

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM - TOWN HALL
ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2011**

Present: Councillors C Burton (Chairman), S Allen (Vice Chairman),
D Day, J Peach, E Murphy

Also Present: Andrew Edwards, Head of Growth & Regeneration
Simon Machen, Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering
Services

Officers Present: Jennifer Harris, Lawyer
Dania Castagliuolo, Governance Officer
Paulina Ford, Senior Governance Officer, Scrutiny

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Arculus and Councillor Fower

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

Councillor Murphy declared a personal interest with regard to item 6 on the agenda, the Disposal of Vawser Lodge as he owned property in the area.

3. Minutes of Meetings Held on 7 June 2011 and 29 June 2011.

The minutes of the meetings held on 7 June and 29 June 2011 were approved as a correct record.

4. Call in of any Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Key Officer Decisions

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

5. Facilitating Growth in Peterborough

The report provided the Committee with an outline of how the Growth Agenda was facilitated for Peterborough and was being taken forward. The Head of Growth and Regeneration introduced the report and informed Members that the Growth agenda was facilitated through three service areas:

- Growth and Regeneration
- Opportunity Peterborough
- Planning, Transport and Engineering

Members were informed that investors had become risk adverse and would be more likely to invest if there was a demand for the service they provided. Part of the role of the Growth and Regeneration Team was to generate demand and therefore provide a market for developers. The Growth and Regeneration team looked at three distinct areas of focus:

- Enabling development where the Council has no land interest an example of which was the station quarter
- Utilising a significant land interest where most of the land was owned by the Council.

- Minority land interest where only a small part of the land was owned by the Council.

The Council were engaging with investors and developers to develop financial packages for investment in the City. Government money previously available had been cut and therefore more engagement with private investors was required. Key to this was the work that Opportunity Peterborough had been doing to market the city to attract new inward investment and as a result had attracted great interest in the City.

The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services informed Members that the planning service played a strong role in delivering the Growth Agenda. It had worked closely with Opportunity Peterborough and the Growth and Regeneration Team to maximise investment and development opportunities across the City. The planning, transport and engineering services had merged into one team to enable a more seamless approach to planning applications. Climate Change and Home of Environment Capital functions would also move into the service area to provide a better service and maximise the sustainability credentials of new development. The team had become pivotal to driving the Growth Agenda forward. The service had recently been awarded a Customer Service Excellence accreditation.

Questions and observations were made around the following areas:

- You mentioned that developers had bought sites for development in the past and they were now disadvantaged because of the economic downturn. Was the football stadium one of those sites? *The acquisition of the football stadium was bought for use as a community stadium. At the time of acquisition the market had been on a downward trend and it had been bought at the right price. The site was unique and bought for development for use to the community. Development of this site was now progressing.*
- Will future budgets be dependant on how well the three service areas succeed in attracting inward investment and future development into the city? Lack of development will have an effect on the amount of 106 monies available. *Members were informed that the Authority had a Planning Obligations Implementation Strategy (POIS) in place. This was a local development tariff that generated a significant amount of income. New development had never fully funded infrastructure development e.g. New school places were funded through formula grant and Local Authority Income Tax etc. Set out in the POIS was how the viability of new development schemes would be appraised. Members were advised that the POIS would be replaced in 2013 with a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Community Infrastructure Levy was a tax on new development. Money raised from the Community Infrastructure Levy would be ring fenced for local infrastructure needed to support the development of an area. Each charging authority would publish a list of the specific infrastructure it would invest in.*
- What impact will the current planning legislation have on the growth of the city? *The current Regional Plan which sets targets for growth, housing and employment would be removed under the Localism Bill. Members were informed that national or regional targets for growth would no longer exist and it would be up to the Local Authority to determine these. The Government had produced a draft National Planning Policy Framework to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, and to promote sustainable growth. Those authorities like Peterborough who had a Local Development Framework already in place would continue to follow that plan.*
- Can you give an example how the service areas have worked together to bring forward a new development scheme. *Obtaining planning consent for the Moys End stand of the football ground was a good example of how Planning, Transport and Engineering and the Growth and Regeneration teams had worked together. This had been a challenging project incorporating the requirement for an energy centre, ensuring it was a sustainable development and suitable for community use. Working as one team had enabled any issues to be identified and sorted out quickly. This way of working had made contact with the Council much easier.*

- How is this improved way of working facilitating the North Westgate Development? *There had been a lot of interest in the site but it needed to be financially viable and developers were reluctant to take risks in the current climate. The team were working closely with a number of interested parties. It had been important that the product at North Westgate was right and this would take time to put in place.*

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report.

