

STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 8
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Report of the Executive Director of Operations

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PORTFOLIO PROGRESS REPORT

1. PURPOSE

To provide Members with an update from Portfolio Holders on progress relating to their Portfolios relevant to this Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to scrutinise the progress made on the Cabinet Members' Portfolios by providing challenge where necessary and to suggest ideas and initiatives to support improvements in performance.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

The ambition of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement is to deliver a bigger and better Peterborough, taking advantage of the inherent opportunities we have and at the same time tackling the challenges we face in order to deliver a higher quality of life for all. The priorities and actions from relevant Portfolios directly contribute to this ambition.

4. BACKGROUND

At its November 2009 meeting, the Stronger and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee invited Councillor Elsey, Councillor Hiller and Councillor Lee to update them on their priorities for the coming year. This report provides Members with an update on those priorities with progress made to date, coupled with information about newly emerging priorities where relevant.

5. KEY ISSUES

5.1 Councillor Elsey – Cabinet Member for Regional and Business Engagement

5.1.1 Background

At the November 2009 meeting Cllr Elsey spoke to members about his portfolio which covers tourism, resilience, markets, street trading and City Centre Management.

He reported that a service review had been conducted between April and October 2009 which culminated in a restructure to ensure that services delivered were fit for purpose. The new flagship Destination Centre had also opened and had received admiration from people visiting from other Cities. He also reported that St Peter's Arcade was being looked at to see what changes could be made to restore it. St Peter's Road would also be made more attractive so that visitors arriving from the car park would have a more enjoyable experience.

Cllr Elsey reported that one of the key challenges he faced would be business engagement which was not just about the City Centre but throughout the City. However, a working group was mapping out all of the vacant premises to see where they were, and a new City Centre Manager was in place who would actively engage with businesses. Other key challenges would be conducting a commercial trading review and a parking services review.

5.1.2 Update

- Agreement has been reached with the owners of the Outside Diner to move to Long Causeway. There will be a 16-week build time for a new, smaller trailer in keeping with its surroundings
- The first monthly City Business forum was held on the 9th February, at which presentations were delivered by the NHS regarding the Safe Haven Scheme involving businesses. The first edition of the City Centre newsletter was also issued and this will be a bi-monthly newsletter with updates on the City Centre for all businesses. The meeting complements the newly remodelled monthly City Executive Meeting that looks at the wider issues affecting the city and draws up plans where necessary to help mitigate against negative impacts
- The Destination Centre continues to perform well, currently working with local artists to help showcase their work
- New cameras are now installed in Cathedral Precincts coinciding with a very positive article in the Evening Telegraph on CCTV coverage and the work that is carried out through the City. We are also looking to secure CCTV provision for the Retail Business Park in Maskew Avenue
- The Cycle Tour Series has been arranged for Tuesday 15th June; we are working closely with Sweetspot who are the organisers of the event
- A major crime reduction initiative has been running at the Wellington Street car park where the car park has gone from highest level of car crime in a car park within Cambridgeshire to zero crime in the space of a few months
- The Multi-Storey Car Park at Northminster is now open for parking 24hours a day (although the stairwells remain locked overnight)
- Traveller protection works at the riverside are being finished off with revised barriers and protection installed near the Crown Court
- Traveller protection works will soon commence at Pleasure Fair Meadow car park, to protect the entrance into the car park from the arches under the mainline railway
- The parking review is underway with outcomes and implementation anticipated during April 2010

5.2 Councillor Hiller – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Community Development

5.2.1 Background

At the November 2009 meeting Cllr Hiller spoke to members about his priorities which included:

- Delivering improvements in service design and delivery through neighbourhood management
- Improving perception-based indicators via the Solution Centre work
- Moving towards multi-skilled enforcement/neighbourhood officers
- Sustaining reductions in Serious Acquisitive Crime
- Transforming our approach to managing anti-social behaviour

- Embedding the principles of Operation Alert across the Partnership
- Delivering Integrated Offender Management
- Co-location of the Council and Police Community Safety teams
- Review of the substance misuse system
- Embedding the housing enforcement role across neighbourhoods
- Developing a broader working relationship with social landlords

