

**MINUTES OF THE GROWTH, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY
 COMMITTEE MEETING
 HELD AT 7.00 PM, ON
 TUESDAY 10 January 2023
 BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Councillors I Yasin (Chair), M Jamil (Vice-Chair), G Casey, J Fox, M Haseeb, K Knight, R Ray, N Sandford, M Rangzeb, J Allen (substitute) and Co-opted Member Parish Councillor Neil Boyce

Officers Present:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rob Hill, Acting Service Director, Communities • Matt Oliver, Head of Think Communities Peterborough • Jamie Fenton, Cultural and Leisure Development Manager • Clair George PES Manager • Peter Gell, Assistant Director Regulatory Services • Felicity Paddick, Estates Manager • Sean Evans, Head of Service, Housing Needs • Sarah Scase, Housing Needs Operations Manager • Jim Newton, Interim Assistant Director for Planning • Lee Walsh, Acting Development Management Team Leader • Ramin Shams, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Also in attendance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Steve Allen, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communication, Culture and Communities • Councillor Ishfaq Hussain, Cabinet Advisor to the Cabinet Member for Communication, Culture and Communities • Councillor Gul Nawaz, Cabinet Advisor for Community Cohesion • Kirtan Uttarker, Youth Council Representative

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Charles Fenner.

Councillor J Allen was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Charles Fenner.

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

In relation to agenda item 5, (Minutes No.34) Parish Councillor Neil Boyce and Councillor Jackie Allen declared Other Registerable Interests (ORI).

32. MINUTES OF MEETING

The minutes of the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny held on Tuesday 1 November 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

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

No call ins were received.

34. Progress Report from Cabinet Member for Communication, Culture and Communities

The Cabinet Member for Communication, Culture and Communities introduced the report, which provided the Committee with an update on the progress of the Cabinet Member portfolio. The report contained information regarding the neighbourhood and community support, libraries, art and museums, tourism, culture and creation and the city centre management. The Cabinet Member for Communication, Culture and Communities advised Members that the Council strongly focused on communities-based support, which had been a challenging time for many residents faced with the unprecedented cost of living crisis. Nonetheless, the Council welcomed refugees fleeing desperate situations in their home countries. He added that the Council faced the challenge of recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic. His work this year focused on community provision engaging with partners to help those in need, including financial help to those most needed.

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

- Members referred to page 27, Paragraph 4.8.3, concerning the city centre and asked why the Council recruited enforcement officers from the CSS Ltd. The PES Manager advised Members that the pandemic hit, and the Council had to redeploy officers to different areas. Due to the ongoing issues in the city centre, the Council had to try to bring officers in from the CSS Ltd, and the contract was due to end shortly, and she would be looking to re-engage Council officers again to provide these services.
- Members referred to page 31, Paragraph 4.12.2 of the report and queried regarding the Open Plus software, which had not been re-stored post-pandemic and raised concerns about the mobile libraries' unclear schedule, and if the Council was taking steps to promote mobile libraries. The cultural and Leisure Development Manager advised Members that Open Plus during the pandemic closed down, most of the libraries had restored access to the Open Plus software, and the Council was working on upgrading the Open Plus software as it had been outdated and not compatible with some of the new systems for some of the libraries. In addition, mobile libraries were on a two-weekly cycle before the pandemic and four weekly cycles post-pandemic. Members agreed that the Cultural and Leisure Development Manager provide a briefing note regarding the measures the Council would take to improve the frequency of the mobile libraries and promote their advertisement outside of this meeting.
- Members acknowledged the high number of penalty charge notices issued and requested that the PES Manager provide statistical data concerning the enforcement officers' activities in the city centre, such as the number of engagements, daily dispersals or the number of fixed penalty notices issued.
- Members were informed regarding the 100% service delivery for the CCTV from 1 January to 31 October 2022, and the Council had 24/7 eyes on all of the CCTV cameras.
- Member referred to page 39, Paragraph 4.11.5 of the report, and asked if the Council was prepared to process such an increase in the number of applications. The Assistant Director for Regulatory Services explained that the license renewal for taxi drivers was on a 3-year cycle. The legislation changed a number of years ago, although the Licensing Team knew that this was coming, there was nothing they could do about it. The Licensing Team was also proposing that for the next

year, to ease some of the pressure, extend some of the drivers' licences to allow the team to get that leeway and bring in additional temporary staff to help process those applications. Members were informed that local authorities would sign up for a national database so that every local authority could see information in relation to drivers' applications.

