

The Scrutiny Big Debate



How the Economic Downturn has Affected Peterborough

Issues Paper – April 2010



Contents

Introduction	5
Overview of the Approach.....	6
Stage 1: Scope of the Review.....	6
Stage 2: Methodology	6
Stage 3: Key Issues	7
Stage 4: Final Report and Recommendations.....	7
The Evidence of Recession.....	8
Peterborough vs. Regional Context the Facts and Figures.....	8
The Regional View	8
Unemployment and the Recession.....	9
Peterborough and the Recession	9
When will the recession end?	9
Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee	10
Introduction from the Vice Chair, Councillor David Day	10
What happened on the night.....	10
Issues to take forward for further work	12
Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee	14
Introduction from the Chair, Councilor Paula Thacker MBE	14
What happened on the night.....	14
Issues to take forward for further work	16
Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee	18
Introduction from the Chair, Councillor Marion Todd.....	18
What happened on the night.....	18
Issues to take forward for further work	20
Sustainable Growth Scrutiny Committee	22
Introduction from the Chair, Councillor Michael Fletcher	22
What happened on the night.....	22
Issues to take forward for further work	24
Next Steps	26
Further information	26

Introduction

The Big Debate for Peterborough in 2010 has involved an investigation by Scrutiny of how the economic downturn has affected the city in terms of its aspirations for growth, levels of crime, requirements to support vulnerable people and its credentials for environmental sustainability with particular reference to transport.

We have been delighted at the level of involvement by our partners, the business community and the public at the four diverse events that we have held at different venues in Peterborough. The sincerity with which views have been expressed to us and the positive suggestions that have been made to improve community and business life in Peterborough are set out in this initial report. Scrutiny will now seek to investigate these issues over the coming months and submit recommendations for future action by the Council and its partners.

We have already received some excellent feedback and we would like to thank everyone who has been involved in the Big Debate series of events. We firmly believe that through the contributions that we have received at our meetings we have achieved a clearer picture of the support and leadership that the people of the city are seeking during these challenging economic times.

Councillor Marion Todd
Chair, Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee
on behalf of the Chairs and Members of the respective Scrutiny Committees

Overview of the Approach

Stage 1: Scope of the Review

- (i) To examine the effect of the economic downturn on Peterborough by answering the following questions:
- How should Peterborough counter the effects of the economic downturn to ensure delivery of the sustainable transport elements of the Local Transport Plan?
 - In light of both the current economic climate and finite resources how best can we ensure that vulnerable adults and children are supported now and in the future?
 - How has the economic downturn had an effect on the amount and type of crime in Peterborough?
 - How should Peterborough counter the effects of the economic downturn to minimise its impact on the growth aspirations of the city?
- (ii) To make appropriate recommendations to the Council, Executive and other partners.

Stage 2: Methodology

Each of the Council's four Scrutiny Committees conducted an in-depth investigation into one of the above questions with different events held over a series of evenings during February 2010 as follows:

- The Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee met on Tuesday 2 February at Buckles Solicitors to look at future transport options for the city.
- The Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee met on Thursday 4 February at Peterborough College of Adult Education to look at how vulnerable adults and children are being supported.
- The Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee met on Tuesday 16 February at the Key Theatre to look at the amount and type of crime in Peterborough.
- The Sustainable Growth Scrutiny Committee met on Wednesday 17 February at the Town Hall to look at how the city can continue to grow and overcome the effects of the economic downturn.

Each of the events was widely publicised through the local media, in the Council's Your Peterborough magazine and its website. Posters were also displayed at various Council buildings across the City and for people unable to attend the events, there was an option to submit written evidence.

Stage 3: Key Issues

Each of the events provoked lots of discussion about how to support people who live and work in Peterborough more effectively. These ideas will form the basis of the respective committees' work programmes during 2010/11.

Stage 4: Final Report and Recommendations

The key areas for potential improvement will be developed into recommendations and referred to the Council's Executive for decision.

A final report will be developed during 2010/11.

The Evidence of Recession

Peterborough vs. Regional Context the Facts and Figures

The following facts and statistics were provided by *Dr Glenn Athey, Director, Insight East*.

