

# PERCEPTION PETERBOROUGH

The Perception Peterborough initiative is supported by Peterborough City Council, Arts Council England, East; East of England Development Agency, Opportunity Peterborough, Sport England; Museums, Libraries and Archives and Heritage Lottery Fund.

These funders made up the steering group, supported by a stakeholders group, whose members are: Greater Peterborough Partnership, Voyager School, Screen East, New Link, English Heritage, Natural England and Government Office East.

Perception Peterborough funders and stakeholders



In addition to this documentation of the Workshops, reference materials prepared for Perception Peterborough are available online from Peterborough City Council.

[www.peterborough.gov.uk](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk)

### **Credits**

*Concept Design, Text:*  
Haring Woods Associates

*Photographs:*  
Haring Woods Associates, Proboscis

*Illustrations:*  
Matthew Huynh

*Storycubes:*  
Workshop Participants

*Graphic Design:*  
Marcia Mihotich

[www.haringwoods.com](http://www.haringwoods.com)

[www.proboscis.org.uk](http://www.proboscis.org.uk)

# What is Perception Peterborough and what did it set out to achieve?

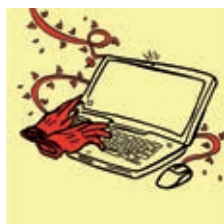
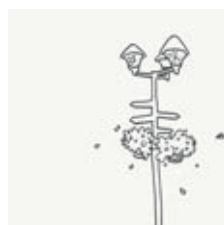
Perception Peterborough is a dynamic and creative visioning project which brought together key local representatives with creative thinkers to develop innovative approaches to the challenges and opportunities facing Peterborough. Initiated by Arts Council England, East, working with Peterborough City Council, the primary local and regional and cultural development agencies, the Perception Peterborough process held up a mirror to the city and its people, to see through others' eyes the assets and challenges and to motivate individuals and agencies to recognise their place in the big picture.

Over 4 days in September 2008, a total of 50 key local representatives and international creative thinkers with over 10 different nationalities came together to develop innovative ideas and approaches to the challenges and opportunities facing Peterborough and its future growth. Within the overarching theme of the Environment, the process focused on three related themes: Growth and development of the built environment; Social cohesion within a climate of migration and Green infrastructure and environmental technologies.

The Steering Group for Perception Peterborough commissioned creative and strategic consultants Haring Woods Associates and artist studio Proboscis to devise and produce a series of interdisciplinary workshops. HWA, with their successful track record of generating ideas which bring together partners, stakeholders, and in due course communities, planners, artists and designers, through a process aptly titled 'CONNECT', collaborated with Proboscis and their international practice of visual and participatory methodologies.

Working together within the creative workshop environment, responding to a series of bespoke, interdependent activities, representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors contributed their expertise, and shared their life experience. This process helped a diverse group of professionals visualise a wide range of ideas and acknowledged that expertise, vision and commitment already exists to achieve essential step change in the city. Discussions following the workshops have begun to identify identify connections and ownership across related projects.

This document introduces the most exciting ideas which emerged over four intense and inspiring days of Perception Peterborough's creative activities, dialogues and debates. These outcomes are the starting point of a long-term, stimulating process for the city.



Peterborough is a long-established settlement on the edge of the Fens, bordering the East Midlands.

It is a city which is characterised by contrasts between a historic city centre with a spectacular Norman Cathedral, an industrial heritage of transport, heavy industry and engineering, and an outer ring of townships, built in the 1960s and 70s as part of the city's New Town status.

Externally Peterborough is well-known as a transport hub, through the train station which is a key route on the East Coast Mainline and road networks which connect the Eastern Region to the rest of the UK. It also has the reputation of being one of the easiest cities to move around in the region.

The city has a current population of 166,000, of which 146,000 live in the Peterborough Urban area, and the rest in the outlying villages.

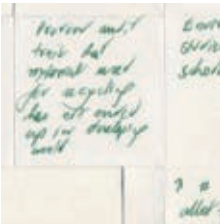
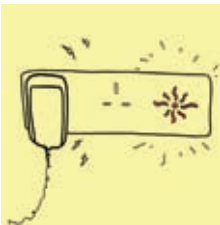
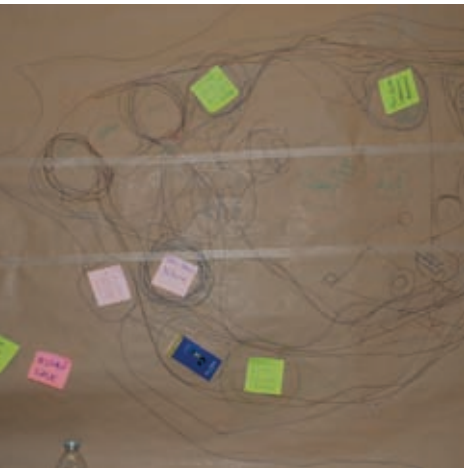
Peterborough has a long history of welcoming newcomers and is regarded as a relatively cohesive city. It is estimated that 10% of the population were born outside the UK and there are 100 languages spoken and 93 different nationalities in the city.

