

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 6
8 NOVEMBER 2023	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change Adrian Chapman, Executive Director of Place and Economy	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Nigel Simons, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change	
Contact Officer(s):	Charlotte Palmer, Head of Environment and Climate Change	Tel. 07920160728

CABINET PORTFOLIO UPDATE – INFRASTRUCTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Cllr Nigel Simons, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change	Deadline date: N/A
It is recommended that the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee:	
1. Considers and scrutinises this report and endorses the approach being taken under the portfolio of Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change.	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is provided to update the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee on the progress of items under the responsibility of Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 The report is being presented by Cllr Simons at the request of the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee. The report will provide an overview of the key portfolio areas. It will also provide an overview of the current performance of Aragon Direct Services, including recycling rates and open space management.

2.2 This report is for the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council:

- 2. Environmental Capital
- 6. Waste Strategy and Management

2.3 The Cabinet Portfolio for Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change covers the following areas relevant to the remit of this committee:

a) Peterborough Limited trading as Aragon Direct Services (ADS), ADS have responsibility for the following Services:

- Street Cleansing
- Grounds Maintenance and Arboriculture
- Home to School Transport
- Property Maintenance
- Vehicle Maintenance and Taxi MOTs
- Catering
- Waste and Recycling Collections

b) Waste Strategy and Management

c) Energy strategy and climate change activity

d) Westcombe Engineering

e) Active Travel

f) Flood Risk Management

g) Green Open Space

3. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	No	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

4.1 **Aragon Direct Services**

4.1.1 **Overview of Aragon Direct Services** - Aragon Direct Services (Aragon) is a trading name for part of the Peterborough Ltd company and was formed in February 2019. 2022/23 marked the fourth full year of operations, covering a breadth of services including:

- Street Cleansing
- Waste and Recycling Collections
- Grounds Maintenance and Arboriculture
- Home to School Transport
- Property Maintenance
- Vehicle Maintenance and Taxi MOTs
- Catering

Aragon is overseen by a board of directors which includes senior Aragon officers, a senior council officer and Councillors. The board is in place to oversee the running of the company and maintain an overarching view on spend and business development.

The council have fortnightly contractual meetings with the Managing Director of Peterborough Ltd and fortnightly operations meetings with its senior managers. Ultimately any changes to the governance or structure of Peterborough Ltd, as well as overall performance, is reported into the Shareholder Cabinet Committee. A report detailing the performance of Aragon and Peterborough Limited over the 2022/23 period was presented to Shareholder Cabinet on 11 September 2023, the link to the report can be found in section 11.1 of this report.

4.1.2 **Street Cleansing** - Aragon undertake street cleansing throughout the city, currently emptying 1,425 litter bins and 350 dog waste bins on varying schedules. Between April 2022 and March 2023 Aragon have collected 901 tonnes of street sweepings and a further 331 tonnes collected via street litter bins.

Aragon continue to have been fully supportive towards, and actively helping, the Peterborough Wombles and the magnificent work they have been doing around the city, via provision of litter pickers and bags, as well as collecting the waste gathered.

Fly tipping continues to be an issue across the city and country. Aragon are working hard to clear fly tipping within the key performance indicator timeframe of 24 hours for hazardous waste and 48 hours for non-hazardous waste as soon as this is reported to them. The following table gives a monthly comparison of fly-tip numbers per month since 2017.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
January	783	790	758	744	850	785	846
February	598	575	597	640	926	578	885
March	750	514	713	616	1017	933	781
April	653	670	554	764	869	753	954
May	729	588	440	833	827	895	923
June	721	651	659	835	801	781	806
July	634	663	751	950	845	921	609
August	661	519	550	777	785	834	797
September	742	596	779	897	887	916	856
October	705	603	690	776	737	861	
November	696	635	638	828	701	800	
December	482	515	600	837	582	893	
Annual Data	10171	9337	9748	11517	11848	11972	9480

Between April 2022 and March 2023, 107 Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued for fly tipping offences and 34 cases have been prepared for court action. Cameras using AI (Artificial Intelligence) are being deployed by officers to assist with the collecting evidence to allow for enforcement action. In this period Aragon have collected 1,492 tonnes of fly tipping.

