

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 7
6 NOVEMBER 2024	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Cllr Angus Ellis, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport Adrian Chapman, Executive Director of Place and Economy	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Angus Ellis Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport	
Contact Officer(s):	Charlotte Palmer, Service Director for Environment and Climate Change	Tel. 07920160728

CABINET PORTFOLIO UPDATE – ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Cllr Angus Ellis, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport	Deadline date: N/A
It is recommended that the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee considers and scrutinises this report and endorses the approach being taken under the portfolio of Environment and Transport.	

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 the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 The report is being presented by Cllr Ellis 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 Environment and Transport 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) Active Travel
- e) Flood Risk Management
- f) 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 Peterborough Limited, a wholly owned company of the council formed in February 2019. 2023/24 marked the fifth 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 a senior Peterborough Limited officer, a senior council officer and two 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 quarterly contractual partnership meetings with the Managing Director of Peterborough Ltd and monthly operational meetings with its senior managers. Ultimately any changes to the governance or structure of Peterborough Ltd, as well as overall performance, is reported to the councils Shareholder Cabinet Committee. A report detailing the performance of Aragon and Peterborough Limited for the first quarter of 2024/25 was presented to Shareholder Cabinet on 9 September 2024. It was agreed at this meeting that a quarterly report will continue to be presented to this committee moving forward.

4.1.2 **Street Cleansing** - Aragon undertake street cleansing throughout the city, currently emptying 1,450 litter bins and 340 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 support and actively help the Peterborough Litter Wombles and the magnificent work they do 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, with a continuation of year-on-year increases in prevalence. Since 2017 there has been a 19% increase in fly tipping. Despite this, 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. The following table gives a monthly comparison of fly-tip numbers per month since 2017.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
January	783	790	758	744	850	785	846	1068
February	598	575	597	640	926	578	885	883
March	750	514	713	616	1017	933	781	916
April	653	670	554	764	869	753	954	1085
May	729	588	440	833	827	895	923	858
June	721	651	659	835	801	781	806	864
July	634	663	751	950	845	921	609	926
August	661	519	550	777	785	834	797	883
September	742	596	779	897	887	916	856	797
October	705	603	690	776	737	861	779	
November	696	635	638	828	701	800	881	
December	482	515	600	837	582	893	1017	

Between April 2023 and March 2024, 133 Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued for fly tipping offences and 57 cases have been prepared for court action. From April 2024 to date a further 66 FPN's have been issued and 18 cases referred for further action. Additional cameras have been purchased via the Fly Tipping Grant secured by the council to assist with collecting evidence to allow for enforcement actions. During this period Aragon have collected 1,492 tonnes of fly tipping.

- 4.1.3 **Green Open Space, Grounds Maintenance and Arboriculture** – Aragon have again been successful in securing grant funding through the Treescape scheme which has enabled the team to plant 4400 trees, varying from street trees to a series of small woodlands that were planted by a group of Peterborough Limited volunteers. In addition, Aragon have supported the planting of the city's first Tiny Forest in conjunction with Earth Watch and have plans to increase this across the city going forward. Aragon's team have completed the annual city-wide grass cutting programme on time and on schedule, which sees in excess of 3,602,111m² of grass cut eight times during the year, alongside 230,252m² of biodiversity grass.

Aragon have again retained Green Flag status at three parks across the city and continue to work with the local friends' groups to support them in their endeavours, and to promote and improve the parks for both regular and new visitors.

- 4.1.4 **Home-to-School Transport** - Aragon currently operate approximately 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 delivered capital works projects and core services to the Council including planned and reactive maintenance, asbestos and condition surveys and water testing services throughout the year. In May 2024 reporting of asbestos surveys, and any subsequent works arising from such inspections transferred to a new system. This provides an online portal, enabling 'live' access to view all asbestos reports and the progress of any associated subsequent works. Following the success of this new service delivery, the Property team are currently preparing a business case to role this out further.

A new Principal Building Surveyor has been appointed to support and lead the existing surveyor team, ensuring that this area of the Property team has grown and developed holistically over the past year. Also important to note is the replacement in 2024 of retiring team members with two experienced construction-focused project managers, expanding the diverse nature of the teams combined experience and qualifications. Our 2023 chartered building surveying apprentice, who was voted Apprentice of the Year in the recent council Staff Awards, successfully completed his first year and has already commenced Year 2 of the associated day-release course at Nottingham Trent University. So successful was this placement within the Property team that we were pleased to offer a second apprenticeship, which has seen another local young person commence the first year of their career on the same course, at the same university.

