

**MINUTES OF THE GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING
HELD AT 7PM, ON
TUESDAY, 1 MARCH 2022
ENGINE SHED, SAND MARTIN HOUSE**

Committee Members Present: Councillors M Farooq (Chair), C. Burbage (Vice-Chair), R. Brown, G. Casey, A. Joseph, Judy Fox, N. Moyo, L. Sharp, H. Skibsted, C. Wiggin

Officers Present Adrian Chapman, Executive Director, Place and Economy
Lewis Banks, Transport and Environment Manager
Emma Gee, Assistant Director, Growth and Regeneration
Dan Kalley, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Also Present: Councillor John Fox, Peterborough First Group Leader
Councillor Nick Sandford, Liberal Democrat Group Leader
Rowland Potter, Head of Transport. Combined Authority
Dr Lucy Jones, Vice Principal, Anglia Ruskin University
Peterborough.

46. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Day and Co-opted Member Parish Councillor Michael Samways.

47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

No declarations of interest were received.

48. MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD ON 6 JANUARY 2022

The minutes of the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 6 January 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

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

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

50. CITY CENTRE AND UNIVERSITY UPDATE

The report was introduced by the Assistant Director of Growth and Regeneration and Dr Lucy Jones, Vice Principal of Anglia Ruskin University. The report provided an update on the progress of the University and the City Centre.

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee debated the report and responses to key points raised by Members are listed below:

- Members sought clarification on whether the Arts would be included in the University offer. The Vice Principal confirmed that Arts would be incorporated into the University offer, however the delivery of a set of Arts programmes would not be within the first two phases but would be part of the development of the third phase.
- Members queried if consideration had been given to the potential impact of car usage by students. The Assistant Director of Growth and Regeneration discussed existing work on travel planning, confirming that parking would be fairly limited on site and use would be made of existing parking spaces. There would also be a priority to ensure that there were public transport routes into the campus, and making sure pedestrian, walking and cycling spaces were accessible. A package of sustainable travel measures was being considered and at the heart of the campus provision.
- In terms of accommodation for the 2022/2023 cohort, the University was confident that it could work to match what would be needed for the level of students.
- Members queried the number of applications received and accepted and how many were from the local area. It was confirmed that Anglia Ruskin University was still in the middle of the UCAS cycle, and while there had been applications from across the country, many were from the local area.
- Members queried outline plans for phase 4. The Assistant Director replied that there would be a greater provision going forward and the university would not be just an educational provision but also an innovation and eco system. Phase 4 would be a larger facility including some industry and possibly employment. It would be an integrated learning environment. The Vice Principal advised that they were in a very active stage of recruitment for academic staff and a key part was the research background that they could bring.
- The Vice Principal added the University was still working towards a target of 3,000 students by 2030. The University was already working with other local education communities, there would be engagement with local providers for the main Living Lab hub in phases 2 and 3.
- Regarding the provision of law and social sciences, the Vice Principal advised there was ongoing work to include law as part of the portfolio as well as introducing aspects of social sciences in future courses.
- New technologies was part of the vision for the future, and would be at the heart and soul of the Living Lab. There had already been conversations with two areas in Peterborough to discuss possible future engagement in this area.
- Members queried if the Embankment Masterplan had left enough space to grow the University over the next fifteen to twenty years. The Assistant Director advised that this has been a key part of the plan and that it did allow for the growth of the university as a phased development.

The second part of the report concerned Peterborough city centre emerging from the challenges faced during the pandemic and moving forward to delivering infrastructure and establishing a city centre framework including development opportunities.

- Members sought clarification on the vision for the Peterborough experience of the future and what would draw people to come to Peterborough. The Assistant Director advised that the Cultural Strategy was integral and confirmed she would be working with other partners such as Nene Park Trust and the Cathedral to ensure there was a rolling programme of events. She added that there would be ongoing work with the Business Improvement District (**BID**) campaign and Queensgate and that the Cultural Strategy would be a key consideration for the artistic community.