4.1.3 Green Open Space, Grounds Maintenance and Arboriculture - Aragon's team have planted over 4500 trees in the past 12 months and have completed the annual city-wide grass cutting programme which sees in excess of 3,602,111m² of grass cut 8 times during the year, alongside 230,252m² of biodiversity grass. The annual shrub cutting cycle has also commenced and the programme of works has been shared with all ward councillors.

We have again seen some great resident and community group engagement in the city this year with tree planting and our biodiversity areas, with both enhancements and creating new wildflower areas. We have been working closely with PECT who have supported both the council and community groups in further enhancing natural habitats in our local areas. Aragon are hoping to trial the city's first Tiny Forest this winter and shall be engaging community groups throughout this project. Alongside this the Civic Society have undertaken planting this autumn at Central Park.

Aragon have retained Green Flag status at 3 parks across the city and continue to work with friends' groups to improve park facilities, including working more closely with the groups to apply for external funding for improvements and events within the parks. All our parks received incredibly positive feedback from the judges and is a credit to the works of not only Aragon but the friends' groups who work hard to improve the parks and put on events.

4.1.4 Home-to-School Transport - Aragon currently operate 30 home-to-school routes for the council, including services for both mainstream and special schools. They additionally operate the Community Link Service on behalf of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, that takes residents who cannot use public transport to get their shopping and back home. This

continues to be a well-used service and utilises the staff in between their school runs to undertake the work.

- 4.1.5 **Property Maintenance** - the Property team have had a busy year delivering capital works projects and core services to the Council including planned and reactive maintenance, asbestos and condition surveys and water testing services.

The service has recently welcomed a Principal Building Surveyor to support and lead the existing property surveyors, bringing additional experience from a project management and high-level surveying background, which includes working across local authority, education, and healthcare Estates. We have also been joined by our new chartered building surveying apprentice, who has already commenced their day-release course at Nottingham Trent University.

Five members of the Property team recently successfully completed their BOHS P901 Management and Control of Building Hot and Cold-Water Services qualifications, which is recommended for the following roles and will support them with their service delivery going forwards:

- Water system technicians and operatives;
- Responsible persons for domestic hot and cold-water systems (e.g., building and facilities managers, duty holders, maintenance staff); and
- Legionella consultants.

We are also currently looking at IOSH Managing Safely training for those team members that do not already hold this qualification, as well as RICS accredited courses for the building surveyors and Pool Plant training for the in-house maintenance team. Whilst this training supports individuals with their own personal development, it also ensures that Aragon and the Council benefit from the skills and knowledge that are gained by the Property team.

- 4.1.6 **Waste and Recycling Collections (including bulky waste)** - Aragon operate a fortnightly collection of residual and recycling waste from circa 85,000 properties, with food waste being collected weekly.

Garden waste continues to be a paid-for service and we have 21,138 subscriptions this year compared to 21,061 last year. Residents continue to take up the Direct Debit option, with 9,355 choosing to pay by breaking down the charge over 3 payments and making it a recurring subscription. Of these totals, 4,275 households subscribe to two bins or more.

Current overall recycling rates are shown below compared to the previous financial year; recycling rates have increased from 38.9% in 21/22 to 40.1% in 22/23 and the recycling rate for April – August 2023 is 44.22% compared to 41.68% during the same period in 2022/23.

April 21 - March 22 = 38.9% Recycled/Composted

April 22 - March 23 = 40.1% Recycled/Composted

The tender for the new refuse vehicle fleet has been completed by Dennis Eagle, who have delivered the new core fleet with food pods and moving from all diesels to new diesel body with electric bin lifts. We have also received two fully electric refuse collection vehicles (RCVs) which are currently used on the garden waste service as they do not require the food pods. The use of food pods restricted the ability to source all electric RCVs for the main service with presently available vehicles.

Aragon had a period of time where no HGV drivers were applying for positions as refuse drivers in the past, and as such they have been internally training staff and have already trained 9 operatives to date and 3 more are currently in HGV training.

Bulky Waste Collections are currently booked through the call centre at Peterborough Direct, with payment being required at time of booking before the collection is approved and scheduled with Aragon. The service can offer up to 40 collections per day on a Tuesday to Friday inclusive and is very well used with available slots booked up for at least 3 to 4 weeks in advance. The existing customer interface is a legacy system which is not fit for the future demands of the service, and as such a project is underway to directly connect the customer interface on the council's website with the back-office computer system Aragon use to streamline the user experience and reduce administrative costs. This work was required irrespective of the status of charging or otherwise.