The Regional View

Prior to the recession:

- There was a track record of long term economic growth
- High rates of employment and economic participation
- Diverse economy – ICT, biotech, agri-food
- 5.7m population in 2007 – projected to increase to 6.8m by 2026 – 2nd highest growth rate in UK.

Since the start of the recession:

- Deep recession: The UK economy has contracted by almost 6 per cent since Q1 2008
- Long recession: 6 Quarters = longest recession since records began
- Unemployment now 6.3 per cent in the region (UK=7.8 per cent), 186,000 officially unemployed (recent small decrease)
- Unemployed claimants – have doubled since June 2008 (116,616 in December 2009 – has been decreasing since September 2009)
- Redundancies lower and stable – still happening, but fewer than Dec08-Feb09 peak

The consensus is that the worst is over and recovery is around the corner, but recovery will be slow. The medium and long term impacts on the labour market, businesses, and other sectors will be significant.



Unemployment and the Recession

The unemployment legacy of the recession will be significant with some key points to consider as follows:

- Claimant unemployment rates are projected to peak in 2010 at 4.5 per cent in the East of England and 6.3 per cent in UK – with rates in 2011 only a little lower.
- In the previous two recessions in 1980 and 1990/91, unemployment rates remained high for several years after the recession had officially ended.
- In the case of the aftermath of the 1980 recession, unemployment rates peaked in Quarter 2, 1984, and reached a trough in Quarter 1 1990.
- After the 1990/91 recession, unemployment rates peaked in Quarter 1, 1993 and reached a trough in Quarter 2, 2001.
- The persistence of unemployment after this recession is likely to be similar to previous ones. High unemployment rates are likely to persist for five years or more.
- The lessons from past recessions are that unemployment continues to increase even after the recession has officially ended. There are a number of reasons for this. One reason is that there is spare capacity in the economy during a recession. Businesses tend to retain workers and reduce overtime or working hours. Therefore, when demand does pick up, they can use existing capacity to meet this demand rather than recruit new workers. Another reason is that employers remain reluctant to recruit until they are satisfied that there is a genuine sustained recovery.

Peterborough and the Recession

- Peterborough's economy had grown strongly prior to the recession.
- There are long standing issues of low labour market participation and low skills attainment.
- Peterborough has experienced a number of large-scale redundancies including – Indesit (423), Pearl Insurance (180), Peterborough City Council (400), Grattans/Freemans (500) and Perkins Engines (450).
- In December 2009, 5.4 per cent of the working age population claimed unemployment benefits (in the UK the rate was 4.1 per cent). In December 2008 the rate was 2.6 per cent.
- It is likely Peterborough will lose 8,000 jobs, with the region losing 99,000 in total.

When will the recession end?

Most business confidence surveys report increases in output and lower levels of job shedding. The recession is likely to officially end soon but the impacts will be felt for years to come. Some businesses have continued to succeed in recession but the impacts are variable across businesses and markets.

Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee

Introduction from the Vice Chair, Councillor David Day



For Peterborough, becoming the UK's Environment Capital will mean that we are a city that encourages people to make significant and real improvements to their quality of life. One of the ways to do this will be to deliver a truly sustainable transport system but this is something that the City Council cannot deliver on our own. One of the aims of the Committee is to work with the Cabinet Member for Environment Capital and other partners and agencies to help deliver this important agenda. This debate was important in enabling Councillors to hear the views and opinions of others on how they would like to see the transport system developed in Peterborough. This was a good first step and we look forward to continue to work together to deliver the UK's Environment Capital.

What happened on the night

The event was facilitated by Trevor Gibson, Director of Environment Capital at Opportunity Peterborough and focussed on the following question:

How should Peterborough counter the effects of the economic downturn to ensure delivery of the sustainable transport elements of the Local Transport Plan?

The Panel comprised:

- Andy Campbell, Director of Stagecoach who gave his views on how bus operators had been affected by the economic downturn.
- James Fitzgerald, LEV Cycles who highlighted the increase in the use of electric bikes.
- Fiona Radic, Green Party and Peterborough Cycling Forum who gave a personal view on how sustainable transport could be delivered in the future.
- Roger Hutchings, Queensgate Centre who gave the perspective from the retail industry on the need to maintain economic vibrancy in the City.

