

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 6
4 JANUARY 2022	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Adrian Chapman – Service Director, Communities and Partnerships	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Steve Allen, Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture & Communities	
Contact Officer(s):	Kitran Eastman - Managing Director, Peterborough Limited Pat Carrington – Assistant Director, City Culture Peterborough Jamie Fenton - Partnership Manager, Culture, Sport and Leisure	Tel. Insert contact number

CITY CULTURE AND PETERBOROUGH LIMITED ANNUAL REPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Cllr Steve Allen, Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities	Deadline date: NA
<p>It is recommended that Communities Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scrutinises, notes and comments on the annual reports from City Culture Peterborough and Peterborough Limited regarding Culture and Leisure services. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is presented at the request of the Communities Scrutiny Committee

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 It was agreed that the Committee would receive annual reports from City Culture Peterborough and Peterborough Limited. The reports are highlights from the past 12 months for the services operated. Along with these reports are updates on other Culture and Leisure activity, points 4.2 covers this work that PCC officers are working through outside of the two organisations.

2.2 This report is for Communities Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. Part 3, Section 4 – Overview & Scrutiny functions, paragraph No 2 Functions determine by the Council:

- 4. Libraries, Arts and Museums
- 5. Tourism, Culture and Recreation

2.3 Culture and Leisure Services directly contribute to relevant corporate priorities and priority outcomes

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	NA
---	-----------	----------------------------------	----

4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 Context

This report contains an overview of culture and leisure services as requested by the committee and 12 months key activity and developments around Culture, Leisure and Sport.

4.2 Culture and Recreation

4.2.1 Football Foundation Local Football Facility Plans

The Football Foundation Local Football Facility project provides an opportunity for grant funding to be used for grass roots football and increased participation locally based on work carried out in the summer to identify improvements needed across the city. A formal development plan has now been signed off by PCC, FA and the Football Foundation, some projects could attract up to 50% funding.

4.2.2 Unlocking Peterborough has been delivering city centre culture and arts performances and activities for residents since September 2021. Funding from Welcome Back Fund has been used to project manage and deliver local and national artists from street art to street performers and acrobatics to lighting and music activities. Finale in the 18th December, the steering group working with the Culture Strategy group and Alliance will explore further opportunities and funding to support this activity moving into 2022.

4.2.3 Working with the Lawn Tennis Association we are looking to install gated access controls at Central Park and Litter Parks tennis courts. Improvements will be made to the courts condition, repainted and lined, new posts and nets. This will also see a new partnership with a coaching organisation to deliver formal and recreational sessions but will still offer tennis for free and affordable options. Other courts will still be available for pay and play tennis as they are now. Total investment between LTA and S106 funds would value over £100k to improve the facilities and offer.

4.2.4 Funding through the Parks Accelerator £1m fund contributed towards the County Parks website, Cambs and Peterborough Parks. This will highlight the main points of interest at the main parks working with partners/stakeholders. Further funding from Future Parks funding has now been agreed to move this forward and will be live for spring 2022 working with Nene Park Trust, Vivacity, Living Sport and East Region Parks Forum. From 2022 Living Sport will take on the management and maintenance of the website for a further 2 years.

4.2.5 5 outdoor Table Tennis tables were installed in rural locations in 2021 following the urban and parks locations installed in 2019/20, Newborough, Eye, Thorney, Glinton and Barnack. Funding through Table Tennis England, Viridor and Living Sport. Funding also in place to support activation for the tables across the city in 2022.

4.2.6 Peterborough Active Lifestyles and Sports Strategy has been on hold due to many partners having resource furloughed and a change to their normal operational delivery. This is still a live strategy and actions are outlined for partners to deliver against. Working with Living Sport we will refresh the strategy to align with covid impacts, changes to culture and leisure within Peterborough and the importance of health and wellbeing across the city

4.3 Peterborough Limited Update - Vivacity

4.3.1 Peterborough Limited is wholly owned by Peterborough City Council and was formed as a Teckal compliant Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo). This means that the company is autonomous from the Council but does require a council appointed board and relies on the Council for guidance and input on strategic matters or important issues of policy.

In February 2019 Peterborough Limited, operating as Aragon Direct Services, commenced delivery of some services for the Council.

