

STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 7
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Report of the Programme Manager, Citizen Power Peterborough

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CITIZEN POWER PROGRAMME – ARTS AND SOCIAL CHANGE & SOCIAL MEDIA PROJECTS

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an opportunity to scrutinise the approach being taken in relation to two of the individual projects that form part of the RSA Citizen Power Peterborough programme, specifically the Arts and Social Change project, and the Social Media project.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to comment on and scrutinise the overall approach to Citizen Power Peterborough in relation to the Arts and Social Change project, and the Social Media project

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 The programme aligns to the following Sustainable Community Strategy priorities which are relevant to this Committee:

Creating Strong & Supportive Communities

- Empowering local communities
- Making Peterborough safer
- Building community cohesion
- Building pride in Peterborough

4. BACKGROUND

Citizen Power Peterborough is a two year programme bringing together local people to shape the future of the city. The aim is to build connections between people and communities, encouraging and supporting them to become more involved in their communities. Seven inter-related projects will look at life in Peterborough and focus on new ways of supporting local people and their communities to make a positive difference. The two projects being considered at this meeting are (i) Arts and Social Change and (ii) Social Media.

4.1 Arts and Social Change

This strand will explore the role of the creative arts in developing a sense of belonging and pride in Peterborough, as well as underpin engagement for the entire Citizen Power Programme. Creative artistic interventions will enable and support local people and those in key roles in the city develop a better understanding of needs, build joint aspirations and share ideas and solutions to the challenges faced by the city. It should be noted that this is not an arts project; it is a practical way in which to picture how social change and the arts can work together to help people help themselves and make a positive difference in their communities.

The aims of the strand include:

- To use the creative arts to deliver high quality activities and interventions that will develop the abilities of local people to get involved and make a positive difference within their communities
- To use the creative arts to build connections between individuals and between people and the places that they live
- To support and build a self sustaining network of locally based artists who can both contribute to the cultural aspirations of Peterborough and be an active part of the arts offer regionally
- To help shape the provision of a future creative arts hub for the city

Arts and Social Change will be delivered through an integrated framework of elements where each element will support and reinforce each other. For example, integrating arts activities into the delivery of the programme will in turn strengthen the arts community in the city as would the delivery of high quality artistic activities which promote involvement at a local level.

These elements are:

- (i) Creative Gatherings:** facilitated sessions for creative artists who live and work in Peterborough. Seven gatherings will be held throughout the two years of the programme and will support the development of other programmes that involve locally based artists Experiments in Place Making and Dialogue in Action (See below for more details on both of these). These sessions will also provide networking opportunities for the creative arts community in Peterborough. This will enable experiences and knowledge to be shared and new relationships to be forged thus creating a stronger and more vibrant arts community which can add value to the city's growth plans. Vivacity sees this element as being an important element in developing a diverse cultural strategy. To promote the sustainability of these events attendees will take on more responsibility in shaping what the gatherings will consider with the final two sessions being facilitated by creative artists from the city. This will mean that the gatherings can continue beyond the life of the Citizen Power programme.
- (ii) Experiments in Place Making:** locally based artists are partnering with local neighbourhoods. This work is taking place through the Neighbourhoods agenda with local artists working with Neighbourhood Managers to look at how creative solutions can be utilised in identifying new approaches to developing communities which best meet local needs. This will happen within the Community Action Planning framework.
- (iii) Dialogue in Action:** Ten partnerships of artists with professionals in Peterborough's public sector pertinent to the Citizen Power agenda. For example a visual artist could partner with a police officer offering the public sector professional with insights around creative ways in which to deliver services and for the artists to gain a 'fly-on-the-wall' experience of an aspect of life in a sector which interests them.
- (iv) Artist residencies:** two artist residencies hosted by communities in Peterborough. The residencies will be for one year (March 2011 – March 2012) and communities will bid to have artists work in their areas. Communities will develop a brief and bid for artists to work with them in their communities. This collaboration will help communities understand what it is they need from their areas, build the capacity of people to make a positive difference in their communities and use the creative arts to explore new ways to do this.