The city has strong environmental assets in terms of green space, but there are issues with the connectivity of the city centre and a number of underutilised assets such as the river, cathedral and public spaces.

The current employment specialisms of the city are food, construction, publishing, auto, finance and leisure, with 30% of city's workforce employed in one of these sectors. The city is developing a specialism in environmental sciences, linked to the development of renewable power, a sector with the potential to grow nationally by 45% over the next 10 years.

One of the UK's four Environment Cities, Peterborough is pursuing a goal to be recognised as the UK's Environment Capital.

Peterborough has committed itself to a very ambitious agenda of growth over the next fifteen years. This growth will entail the building 25,000 new houses, creation of 20,000 new jobs and increase the population by 40,000 over the next 15 years.



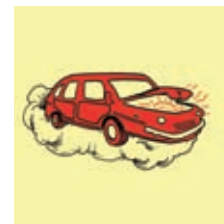
**“Come the civic revolution,  
all eyes will be on  
Peterborough”**

**“Democracy is about people  
being empowered to take  
charge of their own lives and  
share in the powers that  
effect them. That is exactly  
what I see the potential for  
in Peterborough”.**

Benjamin Barber,  
Guardian Society 8.10.2008

**“As a historical British cathedral  
town and transportation hub,  
Peterborough has long played  
a crucial traditional role in an  
interdependent nation founded  
on the economic and cultural  
vitality of its towns and cities.  
As an observer of and  
consultant to the new global  
network of towns and cities  
that comprise our networked  
and interdependent world, I am  
certain that Peterborough’s  
story and emerging economic  
potential afford it limitless  
opportunities for its own  
flourishing as a great English  
township and a small but vital  
hub in the global network.”**

Benjamin Barber on Peterborough





## Workshop Participants

Haring Woods Associates and Proboscis invited the following International participants. Benjamin Barber was the Chair of the International Day, 18 September. Jan-Gustav Strandenaes attended all four sessions, with Ruud Kuijer, Jeff Lederer and Patama Roonrakwit attending both the Wednesday and Thursday sessions.

*Benjamin Barber*  
Senior Distinguished Fellow, Demos, New York City. Founder/Director, CivWorld, USA

*Jan-Gustav Strandenaes*  
ANPED- Northern Alliance for Sustainability; consultant with United Nations Environment Programme. Norway

*Ruud Kuijer*  
Artist. The Netherlands

*Jeff Lederer*  
General Manager, School of Architecture, University of Waterloo. Canada

*Patama Roonrakwit*  
Architect, Director and Founder of CASE – Community Architecture for Shelter and Environment. Thailand

The Workshop participants, listed here in alphabetical order, were selected for their their professional expertise and creative practices from recommendations by the Perception Peterborough Stakeholders and Steering Group members, Haring Woods Associates and Proboscis.

*Bill Agnew*  
Business Liaison Executive, Opportunity Peterborough

*Javed Ahmed*  
Youth Access Point Manager, Peterborough Young Peoples' Service

*Richard Astle*  
Director, Greater Peterborough Partnership

*Gillian Beasley*  
Chief Executive, Peterborough City Council

*Steve Bowyer*  
Director of Strategic Growth, Opportunity Peterborough

*Paul Butcher*  
Senior Ethnic Minority Achievement Consultant Learning and Skills Children's Services

*Bev Carter*  
Associate Consultant for Partners in Change

*Sister Mary Clare*  
St. Peters and All Souls Church

*Hugh Cripps*  
Chief Executive, PECT

*Holly Draper*  
Head of PR and Communications, Opportunity Peterborough

*Max Dixon*  
Policy Officer for Noise, Greater London Authority

*Myria Georgiou*  
Senior Lecturer in International Communications; Director of Postgraduate Studies – Leeds University

