



Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities held at the Forli Room - Town Hall on 22 March 2010

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors D Over (Chairman), G Nawaz (Vice-Chairman), M Collins, B Rush and W Trueman

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Jenny Harris, Lawyer - Property
Mike Heath, Commercial Services Director
Leonie McCarthy, Neighbourhood Manager
Frazer Chapman, Senior Recreation Officer
Alex Daynes, Democratic Services

1. Apologies for Absence

None.

2. Declaration of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2010 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. Responses to Recommendations Made by the Commission

The Commission received a report informing it of the responses to recommendations made at the previous meeting. The commission noted the report and made the following comments:

- Arthur Mellows Village College was shown to be a village based school catering mainly for village based children;
- Performance of urban or rural based children at the school is largely the same;
- 7 April was the end of the thermal handgun survey date due to seasonal temperature changes;
- Carbon reduction measures in schools is good in the rural areas;
- The effective start of the 20mph speed limit outside rural schools would be the end of the summer term but prosecutions could only be successful if travelling over 30mph as current legislation does not account for 20mph speed limits.

5. Play Provision

The Commission received a report outlining the provision of play facilities in rural areas. The Commission was requested to scrutinise the current provision and make recommendations towards its improvement. The commission was advised of highlights in the report including:

- The number of play facilities has been reduced but standards have improved;
- Section 106 monies and Lottery funding can be used to develop play facilities;
- Some play areas are currently in consultation for improvements and developments including in Glinton and Eye.

Questions were asked and responses given including:

- The Council insurers, Zurich, has given the play area in Thorney, referred to in the report as Thorney Park A, a clean bill of health and there were no issues of concern.
- There is a programme of development for rural areas;
- Work is undertaken with developers to ensure play equipment from S106 monies is more robust and long lasting;
- A lower cost for equipment might see a higher cost in maintenance;
- The Neighbourhood Manager, Citywide, offered to join the Enjoy and Achieve Partnership and report back to the North West 1 area on potential developments.

The Commission recommended that:

1. a future report from the Neighbourhood Manager City Wide be received following consultation with the Enjoy and Achieve Partnership and that it makes further recommendations following this information.

6. Business, Employment and Training

The Commission received a report outlining the work that has been undertaken to improve business, employment and training provision in rural areas. The Commission was requested to:

1. Form a subgroup, facilitated by the North West Neighbourhood Development officers, to identify skills, employment and training needs and existing provision in rural areas;
2. Request the North West 1 Neighbourhood Development officers identify, map and record past, present and future employment and training opportunities;
3. Seek opportunities to identify gaps in provision and how to address this;
4. Work with Parish Councils and local residents to identify need and ambition of rural economy;
5. Request the North West Area management team undertake employment and training research and engagement activities for the Rural Communities.

The Neighbourhood Manager City Wide advised members that little evidence could be found of work targeted specifically for rural areas and that training and development opportunities were mainly focused in more deprived urban areas. Comments from the members of the commission included:

- More affordable houses to encourage sustainable communities are needed;
- Country pursuits need to be promoted;
- Hospitality industry needs better promotion including shops, cafés and pubs;
- Educational establishments should hold evening courses in villages and local schools;
- Women's Centre to encourage rural base to businesses especially if based at home;
- Establish holiday homes at local nature sites.

The Commission recommended that:

1. the Neighbourhood Management teams begin work on identifying the need and current provision in rural areas;
2. an article be placed in Your Peterborough and local newsletters as part of information gathering regarding rural based businesses.

7. Forward Plan

The Commission received the latest version of the Forward Plan and was asked to identify any items it wished to consider at a future meeting.

The Commission identified the Supporting People Programme, and the Automatic Number Plate Recognition System for future agenda items.

8. Date of the next Meeting

The date of the next meeting would be confirmed following full Council on 14 April 2010.

CHAIRMAN
7.00 - 7.45 pm