



RSA launches new partnership to boost active citizenship within Peterborough

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The RSA today launches *Citizen Power: Peterborough* an innovative partnership that aims to create active citizenship within Peterborough so that local people feel engaged with their community and can help to shape the city in which they live.

Working in partnership with Peterborough City Council and the Arts Council the RSA will implement a wide range of projects that will help citizens become more self-reliant, resilient, altruistic and creative. *Citizen Power: Peterborough* will help Peterborough overcome some of the local challenges the city faces around drug-related crime, educational attainment and levels of engagement and trust amongst citizens.

The project aims to provide a blueprint for how communities can respond to economic, environmental and social challenges that could be used and applied in other cities across the UK. In its accompanying report, *Citizen Power in Peterborough*, also published today, the RSA argues that with a decade of significant public sector cuts on the horizon, delivering public services that meet the needs of the common good will require mobilising the collective power of people.

Commenting on the launch, Chief Executive of the RSA, Matthew Taylor said:

“Citizen Power is a far-reaching and innovative programme of work exploring the relationship between place and identity. This new and exciting partnership between the RSA, Peterborough City Council and Arts Council, England will provide new ways of cultivating civic capabilities, attachment, participation and innovation at a local level. This report offers a challenging vision of future citizenship that we will need to work hard to realise.”

Peterborough City Council Leader, Marco Celeste said:

“This Citizen Power project supports our local initiatives – such as the creation of neighbourhood councils – to involve our residents in grass-roots decision-making processes. Peterborough is committed to substantial and truly sustainable growth and the Citizen Power programme will encourage the whole community to contribute to and share in the benefits that will come from that growth.”

Arts Council Executive Director, East and South East, Andrea Stark said:

“We are excited to be involved in this ground breaking project with the RSA and Peterborough City Council. Citizen Power in Peterborough will show how great art can inspire dynamic citizenship in the city.”

The following projects will be undertaken as part of Citizen Power:

1. **Sustainable citizenship campaign:** This project will use theories of behaviour change and behavioural economics to combat climate change at a neighbourhood level and help people build more environmentally-friendly lives.

2. **Arts and social change project:** Through the arts we aim to find *creative* solutions to social problems and forge a cultural identity that people in Peterborough can be proud of. The programme will include interdisciplinary arts events, arts residencies, and a cultural festival with high profile international and local artists working alongside local people and pave the way for the development of a sustainable arts infrastructure for the city.

3. **Empowerment through social media:** We will be using social media to mobilise the community, ensure that citizens can keep up with project progress and make decision-making as transparent as possible.

4. **Civic health audit:** The civic health audit is a new tool we are developing for measuring the civic health of a community and will be trialled in Peterborough. The audit brings together user-generated questionnaires, social network analysis and secondary data analysis.

5. **User-centred drug services:** We will be working with drug users to design services that tackle dependency thereby empowering some of the most excluded citizens in Peterborough.

6. **Area Based Curriculum:** This project will involve local institutions and residents in education, to develop a curriculum that has a sense of ‘place’ and make Peterborough a learning city. Specific to Peterborough the curriculum will draw on the whole city as a learning resource and will promote engagement and civic awareness among young people.

Notes to editors

1. **For more information contact Luke Robinson**
2. To speak to Sam McLean, who is leading the Citizen Power programme and author of its flagship report, *Citizen Power in Peterborough*, please ring 020 7451 9440 or email sam.mclean@rsa.org.uk.
3. The launch of the RSA's *Citizen Power: Peterborough* will take place at the RSA on 8th March 2010 with speakers including Matthew Taylor (Chief Executive, RSA), David Halpern (former Chief Analyst in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit and author of *The Hidden Wealth of Nations*), Irene Lucas (Director General of the Department for Communities and Local Government), and the leading artist Bob and Roberta Smith.