(v) **Commissions:** two commissions based on the core themes of Citizen Power will deliver interventions in the city. The first, being developed by Encounters, will take place during November 2010 with the final event on 1 December 2010. This first commission is called 'Take Me To' which is a series of personal tours of Peterborough. Up to 36 individuals or small groups will take part and will be invited to share their Peterborough life with people from across the city by taking them to places which mean something to them. The tours offer a chance to reflect on and share experiences of living in Peterborough, as well as getting a chance to secure a glimpse into the lives of other people who are also living in the city. A final event will take place which will bring together all 'Take Me To' participants to share their thoughts and experiences of the commission. The purpose is to build connections between people and places across the city.

In relation to the final two bullets above the programme is working with a range of individuals and organisations including the Peterborough Council for Voluntary Service, Greater Peterborough Partnership Cohesion Manager, New Link and Neighbourhood Managers to identify individuals and groups who wish to take part in these elements of the strand. This approach is enabling us to engage at a grassroots level.

The idea of a creative arts hub for the city has been discussed for some time and it is hoped that the Old Still, which was used as a base for the city's View 5 artists earlier this year, will provide a hub not just for this strand but for the entire programme. Negotiations are currently in progress to secure this facility. Once in place the Old Still would be a catalyst towards a sustainable creative arts hub which will help the city's growth plans by for example attracting new and improved retail outlets and make Peterborough a much more appealing place for business to come to.

4.2 **Social Media**

This strand is about developing an online platform and social media tools for local people. It is looking at how social media can be used to improve community participation in the city and connect different people and organisations that are committed to making Peterborough a more vibrant place to live.

The long term goal is to establish a sustainable network of community websites, owned and developed by local people interested in positive change. These sites will connect people across the city helping them understand what Peterborough has to offer and how they can get involved either as a participant or volunteer for example.

A precursor to this is the Citizen Power website which is operational and being utilised to promote not just the programme but events and activities across the city including the recent New Internal Encounter (NIE) production 'Tales from the Middle of Town' which performed a theatre show based on stories written by school children from across Peterborough.

Connections of this nature are bringing organisations such as NIE into the Citizen Power programme and they are an integral part of the creative gatherings (see above), sharing their expertise and experience with locally based creative artists thus building capacity within the city.

The Citizen Power website is also being used to secure ideas from people in relation to how well it works for them and what changes are needed to make it fit for purpose going forward. It is also a place for on-line discussion for people to share thoughts, comments and ideas about Citizen Power and its 7 strands. Research is also underway to understand what social media resource exists in the city to identify and build on any best practice and not reinvent the wheel and this is being built into the delivery plan for this strand. This research will also highlight areas of collaboration as appropriate.

4.3 Scrutiny Committee Member Roles

The Committee will be aware that its Members are acting as champions for each of the seven separate project strands that make up the Citizen Power Peterborough Programme. Informal induction sessions are taking place to understand what level of input Members wish to have as the programme unfolds.

5. KEY ISSUES

5.1 None

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Citizen Power: Peterborough is a city-wide programme and is the City's 'Big Society' project. The overarching aims are to develop sustainable, active citizenship in Peterborough focusing on new ways in which to support local people and communities to take action and make a positive difference in their areas.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 Engagement with local people and organisations is key to the success of this programme. Focus groups were an important part of the scoping stage and ongoing local input is planned to ensure the programme truly has a Peterborough focus. The latter part of this input is beginning to unfold as connections with grass roots groups are being made through organisations including Peterborough Council for Voluntary Services.

8. NEXT STEPS

8.1 Feedback and challenge from Members will inform the ongoing development plan for the Citizen Power Programme and its seven strands.

Citizen Power: Peterborough will continue until 2012 with different strands being considered at future meetings of the Scrutiny Committee.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

None.

10. APPENDICES

- Arts and Social Change Strand Action Plan – Appendix 1