Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-21

Growing the right way for a bigger and better Peterborough

Greater Peterborough Partnership
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Overview

Peterborough’s Sustainable Community Strategy is quite simply the plan for the future of our city and the surrounding villages and rural areas.

It is an ambitious and far reaching plan. It aims to substantially improve the quality of life of the people of Peterborough and to raise the profile and reputation of our city as a great place in which to live, visit and work. And we will do that by taking advantage of the opportunities of our growth agenda.

This plan is specifically designed to bring clear benefits to the people of Peterborough – those who live here already, as well as those who come to live here in the years ahead. It is as much about empowering our existing communities, investing in new leisure facilities and enhancing our local neighbourhoods as it is about building new houses and encouraging the creation of new jobs.

Where we have advantages already, we want to build on them. So we don’t just want to be one of the country’s four environment cities, we want to be the UK’s environment capital. And we don’t want to create more jobs, we want to create jobs that will raise levels of overall prosperity. We won’t be satisfied with the improvements we have achieved so far in our schools; we want to ensure that every child in Peterborough has the advantage of state-of-the-art learning facilities and achieves to their potential. We will seek to inject quality into everything we do, ensuring that as we build the bigger Peterborough, it is also very much a better Peterborough.

Where we face challenges, we want to overcome them. We will not accept the current low skills base of our economy. We will work hard to improve the health and life expectancy of the people of Peterborough. We will constantly prioritise the need to make Peterborough safer. And we will seek to make our city centre and our neighbourhood centres thrive.

The Sustainable Community Strategy is the plan that will guide the work of all the partners in Peterborough – public, private, voluntary and community. It is also the plan for every individual. We can all help. Whether it is by taking part in local community groups, acting to improve our own health or by encouraging learning within our own networks, we all have a role to play if we are to build a Peterborough that is not only bigger, but very noticeably better. A Peterborough we can be even more proud of.

“In five years time I want to retire and in my dotage be provided with health facilities from NHS and other health providers, accessible at times convenient to me.”
Introduction by John Bridge, OBE, Chair of the Greater Peterborough Partnership

Peterborough’s Sustainable Community Strategy, first launched in spring 2005, set out a compelling vision for the future of our city and its surrounding rural areas – to create “a bigger and better Peterborough”. We adopted this vision because we firmly believe that by seizing the opportunities of growth we will deliver better public services and improved quality of life for its people and communities, both existing and new.

As my predecessor as Chair of the Greater Peterborough Partnership (GPP) wrote at the time, the Sustainable Community Strategy “reflects both the agenda for growth and the clear desire to ensure that Peterborough grows the right way, so that economic and population growth leads to genuine improvements in key areas, particularly those where Peterborough currently has specific problems or issues. It recognises that if we are to create a bigger and better Peterborough, then we will have to deal quickly and effectively with the pressing issues of today as well as the plans for tomorrow.”

And that has been our agenda for the last three years. Working under the umbrella of the GPP, the partners have successfully delivered meaningful improvements in health, community safety, and education and skills. At the same time we have worked hard to take forward the growth agenda, supporting the building of new homes and improvements to existing housing, along with the regeneration of communities and promoting the expansion of the local economy.

This has been a busy and often complicated agenda. It is also a long-term one. We cannot expect to have overcome the considerable barriers to improved public health and life expectancy in a three-year period. Nor will we completely reverse the long standing issue of underachievement in our schools and in the level of adult skills in our economy. We must also remember that we have been taking this agenda forward at a time of considerable inward migration to Peterborough, which has increased our population and supported our economic growth, but also put pressure on public, voluntary and community services.

Nevertheless, we can be proud of what has been accomplished. We need to recognise and celebrate what has changed for the better as well as assessing what more needs to be done and where we should focus our resources if we are to continue to move our strategy forward.

For me the clear highlights of the last three years include the opening of two new state-of-the-art schools – Voyager and the Thomas Deacon Academy – the expansion of our university offering through the joint venture with Anglia Ruskin University, the significant reduction in the number of young people not in education, employment or training and the overall reduction in crime figures. I am equally satisfied that during this period our economy has continued to prosper – Peterborough was
rated as the number one business hotspot for business creation in a 2007 survey by the Post Office.

During 2007, the partners within the GPP took the decision to review and, where necessary, update the Sustainable Community Strategy. We needed to do this to bring it in line with a number of important national policy developments and to ensure it continues to reflect the local agenda. As we took those discussions forward with input from a wide range of statutory, voluntary, community and private sector organisations it became clear that a number of changes were needed.