The whole Property team are currently completing their annual health and safety training which includes asbestos and legionella awareness, ladder safety, first aid awareness, COSHH and manual handling. Three of the team recently underwent a 3-day First Aid training course, with a further team member completing their First Aid refresher training, and two team members successfully achieved their IOSH Working Safely certification in the past few months. 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 20,864 subscriptions this year compared to 21,223 last year. Residents continue to take up the Direct Debit option, with 9,479 choosing to pay by breaking down the charge over 3 payments and making it a recurring subscription. Of these totals, 4,059 households subscribe to two bins or more.

Current overall recycling rates are shown below compared to the previous financial year; recycling rates have remained static from 40.1% in 2022/23 to 39.6% in 2023/24 and the recycling rate for April – August 2024 is 38.96%.

April 21 - March 22 = 38.9% Recycled/Composted
April 22 - March 23 = 40.1% Recycled/Composted
April 23- March 24 = 39.6% Recycled/Composted

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.

Batteries and vapes are now collected alongside the waste and recycling bin collections. To dispose of these items all residents need to do it separate them into two clear plastic bags (one for vapes and one for batteries) and place these bags on top of the bin (green or black) or food caddy on collection day.

4.2 **Waste Strategy and Management**

4.2.1 **Recycling Improvement - Education and Awareness**

Recycling rates - Recycling rates have remained static over the past 12 months reducing slightly from 40.1% in 2022/23 to 39.6% in 2023/24 with the recycling rate for April – August 2024 at 38.96%.

Waste education team – the team continue to work 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. In the period September 23 - August 24 the team have delivered 90 education/engagement events, 63 of these have been within schools.

Recycle Week 2024 – is taking place between the 14th and 20th of October with the theme of ‘Rescue Me’ which focuses on “missed capture,” the items that can be recycled but are commonly missed and are placed in the black bin and not recycled. Alongside a programme of social media activity, the team also worked with the organisers of the Great Eastern Run to launch the start of the week and will be undertaking educational events throughout the week.

- 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 with all councils being required to collect Food Waste separately by March 2026.

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. Between April 2023 and March 2024 68.54% of received materials were separated for recycling, reuse, and composting. Further development of the service includes a role specifically designed to permit hand sorting of any bags of mixed waste that contain recycling and to educate site users about 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 March the council published its 2022/23 Carbon Footprint. Greenhouse gas emissions for the year were 7,867 tonnes CO₂e. Emissions have reduced from the previous financial year by 667 tonnes CO₂e (7.8% decrease). The council’s most significant area of emissions is from buildings, representing 56% of organisational emissions, with 27% from transport.

In September 2024, the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee endorsed the council’s Roadmap to Net Zero. The Roadmap builds on analysis detailed in prior carbon footprint

reports to recommend a set of actions supporting the council to reduce its emissions. It uses the methodology detailed in the 2022/23 Carbon Footprint report to focus on emissions under the direct control of the council, but not on emissions that the council only has influence over, as these have not been fully measured. The quantified steps laid out in the Roadmap, if implemented in full, are estimated to reduce the council's Carbon Footprint to 2,344 tonnes CO₂e annually. Such a reduction would amount to a 78% reduction in emissions compared to the 2018/19 baseline year and a 70% reduction in emissions compared to the most recently measured emissions in 2022/23. Additional unquantified measures, along with advances in technology, are expected to help reduce these emissions further.

Financing the transition to net zero is in some ways the greatest challenge of all. The financial position for councils across the country including Peterborough City Council remains challenging, with substantial pressures and significant work needed to achieve long-term financial sustainability. Funding must therefore be carefully considered in the pursuit of net zero projects. When pursuing funding sources for net zero projects, the following order of prioritisation will be used: External grants; Invest to save; Invest to deliver co-benefits; Invest to reduce emissions. Wherever possible, external grants will be sought in the first instance to cover or contribute to the costs of decarbonisation. Where grants are unavailable or do not fully cover the costs of a decarbonisation project, loans will be considered. Loans to deliver projects that offer cost savings and other co-benefits will be considered ahead of projects which offer fewer other benefits.

This year heat Decarbonisation Plans, which detail proposals for energy efficiency measures and low carbon heating, have been developed for a further 13 corporate buildings. These will be used to inform future plans and grant applications.

Net Zero Peterborough - A Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) for the city was adopted by council in December 2022. The Local Area Energy Plan considers the current and future energy needs of the city, and projects the need for heat pumps, connections to district heating, improved energy efficiency measures, public electric vehicle charging points, electricity generation and additional capacity in the electricity network.

