall and larger gym would have a much broader appeal to the public. Long term planning could continue despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the current closure of facilities. The capital

borrowing costs for the new pool were less than the costs of maintaining the existing pool.

- It was common for pools to be positioned above ground level.
- Members sought reassurance that the new pool would be of sufficient length and have adequate viewing areas to host galas. Officers responded that this was indeed the case and the pool would be able to host all relevant regional competitions.
- Members referred to the Car Parking Strategy on page 16 of the reports pack and sought reassurance that the figure of 57% car park occupancy was accurate and that there would be sufficient parking provision for a growing city. Officers responded that the figures from Royal Haskoning took into account pre-pandemic seasonal variations in parking demand. There might be pressures on the Werrina Car Park which could potentially be addressed by decking surface car parks.
- There were no plans to revert to the previous layout following the relocation of the disabled parking bays on St. Peter's road although this would be kept under review.
- Members requested that the Executive Director – Place and Economy informs the Committee of the proportion of parking spaces in the City assigned to disabled people.
- Members raised concerns that the new Government Hub in close proximity to the football stadium might put pressure on parking in the area.
- Members request that the Executive Director – Place and Economy provides details of the planned consultation with churches and the future of the Brewery Tap in light of the North Westgate redevelopment. This to include general information on the North Westgate consultation process, focussing on the station quarter in particular.
- Members requested an update on plans for the Market, noting that traders were in a difficult situation. Officers responded that a decision had yet to be taken and a working group had been established to explore different options.
- A new multi-storey car park would be built between Peterborough Station and Crescent Bridge to improve access between the City Centre and Station, including for pedestrians and cyclists. Members requested that the Executive Director – Place and Economy provides more detail on highway improvements near the station planned as part of the North Westgate redevelopment.
- Improving disabled access between the City Centre and Station was a key priority for the Council.
- Financial implications for schemes contained within this report would be provided individually when they were progressed.

ACTIONS AGREED:

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

1. Note the contents of the report.
2. Request that the Group Manager – Transport and Environment provides the Committee with a briefing note on the number of roads adopted by the Council during 2019/20.
3. Request that the Group Manager – Transport and Environment provides the Committee with details of key officers within the Highways Team.
4. Request that the Executive Director – Place and Economy informs the Committee of the proportion of parking spaces in the City assigned to disabled people.
5. Request that the Executive Director – Place and Economy provides details of the planned consultation with churches and the future of the Brewery Tap in light of the North Westgate redevelopment. To include general information on the North Westgate consultation process, focussing on the station quarter in particular.

6. Request that the Executive Director – Place and Economy provides more detail on highway improvements near the station planned as part of the North Westgate redevelopment.

31. CULTURE AND LEISURE SERVICES IN PETERBOROUGH

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Recreation accompanied by the Service Director, Communities and Partnerships. The report updated the Committee on the delivery arrangements for culture and leisure services following the ending of the council's contract with Vivacity at the end of September 2020, with a particular focus on the opportunities for supporting the economic development and growth agendas for the city.

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

- The Council had received Arts Council grant funding and would continue to apply for new grant funding opportunities.
- Members praised plans to develop a Culture Strategy and felt this would support local artists.
- Members commented that Peterborough Museum would benefit considerably from the planned extension and requested a timeline for this project. Officers responded that the museum was an important part of the City's growth agenda. The process of making a submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) could take between 3 to 5 years.
- The relocation of the library to a more central location would help to revitalise the City after the pandemic.
- Members praised plans for collaboration between the Cresset Theatre and New Theatre.
- A study was being commissioned to establish the appropriate model for delivering the new leisure centre in Werrington. No difficulties were anticipated in delivering the scheme.
- Members requested that the Service Director, Communities and Partnerships provides an update on funding for improvements to cycling facilities in Southey Wood. It was noted that cycling and walking in rural areas had increased since the start of the pandemic. Making use of open space was a key part of the green recovery and it was important not to neglect rural facilities.

ACTIONS AGREED:

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

1. Note and comment on the content of the report and suggest additional themes to explore that may support the economic growth and sustainability of our city.
2. Request that the Service Director, Communities and Partnerships provides an update on funding for improvements to cycling facilities in Southey Wood.

32. 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.

There were no further comments by Members.

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.

33. **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 briefing notes on the following Forward Plan items:

- Vehicle removal for Parking contravention – KEY/15APR19/02. A particular focus was requested on the role of the Local Authority Trading Company, which areas are included, whether cars could park on green infrastructure and what signage would be provided.
- Approval of funding of the provision of accommodation to reduce homelessness – KEY/14OCT19/01

ACTIONS AGREED:

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to consider the current Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and:

1. Requested a briefing note on the Forward Plan item – Vehicle Removal for Parking Contravention – KEY15APR19/02
2. Requested a briefing note on the Forward Plan item - Approval of funding of the provision of accommodation to reduce homelessness – KEY/14OCT19/01

34. **WORK PROGRAMME 2020/2021**

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the item which gave members the opportunity to consider the Committee's Work Programme for 2020/21 and discuss possible items for inclusion.

Members **UNANIMOUSLY** agreed to request a report at the 10 March 2021 meeting on the future of St. Peter's Arcade. Particular concerns were noted regarding the consultation process for its closure and disabled access.

ACTIONS AGREED:

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to add an agenda item to the 10 March 2021 meeting on the future of St. Peter's Arcade.

35. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

10 February 2021 – Joint Scrutiny of the Budget

10 March 2021 – Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee

CHAIRMAN

7pm – 8.40pm

This page is intentionally left blank