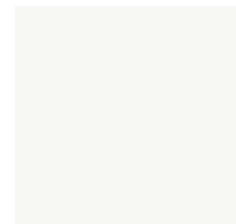
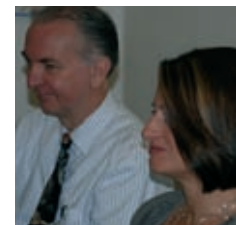
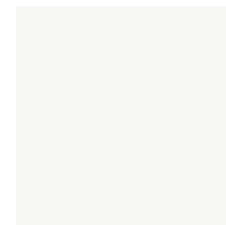
*Nick Goodman*  
Environment Capital Officer, Greater Peterborough Partnership

*Paul Goodwin*  
Director of the Re-Visioning Black Urbanism Project based at the Centre for Urban and Community Research, Goldsmiths, University of London

*Moir Green*  
Deputy Headteacher, Voyager School, Peterborough

*David Haley*  
Ecological artist

*Kevin Harris*  
Consultant, Local Level



*Usman Haque*

Artist, Architect and Director of  
Haque+Design

*John Holdich*

Former Cabinet Member for Housing,  
Regeneration and Economic  
Development, Peterborough City  
Council

*Jawaid Khan*

Cohesion Manager,  
Greater Peterborough Partnership

*Sally Labern*

Artist

*Maheebub Ladha*

Director, Peterborough Racial Equalities  
Council

*Osbert Lancaster*

Director, Footprint Consulting

*Gosia Lasote*

New Link Resource Centre Manager

*Councillor Lee*

Cabinet Member for Community  
Services, Peterborough City Council

*Loraine Leeson*

Artist

*Mick Leggett*

Chief Executive, Cross Keys Homes

*Cat Moore*

General Manager/ Producer, New  
International Encounter

*John Newling*

Artist, Peterborough historic core  
redevelopment commission

*Darryl Newport*

Director, Sustainability Research  
Institute, University of East London

*Joseph Oliver*

Director, BASH Creations

*Richard Pierre-Davis*

Co-founder, Mongrel, arts collective

*Simon Read*

Artist

*David Reavell*

Director, O&H Properties Ltd

*Greer Roberts*

Strategy Manager, East of England  
Development Agency

*Dr Katharine Sarikakis*

Institute of Communication Studies,  
University of Leeds

*Ronnie Shahmoon*

Owner, O&H Properties Ltd

*Phil Shephard*

Intelligence Director, Centre for  
Sustainable Engineering

*Wayne Stimson*

Eco Arts Projects

*Jean Stowe*

Freelance horticultural writer

*David Stutting*

Development Manager,  
Opportunity Peterborough

*Peter Thornton*

Director, External Relations, Arts  
Council England, East

*Kevin Tighe*

Head of Culture, Peterborough City  
Council

*Natalie Tobutt*

Regional Policy Adviser East of England,  
English Heritage

*Chris Williams*

Managing Director, Peterborough  
Energy Park

### **Haring Woods Associates team**

*Michael Woods*, Senior Partner

*Eileen Woods*, Senior Partner

*Tony Beckwith*, Senior Consultant

*Adriana Marques*, Senior Producer

*Joanna Baxendale*, Project Manager

*Celia Makin-Bell*, Consultant

### **Proboscis Team**

*Giles Lane*

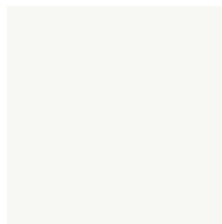
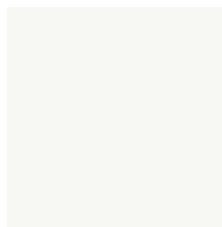
*Alice Angus*

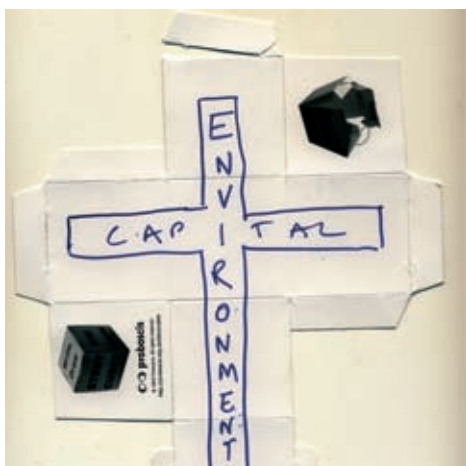
*Orlagh Woods*

*Karen Martin*

*Sarah Thelwall*

*Niharika Hariharan*









## Perception Peterborough Workshops

The Perception Peterborough workshops were held between September 15-18 2008 in Peterborough Museum, one of the city's most popular cultural venues.

