

**CASE STUDY: PETERBOROUGH ENVIRONMENT CITY TRUST**

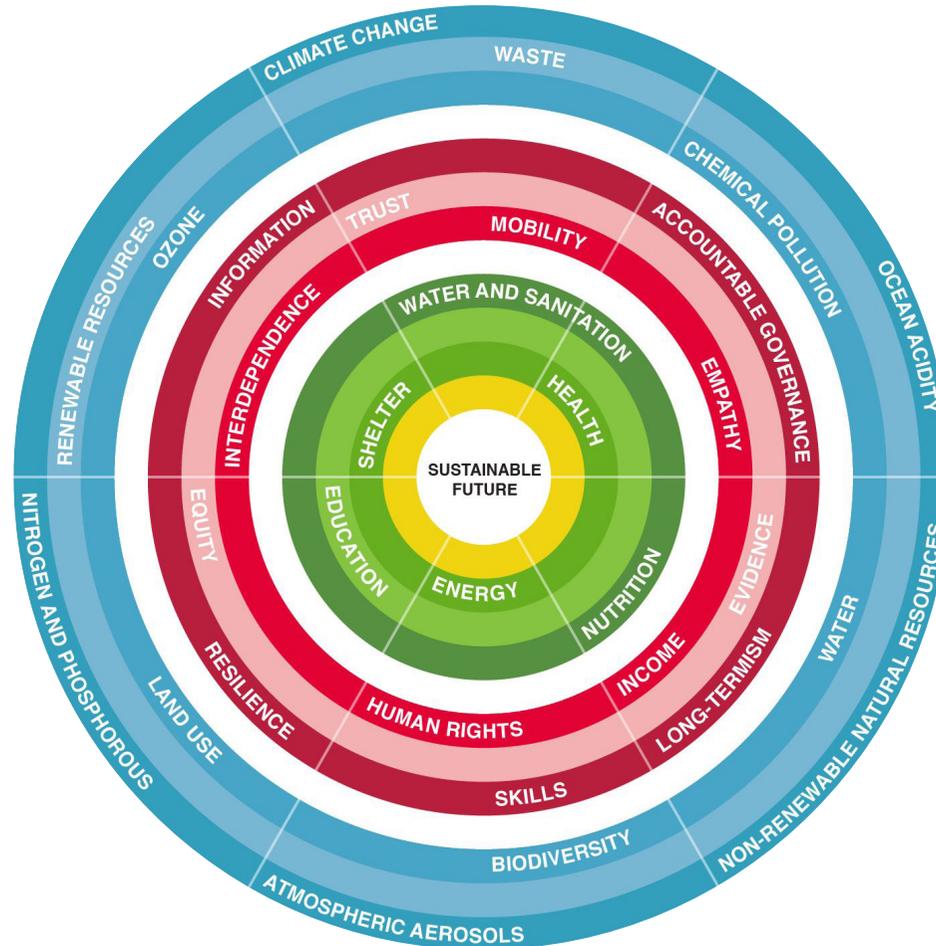
**THE CHALLENGE**

Leaders in Peterborough City Council have set their sights on making the city the environment capital of the UK. Peterborough has already taken significant strides towards sustainable growth and innovation, and now councillors believe it has what it takes to become a true pioneer of urban sustainability.

In April 2013 the council was awarded a Future Cities grant of £3 million from Innovate UK in recognition of its commitment to run an effective, efficient and sustainable city. As part of its strategy, and together with Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT), the council started to develop its Environment Capital Action Plan, outlining how to achieve its forward-thinking sustainability goals.

It was at this point that Rachel Huxley, CEO of PECT, was made aware of Horizons by Innovate UK, co-creator of the online tool.

**HORIZONS FRAMEWORK**



**THE OBJECTIVES**

The key objectives of using the tool for Peterborough City Council were to ‘futureproof’ their Environment Capital Action Plan and test its robustness.

This included identifying sustainability risks and potential opportunities, developing shared understanding and ownership within the team and challenging their current thinking around sustainability issues.

**KEY TO THE FRAMEWORK**

- ENVIRONMENTAL BOUNDARIES
- SOCIAL / POLITICAL FACTORS
- ESSENTIAL NEEDS

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### USING HORIZONS

These goals were tackled through a Forum for the Future-facilitated multi-stakeholder workshop in which attendees – including key business, community and council representatives – discussed what they thought were Peterborough’s key challenges. The group identified nine of the Horizons cards which they believed were critical to Peterborough’s success in becoming a sustainable city: Land Use, Education, Health, Water and Sanitation, Energy, Waste, Non-Renewable Resources, Shelter and Fresh Water. The cards importantly provided a framework to discuss issues as a group rather than starting with everyone’s individual priorities.

“It was perfect timing. The Horizons tool provided us with the opportunity to test the robustness of our plans for the city, critically evaluating them from a range of angles with the help of multiple stakeholders. It was a very comprehensive process and helped us realise where the strengths and weaknesses in our plans were.”

**RACHEL HUXLEY, CEO OF PECT**

### THE LEARNINGS

By dividing these into ‘no brainers’, ‘critical but more thought required’ and ‘critical but not yet thought about’, attendees were challenged to question their choices and assumptions. The council and PECT team were able to evaluate their action plan within the Horizons framework, and have an open, creative and innovative discussion with their key stakeholders. This allowed diverse perspectives to be shared and secured stakeholder buy-in.

### THE IMPACT

The workshop led to some surprising realisations, including a re-evaluation of the plan’s key targets. As the fastest growing city in the UK, one that is susceptible to both droughts and flooding, and has looming transport, landfill and energy issues, the Environment Capital Action Plan and targets had been designed primarily with future environmental limits in mind.

However, by exploring potential future challenges from a social and political perspective, skill development and housing arose as equally pressing issues.

Rachel summarises: “We simply took for granted that the challenges we might face would be related to environmental issues, the effects of climate change, population increase, energy production and so on. It now seems obvious, but one of the biggest issues we face is to do with public trust and gaining buy-in from our key stakeholders, particularly business.”

PECT believes that the workshop has already expanded thinking, enabling different perspectives on the same challenges and provided a robust framework to continue to test their plans for the city.

### SELECTION OF KEY CARDS