- PES Manager informed Members that the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) was due for renewal in May 2023. Therefore, the team would produce the renewal briefing pack shortly, which would go out for consultation. She explained that any condition in the PSPO had to be evidence-led, which would have a detrimental impact on the area and likely to amend some of the conditions already in the current PSPO in relation to the alcohol and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).
- The Culture and Leisure Development Manager advised Members that the £265k from Share Prosperity fund was for a three-year programme around the Alliance delivering the culture strategy on behalf of the city. Members requested that the Culture and Leisure Development Manager provide a briefing note regarding the Cultural Alliance delivery programme and its engagement with the community groups across the city outside this meeting.
- Members asked if the Council was considering an app-based tourism information for visitors. The Cabinet Member for Communication, Culture and Communities advised that he had discussions regarding an app with Visit Peterborough and was confident that the app would be the way forward. Also, the website needed improvement, which required better activity on socials.
- Members queried regarding the parking services payments and asked how many facilities allowed cash payments. The PES Manager advised that the majority of the facilities accept cash as payment and that many people use the phone app to make payments as well as card payments. In addition, she advised that the ticket machine at the Haven Car Park had been upgraded, and they are currently exploring options for the ANPR for some of the car parks, which would allow different payment methods.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED:**

- To endorse the approach being taken under the portfolio of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communication, Culture & Communities.

35. Community Asset Transfer Programme Update

The Head of Think Communities introduced the report, providing the Committee with an update on Community Asset Transfer (CAT) progress. He explained that the Council agreed on a five-year programme of CAT in 2013 focused on building community capacity and empowerment, driving community development and focusing on the local provision. There were 36 centres considered for CAT, nine transferred to date, ten held pending for review, and 17 were not appropriate for CAT or centres with no proposal. He explained that the works currently being carried out were assessed against a set of criteria which included value for money, accessibility, reducing duplication of services in the local area, sustainability, governance arrangements and PCC priorities.

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

- Members raised concerns over the period it had taken the CAT Programme to complete. The Head of Think Communities advised that the complexities around maintenance and compliance were the significant issues which held back the process.
- Members asked if the Council had established active communication with the volunteer groups. The Head of the Think Communities advised that the Community Connectors were actively contacting all the centres and re-assuring those volunteer groups on the arrangements moving forward.
- Members raised concerns that it took the Council nearly nine years to be at the current stage for CAT, and the progress was unacceptable. The Head of Think Communities advised Members that the team in the communities is an entirely different set of people than were at the start of the CAT, and the Communities Team was working hard with NPS to get that knowledge back. However, he recognised that some of the corporate knowledge had been lost and felt he had gone backwards.
- The Cabinet Member for Communication, Culture and Communities advised that each centre had been different and should allow time for an officer to sort each case. The CAT Programme was paused for some time for its review to be done, and the new team picked this programme, as the people who initially started were no longer working for PCC.
- Members asked when the CAT programme would be concluded, as this was initially a five-year programme started in 2013. Members were advised that the team was third away from reviewing the centres and closely worked with NPS over the mapping. There were issues related to maintenance, compliance and management arrangements, and the difficulties in re-establishing contact.
- The Head of Think Communities advised Members that he would work closely with local ward members. He explained that he would continue to review the centre, and once the review was completed, he would decide whether to complete the CAT programme.
- Members queried whether the criteria set for the CAT programme in 2013 were still relevant and whether reviewing the programme would be an alternate option. The Estates Manager advised that it was part of the strategy to review as ten years had passed in which Covid19 hit and the cost of the living crisis started.

The following recommendation was made by Councillor Sandford and seconded by Councillor Jamil that the Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend that the Cabinet review whether having a Community Asset Transfer programme is the most appropriate way forward and what format it should take.