Each member of the Panel gave their personal perspectives on the future of sustainable transport in Peterborough and after hearing from the Panel, members of the audience challenged the views.



Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee *(cont)*

Issues to take forward for further work

The meeting then sub-divided into four workshops to carry out further discussions and to identify issues that the Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee could examine.

A. Park and Ride	
1.	Consider the provision of an all year round park and ride service by providing three sites in the City
2.	Provide cycle facilities at the park and ride sites
B. Cycling and Walking Improvements	
1.	Provide better marking of cycle routes
2.	Improve the availability of maps on cycle and walking routes
3.	Consider extending the use of mobile explorer to cycle routes
4.	Provide a facility for cycle route planning on the Council's website
5.	Enable easier reporting of problems, such as glass on cycle routes
6.	Consider the creation of a cycle hub in the city
7.	Allow cycles to use Bridge Street by incorporating cycling into the redesign
8.	Allow cycles to use bus lanes around the city
9.	Improve the safety and security of the cycling and walking networks
10.	Provide a cycle bridge over the railway line at the station
11.	Encourage the use of the existing City Council pool bikes by improving shower facilities and lockers
12.	Examine the possibility of using the Future Jobs Fund to introduce cycle route guides
13.	Create incentives for people to live within cycling or walking distance of their workplace
14.	Provide cycle racks/bike trailers on buses
C. Public Transport	
1.	Provide more bus lanes/green lanes around the city
2.	Consider the development of smaller bus interchanges around the city and the introduction of peripheral bus routes
3.	Provide more late evening bus service
4.	Provide more direct bus services into the City Centre
5.	Adopt measures to make bus services attractive to all age groups
6.	Introduce subsidised fares for young people
7.	Pilot the use of alternative fuels
8.	Trial the use of electric vehicles in the city
9.	Consider the introduction of multi-operator ticketing, similar to an Oyster Card
10.	Introduce the availability of cross ticketing on all bus operators
11.	Introduce the use of Smartcards on public transport in the City
12.	Develop more effective promotion of public transport

D. Rail	
1.	Provide infrastructure for electric vehicles at the railway station
2.	Examine future rail improvements that include light rail
3.	Examine the need for more rail stations in the city
E. Other Suggestions	
1.	Improve disabled access in the city and on public transport
2.	Pilot 20mph zones outside all schools across the city
3.	Examine ways to keep traffic out of the city centre
4.	Include charging for staff and member car parking permits in a phased approach and include an opt out scheme offering a megarider as an alternative within the Council's Travel Plan.
5.	Leadership by example in sustainable transport by Members of the City Council
6.	Introduce disincentives to drive into the city centre including congestion charges
7.	Future Section 106 agreements need to be stronger, clearer and enforced
8.	Funding should be directed to ensure implementation plans concentrate on the Environment Capital objectives and priorities
9.	Review car parking charges and introduce car share only bays
10.	Include partners in the design of the Local Transport Plan to give a more holistic approach
11.	Strengthen transport policy by examining the mechanisms for delivery of sustainable transport
12.	Consider the use of shared space in the redesign of city centre
13.	Encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport to school, including introducing Bikeability into schools
14.	Improve accessibility at the bus station
15.	Integrate sustainable travel with new developments across the city

Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee

Introduction from the Chair, Councillor Paula Thacker MBE



The Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Committee takes a great interest in how our services provide support to vulnerable adults and children. With the current economic downturn and finite resources, it was appropriate that for our part in the Big Debate, we took an in-depth look at how we are supporting vulnerable adults and children now and in the future. We decided to do this by inviting a panel of guest speakers to put their point of view forward on areas that have been affected by the downturn in the economy and then invited the audience to participate and challenge the panel on their points of view. I am delighted that so many people attended this event and look forward to examining the issues raised and working with officers to take recommendations forward.