The council leads a £3.2m project funded by Innovate UK to develop a tool which can design detailed net zero projects, develop bespoke delivery plans and track the progress of net zero projects. Projects are tailored to the community in which they are to be delivered in, reflecting the needs and aspirations of the local community, thus ensuring that projects are more likely to be successful and attract viable funding for delivery. Work is initiating with local communities to co-design and test ideas. Project partners include Cambridgeshire County Council, Energy Systems Catapult, edenseven, Nordic Energy and PECT.

The council is working closely with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County council on plans for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. We have recently submitted a bid to Government as part of their LEVI programme. The LEVI programme will deliver EV infrastructure in residential areas where residents do not have off-road parking. The Combined Authority area has been allocated £5,437,000 to support the rollout of chargers. Once the application has been approved, we will be undertaking a joint procurement exercise to appoint a Charge Point Operator to roll out EV chargers throughout residential areas in Peterborough.

The school engagement programme supports schools to develop climate action plans. The programme is pupil led, with students supported to undertake energy audits and come up with ideas to reduce carbon emissions. To date 20 schools have engaged with the programme.

Carbon Literacy training teaches about climate science, global and local impacts, potential projects to reduce emissions and the associated co-benefits and how to talk about climate change with others. Carbon literacy training is offered to local communities and Parish Councils, as well

as to council officers and councillors. The council has also recently developed a new course for businesses, which is now on offer to any local Peterborough business.

Adaptation - Funding has been secured via the Shared Prosperity Fund to develop an adaptation plan for Peterborough. It is intended that this will be published following completion in March 2025.

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 commercial and/or public 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 and key businesses and public buildings in the city centre. These buildings have been identified as they are significant 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 a net-zero carbon city.

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 the commercialisation stage of the project and 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. External experts have been appointed to advise the council on the legal, technical and financial requirements of the project and a procurement specialist has been appointed to lead the procurement process for the partner. The internal PIRI project team have also held meetings with the UK Infrastructure Bank and the Department for Business and Trade and a meeting with the Danish Board of District Heating was held in Peterborough with the Cabinet Member for Growth and Regeneration.

A cross-party working group has been set up and two meetings have now been held. Progress updates have been provided and future workstreams of the team have been discussed with the group. Further meetings have been scheduled and they will continue until the commercialisation phase of the project has concluded.

A soft market test will be held in October, and following this exercise the procurement process for the external partner will launch in November. The procurement will be conducted on a competitive dialogue basis and once a preferred partner is identified, officers will take a report to Cabinet for consideration of the proposed partner, the Full Business Case for the project and to consider approving for the council to enter into a Development Agreement with the partner. Officers and advisors are aiming to have this in place by the Autumn of 2025. The Development Agreement will allow the preferred partner an agreed period of time to fully develop the business plan for the PIRI design, development and operation and, if this is successful the council will enter into a formal partnership with the partner in early 2026.

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 works on the following policies as part of this work:

- 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 **Active Travel**

The council has been designing three major cycleway projects with the Government's Active Travel Fund projects (£986,590 was awarded for these projects). This puts the council in a very good position to bid for future construction funding when opportunities become available. These projects are:

- Oundle Road Cycle Infrastructure Design - Ham Lane to Lynch Wood (£400,000).
- Thorpe Road Cycle Infrastructure Design - Thorpe Meadows to new western rail station entrance (£300,000).
- Bourges Boulevard / Lincoln Road Infrastructure Design - City Centre to Werrington (£286,590).

The council also secured construction funding for the Thorpe Wood Cycleway (£2 million) and construction will commence shortly, the council is finalising the required land agreements. The council will also be working up a number of active travel feasibility projects and behaviour change programmes having been awarded £241,000 of revenue funding through the Government's Capability and Ambition Fund.

A number of other active travel schemes are currently being progressed, including Cygnet Bridge and the Peterborough Station Quarter project, public consultation has recently concluded on the Station Quarter project and the full business case will be submitted to Government in early 2025.

The council has increased the number of permanent school streets from 12 to 15. 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. One school street in Queens Drive West is now operated with traffic cameras prohibiting vehicles from entering during school times (there are exemptions for residents, staff etc) which has been a real success, and we are looking at potentially rolling out this technology to other school street sites.

The LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan) was adopted by Cabinet in July 2024 and work has started on developing a Rural Cycling and Walking Strategy. A Walking and Cycling Cabinet Working Group has been created to review and help progress walking and cycling initiatives.

4.5 **Flood Risk Management**

A separate report detailing the progress of this work will be presented at this committee and therefore the information has not been included here to avoid duplication.

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 for Environment and Transport.

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

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