1. We wanted to ensure that the children and young people’s agenda was firmly cemented within the framework of the document, recognising the huge amount of work that has been done around the Every Child Matters agenda, which was not included in the 2005 document.

2. We recognised that our aspiration to become the environment capital of the country, set out as one of the breakthrough goals in 2005, and our obligations to tackle climate change needed more prominence.

3. We believe that it is important to set out very clearly in the strategy that our intention is to pursue growth in order to benefit all our communities and that our agenda is to ensure that no individual or community is left behind as we collectively increase opportunity, prosperity and life chances.

4. We needed to ensure that the interests of Peterborough’s rural communities were better represented and recognised in the Sustainable Community Strategy. This has been done through the development of a new Rural Strategy, following an intensive engagement exercise with Parish Councils. This document forms part of this Sustainable Community Strategy and will guide the work of partners over the coming years to ensure that our rural communities benefit from growth and retain their vibrancy and individuality.

As a result we have slightly updated the vision for the future of Peterborough and revised the priorities within the Sustainable Community Strategy to offer a more cross-cutting approach to our work. We now have four priorities:

1. Creating opportunities – tackling inequalities
2. Creating strong and supportive communities
3. Creating the UK’s environment capital
4. Delivering substantial and truly sustainable growth

We believe that by taking this cross-cutting approach we stand a better chance of achieving our outcomes than if we target specific age groups or communities. The children and young people’s agenda and the health agenda remain of fundamental importance to achieving our aims. They are addressed as part of this cross-cutting agenda, working across all the priorities of the strategy.
The Local Area Agreement and other strategic documents

The Sustainable Community Strategy sets the direction for the overall strategic development of Peterborough. In that sense it represents the agenda of all the partners and should be reflected as such in their individual business plans.

There are, in addition, many other strategic documents that support the overall development of Peterborough, all of which should take their direction from the vision and priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy. Some of these documents are referenced later in this strategy.

It is often best to view the Sustainable Community Strategy as the writing in the stick of rock, which should flow through all the work of both organisations and individuals as set out in the diagram below. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is the tool for achieving the changes set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy. It is a three-year agreement between the partners in Peterborough and our partners in regional and national government, setting out the actions we will take and the targets we aim to meet in pursuit of the longer term vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

It is perhaps best to see these as two parts of the same document, with the Sustainable Community Strategy setting out the vision and priorities for Peterborough over the period 2008-21 and a series of LAAs, negotiated on a rolling three-year basis, outlining the short and medium-term action plans for helping us realise that vision.
The Peterborough Story

Peterborough is a place of both great opportunities, building on considerable existing strengths, and major challenges, reflecting a variety of historic and more recent developments to the built and social structure of our city and its surrounding area.

Peterborough – the opportunity

Peterborough’s opportunities stem from its strong economic base; its existing strengths as one of only four environment cities in the country and as the home of the country’s largest cluster of environmental companies; its geographic position at the heart of a distinct sub-region of market towns and astride both north-south and east-west transport routes and, perhaps above all, from its readiness actively to embrace growth. It also boasts diverse and relatively cohesive communities and has a long history of welcoming new communities and of rapid growth. Its rural hinterland, too, presents an opportunity to showcase the city as an exemplar of how to unify the rural and urban agenda for common advantage.

Peterborough’s opportunities have been greatly enhanced by the substantial work of the last three years which have put in place a solid base on which to build and to deliver further improvements in quality of life. The significant investment in school buildings, for example, has seen the opening of two brand new schools in the city and substantial improvements in others. Our children have delivered record results at Key Stage Four for the last two years in succession.

Plans and budgets are in place for the extension of higher and further education in the city and work will start on the expansion of Peterborough Regional College as part of the joint venture with Anglia Ruskin University in 2008. In addition, the completion of the Integrated Growth Study – the largest example of a holistic approach to growth ever undertaken in this country – provides us with the evidence base for the physical growth and regeneration of Peterborough.

More exciting plans for the future, which will start to deliver over the coming years, include the development of a new retail centre at Northwestgate and the redevelopment of the existing Queensgate centre. Plans are well advanced for the redevelopment of the South Bank – which will include a large carbon free development – along with the Station Quarter and the nearby Green Quarter. The latter will include state-of-the-art environmental technology and play host to a cluster of environment agencies and businesses.