On 1st October 2020 the business expanded by 350 staff, when it took over the Council's leisure provision when its incumbent provider handed back the service. There were significant synergies between the Aragon operation and Vivacity leisure services. Key areas of sports and leisure overlap with parks, open spaces and grounds and sports pitch maintenance. Both Aragon and Vivacity Leisure had a large workforce providing local services for Peterborough residents. Property repair and maintenance was contracted to Aragon, and many of the back-office functions such as HR, IT, Legal, were run by the same providers.

On transfer the Leisure service formed a separate operating arm of the company. This enabled clear open and transparent finances. The service will continue to operate under the name "Vivacity" or "Vivacity Leisure". We have, however, worked to ensure that two areas are not siloed

4.3.2 **Run, Review and then Reshape**

Peterborough Limited committed to "Run, Review and then Reshape" the services, taking into account the Council's strategic and service provision views, commercial opportunities, and the challenges of COVID-19.

The initial plan was that the Run and Review phase would take place from October 2020 to April 2021. Due to the second wave of COVID and the subsequent lock downs, however, this timescale was altered.

- From 29th March 2021 – Outdoor Facilities Open – Lido and Athletics Track.
- From 12th April 2021 – Indoor Facilities Open – no classes or group actives and with COVID restrictions.
- From 17th May 2021 – All Indoor Facilities Open – with COVID restrictions.
- From 21st July 2021 – all Indoor Facilities Open – no restrictions.

From the staggered reopening we assessed the services and combined with feedback from the PDR process, which concluded in August, we came up with a progression plan. A new structure for the Vivacity Operations was consulted on in September and October.

The restructure involved all staff in the Vivacity operational area including leisure centres, sports development, health and wellbeing, Club Viva, and Swim School. The new structure introduced new and changed roles, and multi skilling staff. Teams will work closely to ensure smooth service delivery, customer growth, and improve health outcomes as well as work to ensure all company standards are maintained to reduce risk and ensure service viability.

Roles were developed to enable cross working and more efficient teams to be built which ensure resilience and give staff opportunities to gain new skills and progress within the business.

The key benefits of the new structure are:

- To establish roles which drive specific focus and responsibilities in defined areas.
- New job descriptions/roles that enable staff to utilise and develop further specific skills, knowledge and experience across the business.
- To make it easier to develop performance measures which would support staff development, aiding career progression and so improve performance.
- Enable the forging of good working relationships across sites and work area.
- Using people skills and resources more efficiently.
- To provide a new purpose built structure which fits in with the Peterborough Limited Structures

We are now in the process of a phased implementation of these changes, which will take place over a number of months.

Following the retirement of the former Leisure Operations Director in October, the post was reviewed and combined with the vacant Aragon Operations Director role. A new Operations Director has now been appointed to cover Vivacity and Aragon, who will start in the New Year.

4.3.3 Key successes in 2021

Although 2021 has been a challenging year for Vivacity and the leisure industry as a whole, we have had a number of great achievements. A selection of these include:

- Online Classes during lockdown – a large number of both health and wellbeing classes were recorded and made free to access on our website and advertised via social media. Live stream classes were also available.
- Leisure staff support – a number of Vivacity staff were trained and worked with Aragon to deliver the recycling and waste collection service in January and February 2021. Leisure staff also supported the inhouse lateral flow testing site, which was put in place to support Aragon staff at the depot – and what an amazing job they are did too!
- £500K sports England grant obtained to support the reopening of leisure centres
- Easter Lido Opening – On Monday 29th March outdoor leisure facilities were able to open. This saw the Lido open 8 weeks earlier than normal to maximise the Easter Holiday period while all other pools are closed across the city. Interest in the Lido was very positive with over 4,000 bookings in the first month. City of Peterborough Swimming Club have took advantage of the Lido opening, using the facility for 10 sessions a week. PACTRAC Triathlon club have also enjoyed the early opening and booked 3 private sessions. The marketing and media coverage has was very good including national coverage on BBC radio 4
- Over the summer and Easter holiday we support the government scheme to ensure children who normally have free school means could access food and child care. Sessions running from Hampton Leisure Centre as part of our extended kids clubs provided the activities for these sessions and the Aragon Catering team provided the hot healthy lunches. We received lots of positive feedback from the families who attended.
- Lido Dog Swim - The final of the season was dog swim where dogs and their owners were welcomed to the pool! This event was a first for Peterborough and sold out within 15 hours of it appearing on our website. Places were all been pre-booked and with some 75 dogs, accompanied their owners visiting us. This event was on both local new channels and the front page of the The Times.