6. The Disposal of Vawser Lodge

The report had been produced at the request of the Committee to update them on the progress that had been made on the disposal of the Vawser Lodge site. The Head of Growth and Regeneration informed members that there had been a delay in disposing of the site due to the fact that it was adjacent to the Peterborough District Hospital site. A decision had been made that it would be better to sell it as a residential site but to hold back on the disposal of the Vawser Lodge site until the PDH site was sold to increase the marriage value. However there had been no indication of when the PDH site would be sold so a further decision was taken to look at ways of disposing of the site before the PDH site was sold. A number of developers had shown an interest.

Questions and observations were made around the following areas:

Councillor Arculus who had been unable to attend the meeting requested that the Chair ask the following questions on his behalf:

- When is the consultation with ward councillors going to take place? *Officers would consult with ward members as soon as proposals were available.*
- Has a professional valuation been carried out? If so, what is the market value? What would the development value be? If one hasn't been carried out; then why not? *A professional valuation had been carried out but officers were unable to release the figures as it was commercially sensitive information.*
- What is the projected marriage value to any sale of the Peterborough District Hospital site? *This was commercially sensitive information that officers were unable to release.*
- Has any thought been given to using this site for university or educational use? If not why not? *Thought had been given but only in terms of residential support to the University.*
- Have any approaches been made either by local schools or care providers to take over the site? *No approach had been made by local schools; a care provider had shown interest but it had been an insignificant value and it was decided to turn the offer down.*
- The site is not in good repair. It shows a lack of foresight not to keep the property and buildings in good state as this impacted on the value. Who was responsible for this? When was the property last inspected? *The Head of Growth and Regeneration was responsible for the site but could not recall when it had last been inspected. The building was not in a fit state to use or keep open and had been made secure. Any future developer would demolish the building.*
- The land around the site is for sale. Has the council given any thought to assembling a site for development or educational use out of the land currently marketed? The ward needs greater provision of primary and secondary education. *A significant amount of work was done jointly with a number of parties, including the existing landowner. However at the time the landowner declined to sell the land or engage at a level that would be viable.*

Other questions asked by Members of the Committee were:

- Had the Local Authority considered undertaking its own development of this site with a particular view to building new accommodation for elderly residents? *Members were*

advised that this had been considered but the development risks associated with this and cash flow meant that it was a risk that would not be viable at this time. However work had been done with a number of local Registered Social Landlords to enable them to build affordable units and also with Care Providers to enable them to acquire land.

- Can officers confirm if the land that Vawser lodge was built on had been left by someone in their Will to be used only for the use as a respite centre. *As part of the sale process due diligence would be undertaken to check historical records to see if there are any restrictions in place. Officers advised that they were unaware of this restriction but would check again.*

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report.

7. Local Development Framework Scrutiny Group

The report informed the Committee on the background of the Local Development Framework (LDF) Scrutiny Group. Members were asked to consider whether the LDF Scrutiny Group should continue or be disbanded. If disbanded the Sustainable Growth Scrutiny Committee would provide the strategic and high level overview, scrutiny and monitoring of the Peterborough Local Development Framework (LDF) Development Plan Documents.

Members considered the value of the group going forward and acknowledged the good work that the group had done in the past. Members felt that the group had fulfilled the purpose for which it had originally been formed. Any remaining LDF Development Plan Documents would be presented through the normal scrutiny reporting process to the Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the Local Development Framework Scrutiny Group be disbanded immediately and that all future monitoring of the Peterborough Local Development Framework Development Plan Documents be dealt with directly through the Sustainable Growth Scrutiny Committee reporting process.

8. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan, containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the following four months. Members were invited to comment on the Plan and, where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's work programme.

ACTION AGREED

To note the latest version of the Forward Plan.

9. Work Programme

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2010/11

ACTION AGREED

To confirm the work programme for 2010/11

10. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 13 October 2011

CHAIRMAN 7.00 - 8.16 pm

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