

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 5
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Report of the Director of Environment Capital

Report Author – Trevor Gibson, Director of Environment Capital
Contact Details – 317401 or email trevor.gibson@peterborough.gov.uk

ENVIRONMENT CAPITAL – THE NEXT STEPS

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report is presented to the Sustainable Growth Scrutiny Committee to update Members on Environment Capital progress to date and the next stages in developing and launching the approach.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to comment upon progress to date together the proposed process for launching Environment Capital later in 2010.

3. LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

- 3.1 Creating the UK's Environment Capital is a one of the four priorities contained within the Sustainable Communities Strategy.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Peterborough's Sustainable Communities Strategy contains four priorities: Creating Strong and Supportive Communities; Creating the UK's Environment Capital; Creating Opportunities, Tackling Inequalities; Substantial and Truly Sustainable Growth. Each of these priorities has four specific outcomes, beneath which sit a diverse range of actions and interventions to deliver lasting positive change for Peterborough.
- 4.2 By adopting the Sustainable Communities Strategy, the Council has committed itself to becoming the UK's Environment Capital, building on the longstanding experience as one of four Environment Cities in the UK. The "journey" from Environment City to Environment Capital is considered appropriate given the shift towards global environmental challenges such as climate change as well as the city's ambition to grow substantially and sustainably. As a consequence, the approach is relevant to the Sustainable Growth Scrutiny Committee as the way in which the city grows is critical to achieving the Environment Capital ambition.
- 4.3 Environment Capital now has widespread support as a key focus and unique selling point for Peterborough which has been achieved through clear political direction and the efforts of a committed, cross-sector Environment Capital Partnership.
- 4.4 Significant building blocks are already in place including the Sustainable Communities Strategy, Local Area Agreement, the creation of an Environment Capital Cabinet portfolio and the Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee itself. The approach also has the support of Opportunity Peterborough as a key tool in driving economic development and of the wider business community as represented by the Economic Development Partnership.

- 4.5 The city is currently leading on some areas of work and is receiving global recognition for its unique “Peterborough Model”. This project is being delivered through collaboration with IBM, Royal Haskoning and Green Ventures to create an accessible on-line tool for visualising the city’s environmental performance. As a result of this and other initiatives, the city is gaining a significant reputation for its environmental experience and credentials.

5. THE NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 There are significant advantages in maintaining the momentum in driving forward the Environment Capital Agenda. It can, and does, play a key role in driving the city’s economic development, supporting sustainable growth and providing a focus for building strong and supportive communities.
- 5.2 The next stages in the process must continue to position Peterborough as an environmental leader and enhance its reputation as a result. It must also continue to build the Environment Capital culture within the Council and throughout a wider family of city stakeholders.
- 5.3 The next stages must also include a range of projects and activities aimed at supporting the Environment Capital agenda. The Committee has previously seen early drafts of the city wide Development Plan which will be updated and improved as part of this work. The Council and other partners must be mindful of the impact of their activities and decisions on the environmental and wider sustainability agendas.
- 5.4 The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council together with the Cabinet Member for Environment Capital are committed to launching the Environment Capital approach in the autumn of this year. To this end, three work streams have now been established:-

Stakeholder Engagement: The Director of Environment Capital with support from GPP colleagues is working with partners to galvanise support for and input to the Environment Capital approach to build and maintain a common approach and culture. This will involve a clear definition, an outward facing prospectus and a briefing document aimed at all city ambassadors. In addition, if it is to succeed, Environment Capital must deliver improved outcomes for local residents and communities.

Policy Development: This will include the replacement of the Council’s Environment Policy (2000) with a newly developed Environment Capital Policy which will form part of the Council’s Major Policy Framework. The policy will seek to ensure that Environment Capital principles are a consideration in all services, strategies and policies. The sustainable growth of the city will be supported by an Environment Capital Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which will drive sustainable developments across the city building on the Environment Capital Core Strategy policy.

Marketing: A newly formed team comprising marketing expertise from a wide range of partners including, PCC, OP, PECT, GPP and UKCEED is leading the development of a marketing strategy to ensure that the new approach enhances the city’s regional, national and international profile. This profile will, in turn, support inward investment and economic development. It should be noted that if Environmental Capital is marketed without delivering the substance described above, it will not be successful.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The launch of the Environment Capital initiative will ensure that sustainability is embedded throughout Council services and across a range of key stakeholders.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Key city stakeholders will be consulted on the approach. The Scrutiny Committee will be asked to comment on the detailed policy later in the year prior to its consideration by Council. This report was also considered by the Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee on 15 July 2010.

8. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 8.1 The launch of Environment Capital, backed by a major policy, a range of high profile projects, a SPD and bespoke marketing campaign will maintain Peterborough's position as a leading city from the environmental perspective with positive benefits for the city's future development and all of its communities.

9. NEXT STEPS

- 9.1 Following comments and suggestions made by this Committee, the policy, development plan and marketing strategy will be prepared for consideration by this Committee in September 2010. The Major Policy will be considered by Council in October 2010.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

None.

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