The Company will continue to:

- Run its leisure services as efficiently as possible.
- Work to keep staff safe and the public safe during COVID
- Support the Council's strategic aims and ambitions

4.4 City Culture Peterborough Update

4.4.1 City Culture Peterborough (CCP) manages on behalf of Peterborough City Council:

- The Museum and Art Gallery
- Flag Fen
- The Library and Archive Service
- The Key Theatre

This arrangement has been in place since October 2020 and was as a result of Vivacity giving notice and handing back the contract for these services to Peterborough City Council at the start of the Pandemic in 2020.

When CCP took over the management of these services, the majority of staff were on furlough and all the services were closed to the public.

Over the past 14 months there has been significant progress in the recovery, growth and transformation of the services and these form part of a trajectory that is designed to support the revival of our city post covid both in terms of social wellbeing and economic growth but there are still financial challenges in the delivery of these services.

However, that said CCP have also been successful in attracting new money into the services, identifying efficiencies, attracting new visitors and audiences and reforming old partnerships and

stakeholders whilst developing new partnerships and bringing together non-traditional partners.

CCP have developed a vision, with each service having an identified blueprint of what is required for the next four years.

To date PCC, along with CCP, have been successful in securing funding through two rounds of the Culture Recovery Fund. There is currently a bid into central government for the Community Renewal Fund, a joint project between City College Peterborough and City Culture Peterborough, for circa £0.5m and there are also plans to apply for National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status in 2022. If successful, this would see additional funding from the Arts Council to assist in delivering arts and culture across the City.

Even though we are still in the first year of transition, some efficiencies have already been realised with an initial review of the structure and the most senior posts within CCP being shared with City College Peterborough.

The below takes each service area and gives an overview of the progress to date.

4.4.2 **The Museum and Art Gallery**

After a very short opening in November 2020, the museum fully reopened to the public in May 2021 with a newly styled Café – the Edwardian Kitchen. Return visits from the public were initially very slow but following the development of a Summer Activity schedule with new targeted marketing, the visitor figure for July 2021 have exceed those of July 2018 and 2019. Events that have taken place include – Rotten Romans, Dinosaurs Tuesdays, Natural History and a Colour Carnival.

Schools also returned to the museum and Mondays became full with school visits (until the end of term) and we also have bookings in place for the new term.

Although the museum was mainly closed between October 2020 and May 2021, and some staff remained on furlough, work was undertaken in applying for bids, developing the vision and blueprint and in undertaking outreach /widening participation work.

In addition to the above CCP:

- are also working on the development of the plan for the museum bronze age extension. An expression of interest was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £5m, which was approved, and a full application has now been submitted. If successful, this will be matched with £2m from the Town Fund.
- held our first ever, international street and contemporary art exhibition ‘Urban’, which features artists such as Banksy, Damien Hurst and Blek Le Rat and will turn our “Edwardian Kitchen” into an Urban Kitchen!”. This exhibition is expected to attract visitors to the City from across the country, thus supporting the economic recovery of our City Centre.
- worked on long term sustainability plans to reduce the reliance of the council’s grant and will be submitting an application for NPO status.

4.4.3 **Flag Fen**

In October, when CCP picked up the responsibility for Flag Fen, it very quickly became apparent that there needed to be some very focused work to ensure the site and artifacts were to be preserved. This work was of significant importance as much of what we have at Flag Fen are the only examples in the world (the boats and the causeway) or the earliest known examples i.e. the wheel.

Working with Heritage England, CCP secured funding from them and PCC to undertake some

urgent preservation work on the Must Farm Boats. CCP are now working with York Archaeological Trust to have the boats preserved and conserved. This is a significant piece of work that involves tanking and, in some cases, having the boats transported to York for the work. Once complete the boats will be housed in the new Museum extension.

As the boats were discovered at Must Farm in Whittlesey, CCP and PPC have also been working with Whittlesey Town Council in linking up with them and their new heritage centre to ensure a complete tourist trail for the bronze age experience.

CCP have also set up a Flag Fen and Must Farm Advisory Board, that consists of specialist archaeologists and stakeholders to help advise and support this internationally significant site.