After leaving my carbon neutral home I’d take the local bus to the national cohesion arena where I would enjoy learning about one of the many cultures that live in Peterborough, watching a dance demonstration and enjoying a range of new food and drink experiences.
Similarly, our aspiration to ensure that no area of Peterborough is amongst the most deprived in the country, clearly set out as one of the breakthrough goals in the 2005 strategy, remains high on our agenda. Here too, work in the last three years has prepared a solid base on which to progress, including the development and delivery of our Investing in Communities Programme, the establishment of the Greater Dogsthorpe Partnership and the development of our Neighbourhood Investment Strategy.

**Peterborough – the challenges**

There is much to look forward to and to build on, but we acknowledge that Peterborough also faces specific challenges that, left untackled, would prevent us from realising our aspiration of a ‘bigger and better Peterborough’.

Many of these challenges are about inequalities. Not least is the continuing gap between life expectancy rates at the local level and nationally. If the people in our city continue to live, on average, shorter and less healthy lives than the national average, then we cannot claim to have delivered a better Peterborough.

Similarly we cannot claim to have created opportunities for all, if we continue to have lower than average attainment at schools and skills levels in the workforce. Whilst there has been some progress in increasing the qualifications of children leaving Peterborough’s schools, there is still room for improvement. Equally we have to improve the skills levels of our working age population, which currently lag considerably behind the national and regional level, if our economy is to prosper in the future.

Crime, too, remains a key indicator of quality of life in Peterborough. Peterborough was identified as a high crime area in 2005 and, despite considerable reductions in crime levels in recent years, there is much work to do if we are to deliver a safer city and to reduce fear of crime.

And as set out clearly in the 2005 Sustainable Community Strategy, we also need to recognise and accommodate the changes to Peterborough’s demography brought about by inward migration and by the changing age profile of our population. We know that we have at least 100 separate languages spoken and 93 different nationalities in Peterborough. We know too that the age profile of Peterborough will change significantly, with a projected 21 per cent increase in children aged 0 to 14 and a 57 per cent increase in those aged over 65. Our challenge is to ensure that as we grow we build strong, supportive communities that take great pride in their city and respect the contribution of all its communities – whatever their race or age.

In five years time I would like my daughter to be able to shop in exciting independent shops that offer something different to the prevalent chain stores, have a wide range of restaurants and bars to meet her friends in, be able to come home late at night on public transport, go out to a range of venues for alternative entertainment – theatre, bands, comedy – to develop her interests through a wide ranging library and museum that attracts large exhibitions with a decent coffee shop/cafè to spend time in.
Peterborough – the ambition

The ambition of this strategy is quite simple. We aim to deliver a bigger and better Peterborough, taking advantage of the inherent opportunities we have and at the same time tackling the challenges we face in order to deliver a higher quality of life for all. In this respect, we believe that the real challenge for the partners will be to ensure that by becoming bigger, Peterborough does indeed become better so that its people can genuinely enjoy and benefit from growth. A key challenge to the partners will be to set out just what those advantages are and why growth is something we can all support and take pride in.

Specifically, the GPP will work to help the people of Peterborough:

- Achieve higher than average grades at schools that have been completely modernised to the highest environmental standards
- Be able to access support and care locally to enable them to maintain independence, should they be affected by disability at any point in their life
- Be protected from abuse, discrimination and harassment
- Be supported in caring for others, including children and disabled/older family members
- Benefit from a nationally acclaimed university, which is a world class centre of environmental technology development
- Benefit from a state-of-the-art hospital and health and social care services
- Benefit from choice and control in relation to health and social care services
- Deliver the highest recycling rates in the country
- Enjoy a vibrant, safe and exciting city centre with diverse retail and leisure opportunities
- Enjoy easy access to large areas of urban and rural open space, which provides opportunities to relax and to be healthy, as well as species-rich homes for vibrant biodiversity
- Enjoy high quality and easily accessible sporting and leisure facilities that contribute to the development of healthy communities and act as a catalyst to bring communities together
- Enjoy life expectancy of at least national average levels, if not greater
- Feel safe as they live, work and play in all areas of Peterborough at all times of day
- Have the skills to find jobs locally in a vibrant economy that delivers higher levels of prosperity across our communities and is an acknowledged leader in the development and deployment of sustainable technologies
- Live in high quality housing that has been built or refurbished to the highest environmental standards
- Live in thriving, cohesive and mutually supportive communities
- Pioneer a balance between rural and urban usage acknowledging that each shares similar issues which differ in scale and scope
- Take pride in a distinct and diverse Peterborough culture and in our acknowledged status as the country’s environment capital
- Take responsibility for adopting and implementing innovative solutions to the issue of climate change
The Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-21 – Vision and Priorities

Vision

A bigger and better Peterborough that grows the right way – and through truly sustainable development* and growth:

● Improves the quality of life of all its people and communities, and ensures that all communities benefit from growth and the opportunities it brings.

