

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 5
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Report of the Chief Executive

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FACILITATING GROWTH IN PETERBOROUGH

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report is being brought to the Committee to provide an outline on how the Growth Agenda for Peterborough is being taken forward and the relationships between the various departments tasked with this.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Sustainable Growth and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the contents of this report.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 This report supports the Sustainability Community Strategy by:
- Creating opportunities and tacking inequalities
 - Creating strong and supportive communities
 - Creating the UKs environmental capital
 - Delivering substantial and truly sustainable communities

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Prior to 2010 Opportunity Peterborough (OP) was tasked with taking forward the sustainable growth of Peterborough. The company was established in March 2005 as an Urban Regeneration Company and the adopted structure reflected the issues of the day. At this time the question was not 'if' development would happen but rather 'when'. Developers and banks were prepared to take risks and experience has now taught us that many of these were foolhardy.

As we are all aware the financial situation has now changed significantly. Developers and banks are now risk adverse and not prepared to move forward until they can be very confident of the financial returns. In Autumn 2009 the decision was made to recast the role of Opportunity Peterborough with them focussing on the marketing of the City and the establishment of Growth and Regeneration.

In addition the Council was also looking at its internal structures. It was recognised that Strategic Planning, who were part of the Growth function, would be better situated within the planning area as there was a clear synergy with this team. With this in mind this function transferred to Planning, Transport and Engineering on the 1st April 2011.

There are now three departments tasked with the delivery of Growth within the City, intentionally co-located in Stuart House. Considering each in turn:

- **Growth and Regeneration:** Tasked with the physical delivery on site. For the reasons outlined earlier a key aspect of development is securing the funding necessary to take developments forward. Part of the role includes bringing together potential tenants to generate the necessary critical mass that is attractive to developers and therefore funders who will provide the necessary inputs.

The role of this team generally falls into one of three areas:

- Enabling development when we have no land interest: This will involve bringing together interested parties to work together. Working with them to identify innovative solutions to problems and challenges.
- Utilising a significant land interest: This puts the Council in the driving seat and any development of this nature. In essence we use the land we own as a contribution to the development thereby ensuring that it meets the overarching objectives of the Council.
- Working with other landowners when we have a minority land interest: In this instance we seek to influence as adjacent landowners the proposals for the site. In particular ensuring that the final product meets the needs and aspirations of the Council.

In summary the overarching role of this team is to bring together potential partners from both the public and private sectors and get them working together to deliver growth.

- **Opportunity Peterborough:** tasked with delivering economic development services to the business community. This broadly focuses on four key elements:
 - Marketing the City to attract new inward investment: This work focuses on attracting new companies to the city, utilising a range of media to promote the city and ensuring that our attributes are visible to business leaders. The most recent work has focused on London and specifically promotion in King's Cross Station.
 - Economic Development: In this area Opportunity Peterborough is focused on working directly with business, supporting business in a manner ways including Skills development, helping find new premises and in dealing directly with other council departments. This area also focuses on assisting new investors and ensuring that they have a seamless entry to the city.
 - Skills: Having launched the Skills Vision in partnership with Children's Services Opportunity Peterborough now has a small Skills Service which is working closely with businesses, to ensure we understand their skills requirements and with schools/colleges to ensure that education provision meets the future needs of our businesses. Whilst not 'rocket science' the work in this area is viewed as nationally significant.
- **Planning, Transport and Engineering:** This department fulfils the statutory roles of the Council as local planning authority and local highway authority. The two functions were merged in 2010 to provide a seamless service for developers and investors in the city and restructured to provide high quality customer service. The Planning service has since achieved Customer Service Excellence accreditation from the Cabinet Office. The functions of the team are as follows:

- Development Management – determination of planning applications, negotiation of S106 agreements etc
- Building Control – implementation of the Building Regulations to ensure that new development meets national construction standards
- Environment – conservation of natural and built heritage, Biodiversity Strategy, Trees and Woodland Strategy etc
- Planning Policy – preparation of the Council’s Local Development Framework. The team also provides a planning policy service to Fenland District Council
- Housing Strategy – management of the Council’s affordable housing capital programme and preparation of the Housing Strategy
- Network Management – maintenance of the Council’s highway and engineering infrastructure
- Infrastructure Planning and Delivery – preparation of the Council’s Local Transport Plan and the design and implementation of highway solutions

The Planning, Transport and Engineering department works closely with Opportunity Peterborough and Growth and Regeneration both strategically and operationally to ensure that there is a clear path through the statutory approval process for new development, and that proposals are shaped at an early stage to ensure that they fit with Council and community aspirations. The department has a facilitating role with a solution focused culture that supports sustainable development.

The three teams work closely to ensure that we have a seamless approach to working with the business community. The teams have evolved simple communications to ensure that opportunities are actioned in a timely manner and that any issues are handled by the appropriate team, with the correct result being achieved.

5. KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 The Committee needs to consider and note the way in which each of these separate departments work together to deliver sustainable growth within Peterborough.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report is for information only and therefore does not have any direct implications. However the activities outlined in this report will have a Council wide impact.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 To date there has been no internal or external consultation.

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 It is anticipated that Committee Members will receive updates on progress when applicable.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

- 9.1 *None*

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 *None*

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