In addition to the above CCP have also:

- a. Re-engaged with Prof Francis Pryor, the archaeologist who discovered Flag Fen and he has now joined the board of directors of City Culture Peterborough.
- b. Opened the site all year round (used to be March-Sep only).
- c. Had an archaeological dig, funded by Heritage England and being undertaken by Cambridge Archaeological Unit.
- d. Is creating a Heritage Farm on the site
- e. Started to develop Flag Fen's produce range (for example Flag Fen Honey)
- f. Engaged with the National Trust for guidance and support and they are now acting as a critical friend for us.
- g. Planned to build the first of two new additional round houses on the site
- h. Ran some successful events on site, including a Summer Solstice family event, a free Key Worker week, Fledging Fridays, Sticks and Stories and an Evening with Francis Pryor and Ancient lights.
- i. Offered work experience to City College 16-19 students in which they have learnt heritage and environmental skills
- j. In conjunction with City College there are also plans to run some adult course there, for example astronomy.

Again, although initial numbers were low when Flag Fen first reopened, July and August, has seen a significant increase in visitor numbers to the site.

What is apparent from the first 12 months is that Flag Fen is a very exciting proposition and has the potential to become a self-sustaining visitor attraction that will have a significant impact on the visitor economy, alongside supporting the wellbeing of local residents. The plan to sustainability includes a new pricing strategy (recently introduced), calendar of events to generate income, a new secondary spend offer and forming part of the application for NPO status.

4.4.4 **Library and Archive Service**

From the start of the pandemic until CCP undertook the management of culture services, all city Libraries and the Archives were closed to the public and the staff were on furlough. During that period funding was secured to facilitate a Reading Friends programme aimed to support reading groups through video conferencing and over the phone. Alongside this an application to be one of five selected local authority libraries was won with an aim to increase engagement of specific audience groups e.g. teenagers, carers and jobseekers. Work will start on this early 2022.

Once guidelines allowed, CCP started to reopen the libraries and archives in order to support the local residents of Peterborough. In May all libraries across the City reopened their doors and the mobile library was back on the road. PC suites were also re-opened enabling people to access public access computers. Libraries have seen a steady increase in visitor numbers and new memberships. In more recent months they have engaged in new activities to promote literacy and reading across the City, along with partners, for example The National Literacy Trust. This has involved three main initiatives:

1. The High Street Safari -

2. The Summer Reading Challenge -
3. The Mini Vine -

Archives re-opened in line with libraries and has seen its highest monthly user numbers since July 2014 and its highest enquiry numbers since July 2017. Despite reduced opening hours visitor numbers are now on par with pre-Covid visitors.

The Business and Intellectual Property Centre has been relocated and refurbished. This British Library funded provision aims to support new business sign up, and therefore will be a useful provision for city residents looking at starting their own business post-Covid.

In addition to the above, CCP have also been working with PCC on the development and forward plans for the Vine, which is planned to be the new home for the Central Library. Work and research is currently being undertaken to look at the requirements for the Library of the future to ensure that what we offer in the new space meets the local need of now and the future, this becoming a more efficient and attractive service.

4.4.5 **Key Theatre**

The Key Theatre, as with the other services, had to close to the public during the pandemic. Once able to reopen, many shows were still unavailable, and the safety requirements meant that audience numbers had to be kept very low. This had, and still has, a significant impact on ticket sales and income.

Although the Key Theatre could not fully reopen, with the assistance of the Arts Council recovery fund, the Key Theatre has been able to undertake outreach work, digital workshops and planning activities that has widened the participation within local communities. Lost in Translation workshops are an example of this in which the first weekend saw over 450 engage in the workshops that ran in Ifter Park.

However, although the Key Theatre saw numbers creep up and shows returning, ticket sales (including Panto) are still down and not sufficient to fully cover the costs of running the Key. This means it is still reliant of Arts Council funding (which ceases in January) and a PCC grant.

7. **REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 To ensure good scrutiny of the delivery of Culture and Leisure services.

8. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 8.1 N/A

9. **IMPLICATIONS**

Financial Implications

- 9.1 Along with all council services, culture and leisure services will be subject to intensive review as part of the council's financial sustainability work.

Legal Implications

- 9.2 N/A

Equalities Implications

- 9.3 N/A

Rural Implications

9.4 NA

Carbon Impact Assessment

9.5 Overall, this update report has no impact at this time but as the workstreams and outcomes of delivery are delivered the CIA will be reviewed and updated as these may have carbon impacts.

Through the governance processes the CIA will be reviewed and updated to reflect delivery and the outcomes moving forward.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 None