What happened on the night

The event was facilitated by John Richards, Executive Director for Children's Services at Peterborough City Council and focused upon the following question:

In light of both the current economic climate and finite resources how best can we ensure that vulnerable adults and children are supported now and in the future?

The Panel comprised:

- Dr Glenn Athey, Director, Insight East who spoke about the East of England economy and the recession.
- Sandie Burns, Manager, Disability Information Advice Line (DIAL), Peterborough who gave a presentation which highlighted the effects of the economic downturn on the voluntary sector and disabled people.
- Liz Johnson, Account Manager, Jobcentre Plus who spoke about the services that Jobcentre Plus offered and the situation with regard to unemployment in Peterborough and the effects the economic downturn had on this.
- Four young people (NEET's) and a youth worker with Javed Ahmed, Youth Access Point Manager – the four young people spoke about their experiences of being a NEET and the challenges they were facing and the help and support that had been given to them.

Each member of the Panel gave their personal perspective and after hearing from the Panel members of the audience challenged the views that they had heard.



Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee *(cont)*

Issues to take forward for further work

The following issues were identified that the Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee could examine.

A. Young People / Job Skills	
1.	Provide job subsidies for young people.
2.	Give more guidance for young people.
3.	Introduce local employment agreements for young people.
4.	Introduce guaranteed interview schemes.
5.	Provide more training and work experience.
6.	Strengthen public sector services not to make people unemployed.
7.	Seek more work to up skill young people.
8.	Need to identify children earlier who need support.
B. Views of Young People	
1.	Make lessons more interesting.
2.	Provide more activities out of school and college.
3.	Provide more advertising of connexions.
4.	Provide more courses out of the Princes Trust so that more young people can go on them.
5.	Provide free education for 19 – 25 year olds.
6.	Provide more activities in schools.
7.	Let young people have a say.
8.	Investigate providing more places on the Princes Trust Course and double the numbers to make an impact.
9.	Provide more vocational training for those who are not academic.
10.	Provide more aspirational courses for young people.
C. People with Disabilities	
1.	Help PCC/PCT identify which sectors and clients have needs that they can support (either through funding or additional in-kind support)
2.	Help guide policy makers in identifying priorities and understanding the experience of front-line organisations involving disabled people
3.	Encourage the development of needs-led services that build on existing knowledge and good practice (e.g. Peterborough Disability Forum)
4.	Highlight key issues around resilience of services, the changing landscape and the need for evaluating the impact of financial inclusion work
(Items 1 – 4 to be undertaken in close liaison with the Voluntary Sector)	
5.	Examine how to get disabled people involved in impact assessments and policy issues.
6.	Examine how we ensure people with disabilities are not faced with barriers to accessing mainstream services
7.	Provide financial training to people on how to manage their own finances and budget.

8.	Raise mental health awareness and disability amongst organisations to become sustainable.
9.	Examine ways of providing services that emulate MIND's advocacy service – to help people put their point across.
D. Joined up working	
1.	Adopt a whole family approach so the right response is given by the right organisation at the right time.
2.	Develop a joined up programme for adults and children recognising the problems inherent in the structures for health and local authorities.
3.	Need to raise awareness and understanding of what a Personalised budget means.
4.	Take forward family working and the personalisation agenda.
5.	Identify opportunities to work more closely with Jobcentre Plus to be taken forward by the Executive Director of Children's Services and Assistant Director of Adult Social Care recognising the role of Jobcentre Plus in the following services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Rapid Response Service • Rapid Response Service Fund • Outreach services • Mobile office • Mental Health Co-ordinator - A new work capability assessment • Drug Strategy Project • Carers strategy • Engaging directly with employers • Backing Young Britain – 18 – 24 year olds back into work
6.	Recognise the need for genuine decent welfare reform.
7.	Give individuals the choice in what training they go on when unemployed.
8.	Treat service users as an individual not a number.
E. Other suggestions	
1.	Request Scrutiny to write to the Department for Works and Pensions to ask for local autonomy to allow the authority and job centre to pilot a scheme to administer training and benefits to fit the needs of the local area. (Therefore, providing flexibility to meet individual needs).
2.	Provide better sign posting for services available at Jobcentre Plus.
3.	Recognise that public feedback on the Council's budget process highlighted how many people did not know what services are available, so there is a need to consider how we do this better in the future.

Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee

Introduction from the Chair, Councillor Marion Todd



An important function of the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee is to act as the Council's Statutory Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee. Therefore, it was appropriate that for our part in the Big Debate we investigated how the economic downturn had affected the amount and type of crime in Peterborough. We decided to take a different approach and invited the Key Youth Theatre to put on a short performance at the Key Theatre that told the story of a family living in Peterborough who had been affected by the economic downturn. The reality of this performance brought to everyone's attention the effects that the downturn of the economy might have on any family.

What happened on the night

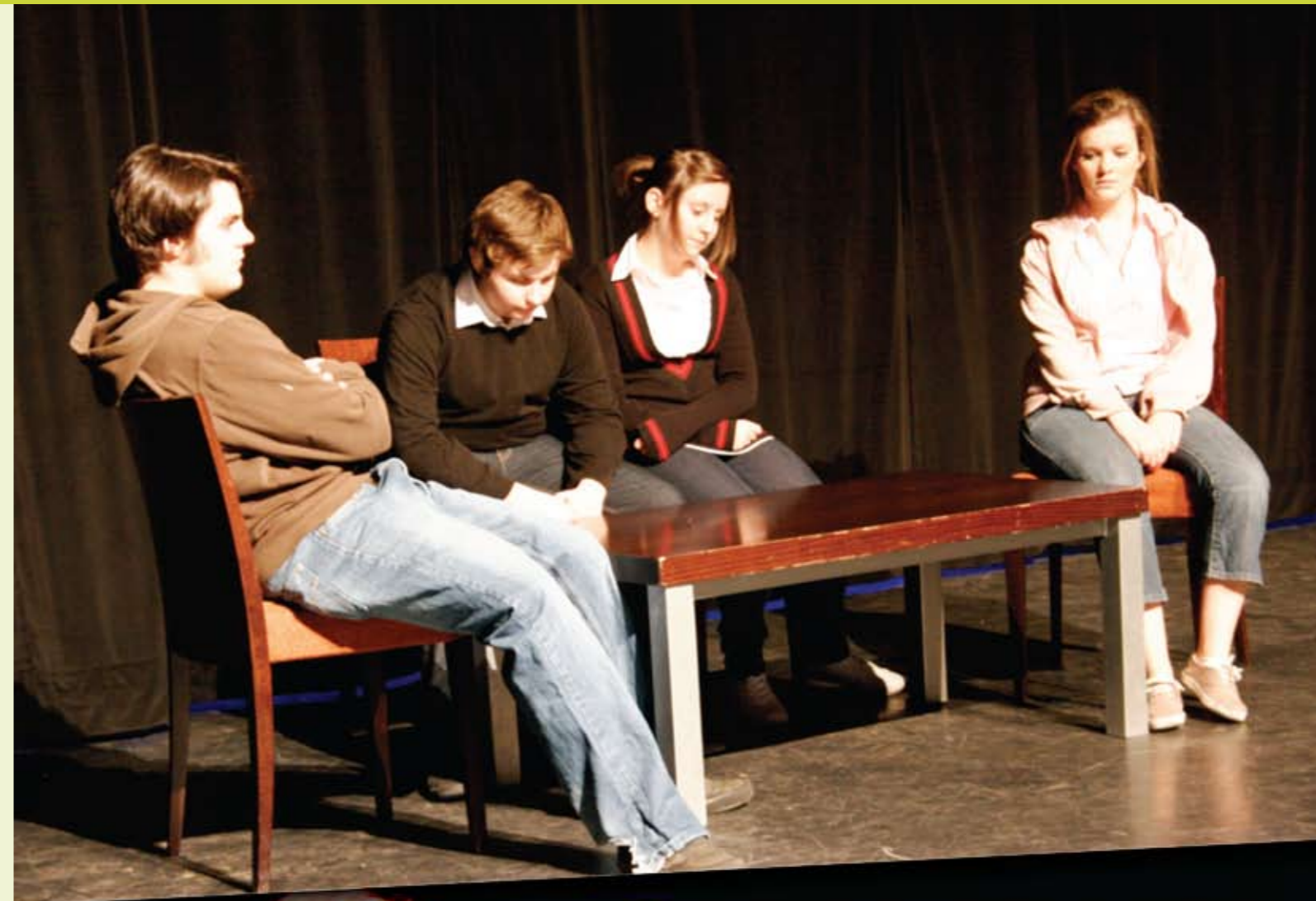
The event was introduced by the Chair who invited the audience to address the challenge question of:

How has the economic downturn had an effect on the amount and type of crime in Peterborough?