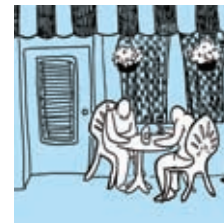
There were three specific themes for which the participants for each day were selected in order to generate informed discussions. Each morning, artist studio Proboscis facilitated creative activities: social mapping, exploring participants' connections to each other and to Peterborough, storycubes, a tactile thinking tool for exploring relationships and narratives, and three dimensional mapmaking to visualise concepts for Peterborough's future. Questions set to trigger and challenge ideas were: What would the features of an environmental capital be? What will it mean to be the environmental capital?

Following lively debates over lunch, Haring Woods Associates facilitated the afternoon sessions via their CONNECT methodology of strategic debate, distilling and relating the outcomes from the mornings' activities.

The fourth day, entitled 'Applying the Global Perspective', was devised to bring together international creative, strategic, environmental and political expertise to build on the work of the previous days. Chair for the day was international political theorist and best selling author Benjamin Barber, with Jan-Gustav Strandenaes, consultant with the United Nations, as the concluding keynote speaker. Ruud Kuijer, Jeff Lederer and Patama Roonrakwit all contributed specific relevant experience.

The notes for each day represent highlights of complex group activities and discussions and starting points for action.

## Realising culture as a key driver for growth



## A connected city

Key to the realisation of the growth of Peterborough is the definition of a shared vision for the city centre, satellite urban areas and the villages. This vision will recognise their interdependence and begin to define the role that each plays.

□ By connecting citizens with a shared vision and goals that they believe in, a profound culture change can happen – from “I” to “we”. We will honour the rights of people to make their own choices, in a context of community responsibility. We will build time and space to work with local communities and initiate discussions outside the traditional cycles of local elections.

□ ‘Homes not houses’ – a potentially significant model of financing for developing new communities in and around Peterborough and generating long term cultural and community investment.

□ Enhancing the connections between the outside and inside of the city. There is a lack of both perceived and physical pathways within the city and between the city and the townships and the rural areas beyond it. People want to travel in a range of directions in the city, not always towards the centre. Sustainable development will create a balance between local neighbourhoods with their own identity and a vibrant city centre.

□ Unlike many cities of its size, Peterborough has fantastic assets in its underused public spaces. The river is an obvious example.

□ As well as a physically connected city, there is a need to explore how the city’s various populations connect together and the positive impact of demographic change. Explore the opportunities that people of all ages can give the city and how they can be assets for the future, rather than obstacles or problems. Need to build on positive attitudes about the city.

□ The cultural health of a community is related to the ecological health of that community.

□ Think local as well as global and keep wealth and the social capital of local people within the city and greater Peterborough, grow local talent and develop a connected local economy.



## Homes not houses





# Education

The new university proposed for Peterborough offers considerable opportunities to form an integrated educational system for the city, contributing extensively to nurturing talent and the revitalisation of the city centre.

A university needs to be integrated into the life of the city, welcoming and open to all, providing opportunities for local people as well as bringing new talent to the area. It needs to learn lessons from other university cities to ensure 'town and gown' issues, to ensure students are an integral part of the community

Peterborough can champion a cutting-edge environment curriculum, integrated across the education system developing and sharing knowledge and practical skills for future environmentally responsible generations. This should build positive participation in the environment city agenda from the outset, across the diverse populations of the city

A university capable of providing flexible courses and degrees, responding quickly to the needs of the students and the community

The university should be positioned to provide the talent to take forward environmental research, sustainability, finance and community needs attracting businesses and creating new jobs in the city

The university campus should be the city itself – providing a real catalyst for the development of the city centre, bringing new partners and opportunities to Peterborough.





# The UK's Environment Capital

Achieving the status of UK Environment Capital would provide a distinctive focus for Peterborough's growth agenda, defining it as a liveable city where people choose to live and work, and which engenders pride and ownership in its citizens.

❑ The visioning sessions all endorsed Peterborough's ambition to achieve Environment Capital status and recognised that it is crucial to work with local people to define, secure and maintain this status. It cannot be achieved solely by top-down initiatives. There is a need to identify and support productive citizens who will drive it forward

❑ The Environment Capital aspiration is one that demands enterprise, innovation and education. In order for the city to be seen as globally significant it must invest in and implement green technology and educate its citizens from an early age

❑ Becoming the Environmental Capital could make real changes in the behaviour of people and organisations. There is a need to ensure that people understand and buy into the need to make change on an individual level