- Members were advised that once the market had moved to its permanent position on Bridge Street there would be opportunities for smaller businesses to rent space and also opportunities for seasonal markets and local individuals to have pop up space.
- Regarding the level of investment, the Vice Principal advised that there had been an upfront initial investment which was about £10k to improve the initial visitor experience and this had been working with Opportunity Peterborough. Enhancements had already been made to the visit Peterborough website, which included an improved online booking function, better social media integration, smoother accommodation availability checker and a better banner advertisement section.
- Opportunity Peterborough had reported an early uplift in visitor numbers, increased engagement on social media, and the website was on the Cresset's top 10 list of ticket sale sources for the first time.
- Opportunity Peterborough would be able to sell space on the website and provide a service and a membership to such organisations as hoteliers.
- Members queried if the Cultural Strategy had been impacted by the inability of the council to match the Towns Fund and how likely it was to replace the funding. The Assistant Director advised that borrowing was no longer an option for the Council. The Vine project which occupied what was once the TK Max building would be able to provide opportunities for small start-up businesses and community cultural provision which would in turn contribute to the rent of that building. There were various options available for this building including leasing it or selling it.
- Members asked what going forward would draw people to visit Peterborough. Members were informed that every city centre had a unique selling point. Peterborough was designed perfectly for the outdoor economy, café culture and the Cathedral which it was hoped could be drawn out in some way to the centre of Peterborough. There was a range of things that the council could do with partners in terms of place marketing. The high street would also evolve and build on more independent offers. It was about curating the whole experience and harnessing the talent that was already there through the Cultural Strategy.
- Members sought assurance that the University would be equipped for students that might be subject to county lines or were vulnerable and that it would provide a safe environment and support. Members were informed that there would be a student welfare support hub available and visible as soon as students entered the first building. All staff would be given extensive training around safeguarding and supporting vulnerable students and would also be trained as mental health first aiders.
- Members commented that big name retail shops attracted people into city centres and more needed to be done to entice them to Peterborough. John Lewis had been a huge loss. Members were informed that Queensgate was reconsidering its offer and would evolve over time.
- Members expressed concerns about ongoing issues for market traders and that the move to Bridge Street might mean a reduction in the offer. Concern was also raised about ongoing issues with cycling on Bridge Street and the fact that there would be a reduced area for pedestrians to walk once the market was in place. The Assistant Director replied that the current market had been too big for current demand and there would be some natural wastage with the move, but there would be capacity to expand the market should demand increase. With the market stalls in place, it would reduce the room for cyclists to cycle in pedestrian areas but leaving people space in which to move around.

ACTIONS AGREED:

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

51 **COMBINED AUTHORITY'S LOCAL TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY PLAN**

The report was introduced by the Transport and Environment Manager accompanied by the Head of Transport, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

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

- Members commented that there had been a lack of engagement in the consultation process and that no one had been available to address the Climate Change Working Group and requested that this be changed moving forward. The Head of Transport apologised for this and wasn't aware of receiving any requests to attend the group and advised that he would be happy to attend a meeting if invited.
- On being asked about the elected member groups that had been engaged with the process, the Head of Transport replied he would be happy to find out and report back.
- Members queried spending money on some roadwork improvements on the A16 given that there were current routes available for cyclists to use. The Transport and Environment Manager advised that there were three schemes being considered to improve pedestrian and cycle ways and was aware of current issues and the team were developing what options could be used and where priorities should be.
- A Member reflected that the Werrington area had lost several cycle paths in recent years. The Head of Transport advised that highways were dependent on government funding which was a 30-year deal. Historically highway authorities had to balance highways and motor vehicles over and above other forms of transport. The LCTP was very much about changing the balance of mode and the investment in sustainable transport, cycling and walking.
- Members commented that Peterborough was one of the fastest growing cities in Cambridgeshire and referring to page 38 of the report noted that out of a total of 100 respondents to the consultation that only 3 people had been from Peterborough and did not feel that this was a good representation of the city. Members sought assurance that the second round of the consultation would go out to all Councillors and other interested groups in the Peterborough area including young people?
- Members commented that the report mentioned the importance of connectivity but there had been no mention of the connectivity of the cycling routes in Peterborough and sought assurance that this would be included in the document going forward. The Transport Manager acknowledged that Members had not felt engaged in the consultation process and apologised and would report this back to his team to ensure this was addressed in the next round of consultation including ways of better engagement with the people of Peterborough. Connectivity was very important and the existing cycle ways in Peterborough would be looked at including the rural areas, as well as continued engagement with the cycle forum.
- Members commented on buses and a previous working group which had been formed to look at bus transport and wanted to know if bus transportation was also being looked at and if the group could be reformed. Members were informed that at the time the working group was in place the Local Authority still had passenger transport powers but this now fell under the Combined Authority. The officer advised engagement with the Combined Authority with regard to bus transport would be looked into.
- Members noted on page 28 of the report that the vision for the LTCP was to help create a fairer society. It was therefore felt that bus transportation must be looked at and a better bus service provided which would also contribute to reducing the number of cars

on the road. Officers advised that this was being looked at and the bus service improvement plan for the entire region had been submitted to government. The key principles of the plan were very much to provide public services to those who currently could not access it. The existing bus service offer needed to be improved and an increase in the service timing so that they were more regular and lasted for longer periods of time. The contractual mechanism for operating bus services was also being looked at with franchising being one option.