The Committee unanimously **AGREED** to the recommendation.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the current position of the Community Asset Transfer programme
2. Note the progress made toward the completion of the review
3. Note and commented on the approach and early findings of the review
4. Note the timescales set out in respect review of community assets and the community asset transfer programme.

36. Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Annual Update

The Head of Service for Housing Needs, accompanied by the Housing Needs Operations Manager, introduced the report, which provided an update on the ongoing work for Housing. He explained that Housing Needs Service continued to see high demand as Covid restrictions were lifted and returned to business as usual. The service had adapted to ensure that they could meet customers' needs while ensuring that clients and staff safely remained a key focus.

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

- The Housing Needs Operations Manager informed Members that there were 19 rough sleepers in the city, and none were veterans. She explained that it was vital to report any rough sleepers in the city so that the service could start to look after them. The Team persistently engaged with people during the cold weather.
- Members questioned whether 19 rough sleepers were realistic numbers, as people in the city might think there were more rough sleepers. The Housing Operations Manager advised Members that there were genuine rough sleepers, and other people who tried to claim they were rough sleepers so they could beg. She explained that the Team would launch a Safer off the Streets campaign to educate members of the public in the next 12 months to support and donate to the campaign, which would directly help rough sleepers across the city.
- Members asked about homelessness in the city and if the Council had taken any steps to support private tenants as the private rental landlords were likely to offload their portfolio because of the new legislation. The Head of Service for Housing Needs advised Members that the private sector was changing significantly, rents were increasing, and the number of benefits for supporting those people did not increase at the same level. He explained that in many cases, the Council had stepped in to help households further, in some cases, financial support to enable them to afford their rent. There was a need to increase the amount of accommodation in the city, and the Council was working closely with the housing association partners on their delivery in Peterborough.
- Members asked if Council had taken any steps to educate members of the public by not giving cash to people who claim to be rough sleepers or homeless. The Housing Operations Manager advised that the Safer off the Streets campaign would be an excellent opportunity to raise awareness among the public. The Safer off the Street campaign would take place in the next 12 months, and it's a partnership campaign to educate members of the people, which could be through a billboard or social media.
- Members were advised that the Council's bids for nearly £3 million from Central Government were successful for the next three municipal years. She explained that the funds would directly support rough sleepers in Peterborough.
- Members queried how the service manages many applications for Housing. The Head of Service for Housing Needs advised that the Council received many housing applications from households not necessarily in housing needs. However, they had got housing want and wanted to move to a cheaper and more secure housing accommodation. The Council informed them about the support options available to them, if the housing register was not the solution.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the work ongoing by Housing.

37. Local Planning Compliance Plan August 2022

The Interim Assistant Director for Planning accompanied by the Acting Development Management Team Leader introduced the report. The report outlined the preparation of a draft Planning Compliance Plan 2022. He explained that the revision was as a result of the Planning Service review which found that the current Planning Compliance Plan adopted in 2013 was not sufficiently up to date.

Members were advised that the new Local Planning Compliance Plan would be more simplified enforcement plan which would set out plan more clearly.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the draft Local Planning Compliance Plan 2022 and endorsed its adopted by the Council.

38. Committee Meeting Start Time 2023 – 24

The Senior Democratic Services Officer introduced the report and sought the committees' views on what start time they would like for the new municipal year 2023/2024.

Members of the committee unanimously agreed that the start time should remain at 7.00 pm for the municipal year 2022/2023.

AGREED ACTION

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to keep the start time for all Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee meetings for the Municipal Year 2023-24 at 7.00 pm.

10. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Senior Democratic Officer introduced the report, which included the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Executive Decisions containing decisions that the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the forthcoming month. Members were invited to comment on the plan and, where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the current Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and **RESOLVED** to note the report.

39. WORK PROGRAMME 2022/2023

The Senior Democratic Services Officer introduced the item which gave Members the opportunity to consider the Committee's Work Programme for 2022/23 and discuss possible items for inclusion.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the work programme for 2022/23

40. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Joint Meeting of the Scrutiny Committees - Monday 23 January 2023
- Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee Meeting – Tuesday 7 March 2023

CHAIR

Meeting began at 7:00 pm and ended at 9:12 pm

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