● Creates a truly sustainable Peterborough, the urban centre of a thriving sub-regional community of villages and market towns, a healthy, safe and exciting place to live, work and visit, famous as the environment capital of the UK.

*Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

“After a drive to work in free flowing traffic, I’d spend my lunch hour in the many good quality shops or perhaps in one of the restaurants. The city would retain its historic features which would blend alongside the new buildings. After work a visit to the new spa and health club for a spot of relaxation.”

“Living in a village with its own high quality recreational area, state-of-the-art schools, a restaurant and pubs. Proud to be living in Peterborough – not somewhere you travel through.”
Priorities

The partners have identified the following four areas of work, which we believe we need to prioritise in order to achieve our vision:

1. Creating opportunities – tackling inequalities
2. Creating strong and supportive communities
3. Creating the UK’s environment capital
4. Delivering substantial and truly sustainable growth

In addressing these priorities we will deliver a number of key outcomes, as set out below.

Creating opportunities – tackling inequalities

Improving health – so that everyone can enjoy a life expectancy of the national average or above and benefit from speedier access to high quality local health and social care services.

Supporting vulnerable people – so that everyone can access support and care locally to enable them to maintain independence, should they be affected by disadvantage or disability at any point in their lives.

Regenerating neighbourhoods – so that the most deprived communities can achieve their full potential and therefore contribute to and benefit from sustainable economic growth in the Peterborough area.

Improving skills and education – so that the people of Peterborough have better skills and benefit from high quality education from cradle to grave, including through the new university.

Creating strong and supportive communities

Empowering local communities – so that all communities and individuals are engaged and empowered, and take their opportunities to shape the future of Peterborough.

Making Peterborough safer – so that people of all ages and abilities can live, work and play in a prosperous and successful Peterborough without undue fear of crime.

Building community cohesion – so that new communities are integrated into Peterborough and welcomed for the contribution they bring to our city and rural areas.

Building pride in Peterborough – so that we recognise, celebrate and take pride in Peterborough’s achievements, its diverse but shared culture and the exciting opportunities for leisure and relaxation.
Creating the UK’s environment capital

**Making Peterborough cleaner and greener** – so that we become the UK’s greenest city with attractive neighbourhoods, surrounded by beautiful countryside and thriving biodiversity.

**Conserving natural resources** – so that we reduce Peterborough’s overall consumption of the Earth’s natural resources.

**Growing our environmental business sector** – so Peterborough is the natural location for green businesses.

**Increasing use of sustainable transport** – so that Peterborough has the highest proportion of citizens using sustainable transport modes in the UK.

Delivering substantial and truly sustainable growth

**Creating a safe, vibrant city centre and sustainable neighbourhood centres** – so that people have more diverse and improved places to visit and enjoy.

**Increasing economic prosperity** – so that the people of Peterborough can work locally, benefiting from a strong local economy that is an attractive destination for business investment, particularly in higher skilled sectors.

**Building the sustainable infrastructure of the future** – so that we create the conditions for business, service and community prosperity and growth.

**Creating better places to live** – so that we provide better places to live for both new and existing communities, ensuring the highest environmental standards of new building.

We recognise that each of these priorities is mutually supportive and that one of our challenges will be to ensure that we take them forward across all areas of our work, recognising their interdependencies.

“I’d like to see Peterborough as a leading edge city which offers lots to those who live here, work here or visit us – so that people choose Peterborough rather than anywhere else.”
Principles

In working to fulfil the Sustainable Community Strategy the partners will be guided by the following principles:

**Leadership/Ownership** – recognising that the Sustainable Community Strategy is owned and will be delivered by all its partners who have a responsibility to ensure that its vision and priorities are understood within their own organisations and reflected within their own corporate documents and performance management.

**Openness** – recognising that as partners we need to inspire and challenge each other to deliver the vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy and that this will require us to be open and honest in our communication, offering each other constructive feedback on all aspects of our collective performance.