5.2.2 Update

- Neighbourhood Management is gathering significant pace, with a number of high profile issues being addressed using this mechanism. Community Action Planning has also begun across Peterborough as part of the neighbourhood management approach. Community Action Plans will be developed for all areas and will establish priorities for change and improvement
- The Solution Centre focussing on community engagement and consultation has concluded and is making a series of recommendations which centre on the development of the 'Involve Peterborough' concept. This concept combines co-locating staff from across public sector agencies who are responsible for consultation engagement activity, developing a skills programme for local community leaders to enable them to play a full and active role, and the development of a business intelligence centre to enable us to make better informed, evidence-based decisions about investment and service design
- Performance relating to reducing Serious Acquisitive Crime remains positive overall, with 9 consecutive months of improvement, and now 11% ahead of target
- A full review of our anti-social behaviour service has been carried out and recommendations for service change will be implemented from the start of the new financial year
- Operation Alert is a highly successful initiative led by the Police but adopted across all partners, focussing on targeting the most prolific offenders and so reducing crime. The model has been so effective that the principles are now effectively mainstreamed into our business as usual activity. Further, we have established a new Tactical Action Group which will continue to drive crime down
- The substance misuse system in Peterborough has been subject to ongoing review and improvement, which will lead to the formal retendering of drug services during 2010/11
- Housing enforcement is now part of the Neighbourhood Management team, which means that action and intervention relating to housing issues can be better targeted. Work is ongoing to develop multi-skilled neighbourhood officers that can enforce across a range of disciplines
- New Community Development Workers and Community Project Officers have been recruited through the Migration Impact Fund and Future Jobs Fund respectively. This will add resource and resilience to our neighbourhood teams and will deliver more results for our communities
- Peterborough has received Connecting Communities funding (2 x £50K) to deliver projects in Central Ward and Ravensthorpe Ward designed to build cohesive communities

5.3 Councillor Lee – Cabinet Member for Environment Capital and Culture

5.3.1 Background

At the November 2009 meeting Cllr Lee spoke to members about his priorities which centred on developing the new Culture and Leisure Trust. Cllr Lee reported that the Cabinet had agreed in principle to the proposal in October 2009 and the business plan would be presented to Cabinet in February 2010 for a decision.

Cllr Lee also reported the following:

- **Library Services:** there had been significant investment in the Central Library with the ground floor being transformed
- **Sports:** the Great Eastern run had been a success and even more people had entered. Due to the free swimming for under 16 and over 60 year olds swimming attendance was up with 41,000 more young people and 10,000 more senior people swimming. The Jack Hunt facilities and pool had been refurbished. The Peterborough athletics track was due to be brought up to professional standards. A new initiative called Active Workplaces would help employees to keep fit. There was a need to increase the number of people taking part in sports to meet the Healthy Active Workplaces Agenda
- **Bereavement Services:** the Children's Woodland Memorial Garden at the Crematorium had now been completed. The crematorium had received a Green Flag status and the installation of a mercury abatement plant for 2010/11 was being implemented. A new mausoleum is being provided at Fletton cemetery
- **Heritage and Arts:** there had been 85,000 visitors to the museum, the most visited attraction locally. £1M was to be invested in the museum building and a project team had been working with the Heritage Lottery Fund to gain more funding. The new Key Theatre Studios had opened. The Peterborough Festival was successful with an increase in attendance from last year.

5.3.2 Update

- **Bereavement Services:** Mausolea provision – Works totalling £630k commenced in October to replace the Mausoleums at Fletton Cemetery with phase one of this development due for completion in late March. Once completed this will allow customer demand for these units to be met for a number of years
- **Mercury Abatement -** The £1,205 million project to install Mercury Abatement plant to comply with new legislation at the Crematorium commences in March and will be ongoing for a period of 12 months. The contract awarded for these works makes provision for flexible working in order to minimise customer disruption and maintain an excellent customer service during this period
- **Sports Services:** Service improvements have continued and include completed refurbishment of the Embankment All Weather Pitch which re-opened on 1st March. Customers have welcomed these improvements and are making extensive use of these popular facilities.
- **Disability Sport –** A grant for £15,000 has been awarded to develop cycling for disabled residents. The grant received will allow for the purchase of 10 adapted cycles and associated equipment. The initiative will be launched in June and the scheme will be based at Ferry Meadows Country Park. The sports development team will be leading this initiative to develop a disabled cycling club and hire scheme

- Libraries and Archives: Some analysis work has been completed on the impact to date of the reduction in the library service opening hours. The opening hours were reduced by 10% including 6 hours from Sunday, 14.5 hours from Saturday and 9.5 from 5 to 7 opening during the week.
- Visitor numbers are down by 4% with the biggest decrease being at the Central Library which lost the most number of hours. To date there have been 821,725 visits as compared to 852,637 in the same period before the reduction in hours.
- With the improvements introduced with the new library management system there has been a 17% increase in the number of requests met within 7 days from 71% to 88%.
- 37% of all requests are now placed online by customers themselves.
- Arts and Heritage: The Face of Peterborough project is in full swing to find the face that 'represents' Peterborough following a build up through computer software of thousands of individual Peterborian's passport sized photographs. The final 'face' will be ink drawing displayed in the art gallery in April 2010.
- The Council has submitted a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund of £980,000 for the redevelopment of the Museum. A preliminary response to this bid is expected in July 2010
- Cultural Trust: Work continues to wards the creation of a cultural trust for Peterborough and an update will be presented to Members at its meeting on the 18th of March

6. IMPLICATIONS

It is anticipated that the Scrutiny Committee will comment on and make recommendations relating to the updates provided in this report in order that delivery potential is maximised for the benefit of our communities.

7. CONSULTATION

Consultation relating to any specific action or initiative contained within this report takes place as required.

8. EXPECTED OUTCOMES and NEXT STEPS

Comments and recommendations made by Scrutiny Committee members will be considered as part of the ongoing development and delivery of specific business areas.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

None

11. APPENDICES

None

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