- Members sought clarification as to whether Park and Ride options were being looked at for the city and additionally if cleaner air zones were also being considered. Members were advised that Park and Ride had been offered in the past at Christmas time, but it had not been successful. There were therefore no plans to bring in a Park and Ride scheme. Peterborough currently did not have a policy on clean air zones, but the LTCP would provide the framework and policy to be able to make those choices in the future.
- Members felt that the Park and Ride Scheme should be revisited.
- Members wanted assurance that the LCTP would focus on sustainable transport, it was also important to improve the local bus service. The LCTP also needed to look at long term solutions for Peterborough including a tram system. Officers responded that they were conscious that the bus service had been altered and reduced over the last few years, however work was being done with all bus operators to seek ways of improving these services and increasing bus patronage. There was a need to move to mass rapid transport in certain locations but equally there was a need for better connectivity between locations to access Peterborough more easily.
- Members referred to the proposed objectives of the LTCP and in particular productivity. Members sought clarification as to what businesses in Peterborough had been engaged with to understand what their needs were. Officers advised that engaging with businesses was something that needed to increase. The Business Board within the Combined Authority which was made up of business representatives including representatives from Peterborough had been consulted but much more work needed to be done in the local area with local businesses and welcomed any support from Members in facilitating those connections.
- Members raised the issue of orbital bus routes assuming everyone wanted to go into the city. Consideration needed to be given to cross city bus routes and earlier and later times for shift workers. Officers agreed that this needed to be improved and the bus service improvement plan submitted to government included this.
- Members sought clarification on whether the Combined Authority Mayor had made a decision on bus franchising. Officers responded that the Mayor was clear in that he was in favour of bus franchising, however there was a process that had to be gone through. A business case had been produced which was reviewed by an independent Audit which had delayed the process, but it was anticipated that the consultation would go ahead from the 10 May.
- Members asked what happened with the trial of e-scooters. Officers responded that the only legal trial of e-scooters was being held in Cambridge, this trial was being extended to enable more data to be collected. All data collected would be reported back to government along with other e-scooter trials to enable government to decide how they will manage legislation around the use of e-scooters.
- Members requested that the Councils response to the next phase of the Combined Authority Local Transport and Connectivity Plan consultation comes to the Growth, Environment and Resources Committee in sufficient time and before any decisions were made. Members also requested that during the next phase of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan consultation that the Combined Authority engage with key businesses in Peterborough.

ACTIONS AGREED:

The Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note and make comments or recommendations that could be considered by the Combined Authority and the City Council as part of the development of the refreshed Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.

The Committee requested that:

1. The Council's response to the next phase of the Combined Authority Local Transport and Connectivity Plan consultation comes to the Growth, Environment and Resources Committee in sufficient time and before any decisions were made.
2. That during the next phase of the Combined Authority Local Transport and Connectivity Plan consultation that the Combined Authority engage with key businesses in Peterborough to understand the barriers to sustainable transport schemes that businesses faced and that this feedback was presented to the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

52 MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Senior 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.

The Senior Democratic Service Officer updated members as to the recommendation made at the Extraordinary meeting on 15 February which was as follows:

Cabinet considered the report and the recommendation of the Growth, Resources and Environment Scrutiny Committee and **RESOLVED** to:

1. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene and the Environment to determine whether the consent to fell the tree at 9 Barnard Way, Bretton be implemented or not, subject to:
2. Obtaining a further independent expert assessment (i.e. not from the experts who have already provided assessments) of the issues relating to the mature oak tree and the property of 9 Barnard Way, Bretton, with such an assessment reviewing the existing reports and clarifying any inconsistencies; and
3. Obtaining a detailed report on the effectiveness, cost and implications of providing root barrier treatment.

ACTIONS AGREED:

The Growth, Environment and Resources 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.

53 FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Chair 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.

ACTIONS AGREED:

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

7pm – 8.51pm

CHAIRMAN

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