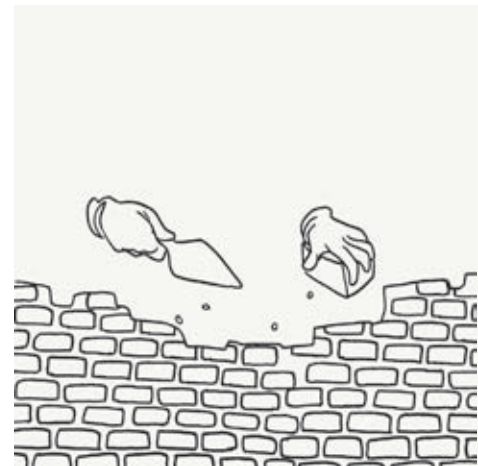
❑ Culture will play an essential role in delivering Peterborough's Environment Capital. It can provide spaces to inform people, generate debate and celebrate the achievements of the city

❑ Creating a balance in the city – encouraging citizens to create a balance between living an environmentally sensitive life versus human passions and consumer pressures. Using and adapting existing assets as well as bringing in innovation and new products

❑ In a city the size of Peterborough, it should be possible to deliver a step change in behaviour by developing an environmentally responsible free public transport which could be a model for the rest of the world

❑ Development of Permaculture and the potential of a local economy – could this help to inform Peterborough's sense of place? Allotments, green walls and roofs all embracing a permaculture concept

❑ Bring back industry to the city centre to reduce carbon emissions. This will contribute to the ebb and flow between the townships and villages and develop the centre as a natural focus for the city.



## A knowledge bank and a new metric

A new type of knowledge bank could be a long term mechanism to help Peterborough continue and expand the Perception Peterborough visioning process. The bank would have a strong research and development function, intrinsically linked to the delivery elements of the growth agenda. This concept would generate, share and disseminate new ideas about the public realm – accessible, usable and valuable to all.

❑ In turn, the knowledge bank could be a vehicle for the city to actively engage with its communities in the delivery process, encouraging civic awareness, responsibility and interdependence.

❑ A physical and virtual space to continue visioning and debate where people from a range of backgrounds can work together

❑ Where the work of national and international theorists can link with delivery professionals on a local level, to inspire those at delivery level to innovate and take calculated risks

❑ A space to develop initiatives and realise projects which are experimental, risk taking and innovative, with local identity and ownership

❑ Projects and innovations realised with the Perception Peterborough 'brand' could gain national and international profile with the potential to be 'saleable product' from the knowledge bank

❑ A 'mobile ideas store' – a place where local people can record their ideas, to be accessed and used by local decision-makers and leaders. A way for connected and concerned citizens to gain confidence that their voice is heard generating more ownership of the development of the city

❑ A new type of metric would create a true understanding of social / cultural profit and loss, in both the short and long term

❑ A new metric that recognises the value of 'sense of place', or the 'soft' elements of our environment. What is the value of the river, the market square, and the village post office in relation to that sense of place?

❑ Developing a new layer of 'cultural values' – would help inform our present master planning and decision making processes.



**A 'knowledge bank' –  
Where society's  
cultural assets  
are deposited  
as ideas**

## Peterborough as global role model

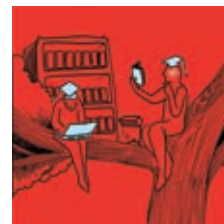
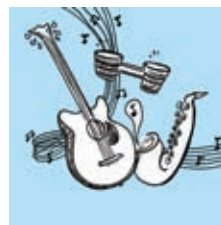
### The United Nations World Urban Forum as a goal for 2010

Peterborough needs to celebrate its assets, innovative ideas and commitment to responding to rapid changes in the economy, education, environment and migration. Throughout the Perception Peterborough workshops, national and international participants were excited by the prospects described by Jan-Gustav Strandenaes, consultant to the United Nations Environment programme, for Peterborough to present itself in the global context.

Perception Peterborough enabled people from a range of sectors to come together and identify their shared goals. The challenge is to find a way for Peterborough's stakeholders to work collaboratively to deliver these shared goals, achieving added value through a more efficient and effective cooperative approach that focuses resources on the best shared ideas.

The United Nations World Urban Forum has a mandate to work with governments and principalities to deliver environmental sustainability and aims to identify best practice models, particularly those focusing on housing and development which it sees as key environment priorities. 'The World Urban Forum was established by the United Nations to examine one of the most pressing issues facing the world today: rapid urbanisation and its impact on communities, cities, economies and policies.'

Peterborough City Council and its partners should consider working towards attending the United Nations World Urban Forum in 2010 to present its work within this exceptional gathering of leaders from around the world. This goal can help galvanise the full range of public, private, community and voluntary agencies to chart an achievable schedule, focus the city's work, define its achievements, and demonstrate best practice to other growing cities around the world.



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