Aragon commenced a trial in September to encourage the correct disposal of batteries and vapes. Initially this is being trialled in two pilot areas and a significant volume of batteries and disposable vapes have already been collected.

4.2 **Waste Strategy and Management**

4.2.1 **Recycling Improvement - Education and Awareness**

Recycling rates - residual waste tonnages having reduced significantly from the high levels experienced during the pandemic. This is having a positive impact on the recycling rate as set out above, for April – August 2023 the recycling rate is 44.22% compared to 41.68% during the same period in 2022/23.

Waste education team - the newly appointed team will be working on a targeted education programme with dedicated education and communication staff targeting areas where contamination, poor participation or other issues are affecting the recycling performance of the city as a whole. Using information gathered from crews, inspections of collected material and data gathered by the onboard equipment, areas can be identified and communication efforts targeting the key issues can be undertaken in conjunction with Aragon.

Recycle Week 2023 - took place between the 16th and 22nd of October with the theme of 'The Big Recycling Hunt'. This theme focussed on "missed capture," the items that can be recycled but are commonly missed in the home. Alongside a programme of social media activity, the team also worked with the Cathedral to light the building green during the week, exhibited in Cathedral Square and undertook some educational events.

4.2.2 **Resources and Waste Strategy** - the strategy, arising from the Environment Act 2021, aims to make recycling simpler and to ensure the materials collected by councils across the country are consistent and thus improve the quality and quantity of recycling collected nationally, exact details are yet to be published by DEFRA.

Once further direction has been provided, we will revisit the previous modelling undertaken to ensure it reflects any update to previously published policy direction. This aims to assist councils in future service design and delivery subject to how this is implemented, and the modelling work aims, where possible, to take account of these implications to futureproof developing services. Alongside this DEFRA announced that implementation of a new Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) system for packaging will be delayed one year until October 2025.

4.2.3 **Household Recycling Centre (HRC)** - the HRC has been performing well in segregating material away from disposal and performance to year, ending March 2023, is 69.31% (of received materials separated for recycling, reuse, and composting). This is above the performance achieved at the Dogsthorpe site. However, the development of the service is not yet complete. Part of the facility is specifically designed to permit hand sorting of any bags of mixed waste that contain recycling and included within the contract is a role for educating site users as to how to prepare for recycling on site. This will improve the resident's next visit, as segregated materials

are often quicker to deposit and allows an opportunity to engage in the wider recycling and environmental message at home. This development is to commence soon with a starting date to be arranged shortly.

4.3 **Energy strategy and climate change**

4.3.1 **Climate Change and Net Zero** - The climate change programme continues to focus on three main areas:

1. To become a net zero carbon organisation by 2030
2. To support Peterborough to become a net zero carbon city
3. To develop a programme of work to adapt to a changing climate

Net zero organisation - in June 2023, Council voted to adopt the council's carbon management action plan. This is the fourth annual iteration of the report. It detailed the organisation's carbon emissions from the financial year 2021/22, reported on the progress made against the 2022 carbon reduction commitments and introduced new commitments to be delivered in the upcoming year.

The council's carbon footprint has been calculated for the year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. The total emissions equal 13,647 tonnes CO₂e. Greenhouse gas emissions are reported in three scopes. Scope 1 emissions are those which are released on site. These include emissions from the fuel used in gas boilers and combustion engine vehicles. Scope 2 emissions are those which are released by purchased energy where the emissions are released offsite. These include emissions from electricity from the national grid. Scope 3 emissions are those which are released by indirect activities. These can include emissions produced by the goods and services we purchase, by staff travel, by the processing of waste produced, by the energy dissipated through the transmission and distribution of the energy supply system or by several other activities.

Emissions have reduced from the previous financial year, primarily through the reduction in emissions from purchased goods and services within the Peterborough Highways Service. Another key action to reduce emissions is the use of HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) fuel instead of diesel within this contract. HVO releases 90% less CO₂e per litre of fuel in comparison to diesel. This occurred partway through the financial year, so vehicle emissions are expected to reduce further in future years.