The performance portrayed a typical family who had been holding their lives together but when they are hit by the economic downturn things spiral out of their control. Both parents become unemployed causing extreme tension in the family which had a detrimental effect on the children. The mother resorts to shoplifting and the father resorts to selling stolen goods. The children become known to the police through truanting from school and anti social behaviour. The husband subjects his wife to domestic abuse and finally stabs her in front of the children.

During the performance young people appeared at certain scenes with a board stating facts and statistics on anti social behaviour, domestic abuse, youth crime, problematic families and drugs.

Officers supplemented the information boards with extra facts about serious acquisitive crime, domestic abuse and drugs.



Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee *(cont)*

Issues to take forward for further work

After the performance Adrian Chapman, Head of Neighbourhood Services at the City Council acted as the facilitator and invited the audience to challenge a panel of people about the messages that the performance had delivered.

The panel consisted of the following people:

- Steve Welby, Chief Inspector – Safer Peterborough Partnership Strategy Manager
- Karen Kibblewhite – Community Safety and Substance Misuse Manager
- David Hankins – YCAP Co-ordinator Youth Offending Service
- Maddy Wise – Attendance Leader, Children’s Services
- Sue Chapman – Domestic Violence Forum Co-ordinator
- Joan Tibbs – Cross Keys Homes

The following issues were identified to take forward:

A. Safer Peterborough Partnership Priorities	
1.	Examine what actions the police are taking about the robbery of personal property.
2.	Support the development of new initiatives to tackle Anti Social Behaviour
3.	Investigate what the impact of behavioural contracts has been.
B. Families and Children	
1.	Examine how much is being invested into debt counselling and look at innovative ways of offering this type of support through local voluntary organisations such as the Church.
2.	Investigate ways of expanding the Safer Schools Partnership and providing police in more schools.
3.	Investigate and examine ways of early intervention and support to help families who are at the starting point of a crisis such as a father losing his job.
4.	Examine what schools are doing to highlight truancy.
5.	Support the Restorative Justice approach and decriminalisation of young people who commit their first offence.
6.	Support the development of the Family Intervention Programme.
7.	Continue with the pilot of the Family Recovery Project
8.	Investigate Restorative Justice becoming a sanction.
C. Communities	
1.	Examine community involvement in helping to combat anti social behaviour and solving crime.
2.	Investigate the provision of more youth facilities and youth projects.
3.	Councillors to consider donating £1000 of their community leadership fund towards youth projects.
D. Other Suggestions	
1.	Examine the possibility of setting up a workers co-operative
2.	Request Scrutiny to lobby the Government to allow Councils more autonomy in making decisions that affect people’s lives at a local level.

Sustainable Growth Scrutiny Committee

Introduction from the Chair, Councillor Michael Fletcher



The economic climate is now very different to that when Peterborough's ambitious plans for growth were planned. The economic downturn that began in 2007 meant that the City Council and Opportunity Peterborough have had to explore new ways of working to ensure that the momentum of growth and regeneration carries on. The debate held by the Sustainable Growth Scrutiny Committee was a way of hearing what the public and business community felt that the Council and Opportunity Peterborough could do to drive forward this challenging agenda.

What happened on the night

The event was facilitated by Andrew Edwards, Acting Head of Delivery at the City Council and Steve Compton, Chief Executive of Opportunity Peterborough and focussed on the following question:

How should Peterborough counter the effects of the economic downturn to minimise its impact on the growth aspirations of the city?