**Partnership working** – recognising that every individual and every organisation has a role to play in delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy and that we need to work together to tackle our priorities and deliver our vision. The GPP will act as the unifying and co-ordinating body for the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

**Engagement** – recognising throughout our work that the Sustainable Community Strategy is a document for every individual and every organisation, and that therefore we need to work hard to involve, listen and respond to people and communities.

**Responsibilities** – recognising that the aspirations in the Sustainable Community Strategy are relevant to all of the people, communities and organisations of Peterborough, who need to be informed, empowered and encouraged to take responsibility for helping deliver it.

**Diversity** – recognising that Peterborough’s diversity is one of its established key strengths and that all our work should promote and celebrate diversity across all our communities and people.

**Prioritisation** – recognising that we cannot achieve all of our goals at once and that we will need to take tough decisions to allocate resources to support the four priorities identified in this Sustainable Community Strategy.

**Delivery** – keeping our promises and delivering what we have committed to.

“After work I catch a gondola ride back into town to do some shopping with the family, catch a movie, and walk home feeling safe and secure on the cleaner streets and open spaces of Peterborough.”
The Sustainable Community Strategy sets out a vision and priorities that will guide the work of the partners and provides a framework within which we will collectively and individually develop strategies and action plans that will help us to tackle specific issues. It should also provide the over-arching themes for the individual plans of each of the partners.

It is not possible to list here all the strategies and documents which should be guided by the Sustainable Community Strategy. However, there are a number of key partnership documents that have been developed within the structures of the GPP that should be seen as supporting the Sustainable Community Strategy itself and in that sense should also be taken into account as partners develop and take forward their own plans.

These include:

- Children and Young People’s Plan
- Community Cohesion Strategy
- Community Safety Strategy
- Cultural Strategy
- Environment Capital Manifesto
- Investing in Communities Strategy
- Neighbourhood Investment Strategy
- Rural Strategy
- Sub-Regional Economic Strategy

"Having recently retired I’m looking forward to going to the marina to watch the boats, meeting up with friends and having lunch in one of the cafés before going on to the museum to see their exhibition of Chinese warriors."
Measurement and Evaluation

The Sustainable Community Strategy sets out a long-term vision and priorities for our partners, working within the framework of the GPP.

It is the role of the GPP to monitor performance against these long-term aspirations and to encourage all the partners to work together to achieve them. We will produce an annual report that sets out objectively our progress. This will be published and discussed at an annual GPP forum and be widely distributed amongst partners.

We will also set out through the Local Area Agreement a series of three-year action plans that will contain specific outcomes and targets that we want to achieve in that timeframe. We will publish quarterly reports on progress against these targets.

These reports will be made publicly available, including through the GPP website - www.gpp-peterborough.org.uk.

The Greater Peterborough Partnership

The Greater Peterborough Partnership is Peterborough’s local strategic partnership. It brings representatives from the public, private, faith, community and voluntary sectors together to work collectively towards the vision and priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

It is important to recognise that the GPP is not an organisation. It does not deliver any of the projects or services that will deliver the improved outcomes we aim for. Rather, its role is to facilitate joined up work and to ensure that the work of the individual partners is targeted at the priorities we have collectively agreed. It can also oversee commissioning of services and projects to help deliver the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy. As such it has an important leadership and performance management role, although clearly all the partner organisations retain their own responsibility and governance arrangements.

The GPP is made up of a main Board which meets quarterly, an Executive that meets monthly and a number of main partnerships that are responsible for the governance and performance management of work within their specific themes of activity. Within the GPP Board, the Executive and the various partnerships are key representatives of the people of Peterborough. Each partnership works to an agenda derived from the Sustainable Community Strategy. Therefore, as our work moves forward, all the relevant organisations and businesses are working to the same agenda. This is a robust model for achieving the improvements that we know the people of Peterborough wish to see over the next few years.

“I’ve finished work at 5pm and met with friends for coffee and a bit of retail therapy (and it’s not even Thursday). While we are sitting outside drinking our latte the city centre is alive with atmosphere and all the buildings look alive and fresh. After our shopping I say goodbye to my friends and catch public transport home directly to the village where I live.”

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To view a copy of the Sustainable Community Strategy Summary or for more information, contact the Greater Peterborough Partnership on 01733 865 042 or visit our website www.gpp-peterborough.org.uk

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