1,224 MWh of electricity was generated via solar panels across the Council's estate. Some of this electricity will have been used on site, with some exported to the national grid.

Funding has been secured to develop heat decarbonisation plans for 13 corporate buildings. These are currently in development and are due to be completed this financial year.

Net Zero Peterborough - A Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) for the city was adopted by Council December 2022. The Local Area Energy Plan provides insight to the council, businesses, residents, and potential investors as to the type and scale of projects likely to be required to transition to net zero. It is anticipated that publication of this Local Area Energy Plan will inform future decarbonisation plans across the city and aid stakeholders in decision making.

A programme of work has been undertaken to design and deliver a schools' engagement initiative which aims to educate and empower pupils to lead decarbonisation projects within their school environment. To date 17 schools have engaged with the programme.

Funding has been secured via the Shared Prosperity Fund to facilitate the delivery of a community carbon literacy training programme. This will focus on delivering training to local businesses, organisations, community groups and schools and is due to commence this autumn.

The Peterborough Accelerated Net Zero (PANZ) project has submitted its report to Innovate UK, summarising its research on non-technical barriers to addressing large scale net zero projects. A draft proposal for further work has been developed and officers have applied for further funding (£2-5m) to continue the project.

INDUS – Indus is a partnership group, led by UK Power Networks, investigating how industrial businesses could decarbonise by forming an industrial hub. The project has engaged with local Peterborough businesses to determine their suitability and willingness to participate in this decarbonisation project. The Discovery stage of the project has concluded, and the partnership is submitting a bid into the next phase of funding, focusing on developing a proposal / business case for the reinforcement solution. Peterborough City Council are a participating organisation within this bid.

The Council has allocated funding to recruit a new Climate Change Project Development Officer who will be responsible for identifying and securing funding to deliver climate change projects across the programme of work.

Adaptation - Funding has been secured via the Shared Prosperity Fund to develop an adaptation plan for Peterborough which officers anticipate covering the following topics:

- An evidence base for how Peterborough may be impacted by climate change
- An evaluation of how council services will be impacted if no adaptation work is undertaken
- Proposed actions for how the council can reduce the impact to council service delivery
- Proposed actions for how the council can protect Peterborough from the most severe impacts
- Proposed actions for how the council can respond to climate change events

Work will take place over the coming months to develop this further.

4.3.2 **PIRI (Peterborough Integrated Renewals Infrastructure)** - the PIRI project is an innovative infrastructure project, which seeks to deliver low carbon heat and electrical power to key businesses and public buildings in the city. Once the first phases are complete, it will transport heat and electrical power from the Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) operated by Viridor in Fengate (owned by the council) direct to the city buildings via a series of underground pipes and cables. The ERF generates its own energy by taking non-recyclable household waste that would otherwise go into landfill and using a combustion process turns it into heat and electricity.

There are potentially several stages to the project, but the first phase will create underground pipework and cables needed to deliver heat and power to key businesses in the Fengate area which is closest to the ERF. Phase two will deliver heat to key businesses and public buildings in the city centre. These buildings have been chosen as they are big consumers of energy. It's anticipated that, once complete, the PIRI project will reduce the carbon consumption of these buildings by as much as 92 per cent. This will play a big role in assisting Peterborough to become carbon zero.

A total of £14.5million of funding has been awarded by the Government to turn the project into a reality. Of this, just over £900,000 will pay for further project work to prove the effectiveness of the scheme in order to secure inward investment. A further £13.5million has been pledged to help pay for the construction costs. It is expected that the total construction costs for the project will be around £53million with the remaining money expected to come from inward investment.

In October at a meeting of Cabinet the Council approved the recommendation from officers to progress the project via a partnership route and work is now underway to procure a partner for the project. Alongside this work will continue to draft the Full Business Case for the project, determine a suitable location for the energy centre and engage with stakeholders. Officers intend

to take a further report to Cabinet in Autumn 2024 before a decision is made whether or not to move ahead with the construction of the project.

4.3.3 **Environment Strategy** - the Council's approach to its Environment Strategy is to work with members and officers across the organisation, and with partner organisations, to embed environmental sustainability into policies, decision making processes and actions. The Council is due to commence work to produce and/or update the following policies during the forthcoming year:

- Citywide Carbon Management Action Plan
- Council Carbon Management Action Plan
- Climate Change Adaptation Plan
- Air Quality Annual Status Report
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
- Local Plan

All these policies and/or associated updates will be subject to the Council's relevant scrutiny and governance processes.