Rob Facer from Barnack UK and Steve Magenis from Royal Haskoning gave the viewpoint from the perspective of private sector businesses.



Sustainable Growth Scrutiny Committee (cont)

Issues to take forward for further work

The meeting then sub-divided into three workshops to carry out further discussions and to identify issues around the economy, housing and health that the Sustainable Growth Scrutiny Committee could examine.

A. Economy	
1.	Improve communications on what is happening in Peterborough
2.	Develop more quickly a university in the City to raise aspirations and to keep our brightest children
3.	Improve the marketing of the City to gain inward investment
4.	Investigate cutting the salaries of City Council staff to help reduce the level of Council Tax by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15% if earning over £50k • 10% if earning over £20k • 5% if earning over £15k
5.	Investigate way of stimulating support to new businesses to ensure that they grow
6.	Need to publically reaffirm the growth plans for the City, including when things will happen
7.	Examine ways of preventing monies, people and expenditure leaving the city
8.	Develop a good leisure and cultural offer for families to attract them to the city.
9.	Provide small units for small businesses and projects
10.	Encouragement for the Council and partners to take risks
11.	Encourage joint working with the private sector
12.	Encourage the development of new business sectors in the City
13.	Develop non-fiscal ways of supporting the economy
14.	Develop Community Banks and Community Interest companies
15.	Encourage the public sector to use local businesses, where possible, in their procurement.
B. Housing	
1.	Develop a strategic approach to address the city's current housing needs
2.	Regenerate the older and more neglected areas of the city alongside new growth areas
3.	Support residents to improve their homes, including fuel efficiency
4.	Encourage all partners and agencies to be flexible and work together
5.	Introduce part exchange schemes to help get people moving
6.	Improve the use of Section 106 agreements to develop new buildings and facilities
7.	Ensure that the Council has a proactive planning department that is flexible, welcomes developers and has a positive can do attitude with developers
8.	Encourage the development of extra care homes to free up larger family homes
9.	Encourage the building of more executive family homes to encourage senior managers to live inside rather than outside the city
10.	Introduce incentives for new businesses coming to the city
11.	Allocate more land for business, including larger sites
12.	Seek ways of making the Council more 'quick on its feet' to react to approaches from developers and businesses
13.	Examine ways to restrict the number of residential properties which are being used as businesses
14.	Encourage the building of more social housing as a way to reduce the city's housing waiting list.

15.	Provide security for workers by giving businesses the confidence to put people on permanent contracts and not temporary ones
C. Health	
1.	Encourage people to grow their own food by developing more allotments, revising the Allotment Strategy and using the Council's asset disposal policy to encourage the development of allotments
2.	Identify new areas of green and open space, particularly in the city centre
3.	Use tax breaks as an incentive to encourage people to cycle to work rather than use a car
4.	Encourage more use of home working
5.	Use planning strategies to support developments that encourage walking and cycling
6.	Understand the different communities and their needs
7.	Provide localised health services
8.	Encourage more outdoor activities for children, including walking to school
9.	Align health strategies with the growth agenda
10.	Develop joint working between the Council and partners to tackle the poor health conditions in the city
11.	Drive health improvement by encouraging different lifestyles
12.	Ensure there is a focus on the causes of good health and just the symptoms of poor health
13.	Acknowledge that growth is not just economic but is also spiritual and social
14.	Ensure that health and well being are not looked at in isolation, for example environmental impacts
15.	Promote social cohesion by increasing employment opportunities
16.	Consider how we deal with future unemployment caused by the long term impact of the recession

Next Steps

All of the events have identified areas for further investigation. These will now be examined to see:

- i) If work is already being undertaken by the Council or its partners to address the issue;
- ii) If the suggestion links into an existing or developing policy or strategy; or
- iii) If there is scope for improvement in working practices within existing resources.

Priority areas will then be identified and detailed recommendations will then be developed and reported to the Executive.

Further information

Further information on this review can be obtained from the Scrutiny Team at:

Scrutiny Team
Democratic Services
Peterborough City Council
Town Hall
Bridge Street
Peterborough
PE1 1HG

Tel: 01733 747474

Email: scrutiny@peterborough.gov.uk