4.4 **Westcombe Engineering**

Westcombe Engineering continues to provide employment opportunities for local adults with varied disabilities, and the business has seen significant growth over the past 2 years. We currently employ a head count of 21 talented employees with 14 of these having a disability.

Our aim is to use Westcombe Engineering as a best practice example of what can be achieved with a diverse workforce and successfully prove that disability is not a barrier for success. Our strong relationship with Peterborough Regional College and the Greater Peterborough University Technical College continues to provide pathways for adults with disabilities to gain experience within a workplace. Two of our apprentices are due to complete their courses this year and we are awaiting their results, with the long term aim that we will then offer an opportunity to complete a university course to become a fully qualified CNC machinist.

A big part of what we are currently doing at Westcombe is building in succession planning and upskilling our workforce to ensure we have robust contingencies in place to cover for sickness and retirement. This is giving clear pathways for our employees for progression where they wish and enhancing the skills we have onsite.

We are currently in the process of procuring a new machine that should help to improve output and increase the opportunities for further sales.

It has also been noted that at present Westcombe do not actively advertise their services and a lot of work comes from 'word of mouth' alone. As a result, we are working with the council's Communications team to put a robust advertising plan in place to not only increase sales but also showcase the excellent work that is being carried out at Westcombe.

4.5 **Active Travel**

The Council has been successful in securing £2,986,590 in the fourth round of the Government's Active Travel Fund. This includes £400,000 for Oundle Road Cycle Infrastructure Design - Ham Lane to Lynch Wood; £300,000 for Thorpe Road Cycle Infrastructure Design - Thorpe Meadows to new western rail station entrance; £286,590 for Bourges Boulevard / Lincoln Road Infrastructure Design - City Centre to Werrington; and £2,000,000 for construction of the Thorpe Wood Cycleway. In addition, £241,000 of revenue funding has been secured through the Government's Capability and Ambition Fund to support active travel feasibility work and future

plans, as well as work in schools. A number of other active travel schemes are currently in the planning stage, including Cygnet Bridge, where public consultation was recently undertaken.

There are 12 permanent school streets operating in Peterborough. A school street is an initiative where the road outside a school is temporarily closed at school opening and closing times to promote walking and cycling.

The LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan) is going to be presented at November's Cabinet and the Council will shortly start working on the rural walking and cycling plan.

4.6 Flood Risk Management

The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy was adopted by Council in March 2023. This document is a revision of the previous Peterborough Flood Risk Management Strategy (2015-20) which was developed by Peterborough City Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority in consultation with its partner organisations. The strategy outlines how flood risk will be managed across Peterborough up to 2027.

In January 2023, the Government announced its intention to implement of schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. This requires the creation of SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) approval bodies (SAB) in local authorities. The council is in the process of determining the impacts of this and ensuring that resources are in place. However, the exact approach towards forming of SAB is still under discussion within DEFRA and the guidelines are expected to be provided in December 2023.

5. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 5.1 This portfolio directly and indirectly contributes to all of the Council's Corporate Priorities and any specific links for any new items of work brought forward are carefully considered and understood.

The report contains no proposals for changes to service delivery and therefore there is no decision to take which may impact carbon emissions of the council or the city.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Consultation relevant to each aspect of the portfolio has been carried out as part of 'business as usual' operations.

7. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 7.1 It is anticipated that the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee will note the content of this report. Any comments or suggestions offered by members of the committee will be fed back to the relevant officers to ensure improvements can be delivered.

8. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 To allow scrutiny of the Portfolio of the Cabinet Member Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The alternative option was to not present this report to the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee; this option was not taken forwards as it is important to allow clear and transparent scrutiny of this portfolio of work.

10. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 10.1 This report provides an overview / progress update, and as such there are no financial implications.

Legal Implications

- 10.2 This report provides an overview / progress update, and as such there are no legal implications.

Equalities Implications

- 10.3 This report provides an overview / progress update, and as such there are no equalities implications.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

- 11.1 Shareholder Cabinet Committee: item 6 -
<https://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=721&MId=4897&Ver=4>

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 None