

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL
COMMUNITIES HELD AT THE BOURGES / VIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL
ON 16 JULY 2012**

Present: Councillors D Over (Chair), D Lamb (Vice Chair), A Sylvester, D Sanders, D McKean and JR Fox

Officers Present: Richard Godfrey, ICT and Transactional Services Partnership Manager
Heather Darwin, Business Transformation Manager
Simon Machen, Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services
Steve Winstanley, Team Leader (Research and Information)
Gary Goose, Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager
Laura Almond, Assistant Neighbourhood Manager
Leonie McCarthy, Social Inclusion Manager
Dania Castagliuolo, Governance Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Murphy. Councillor Sylvester attended as substitute. Apologies were also received from Councillor Harrington and Councillor John Fox attended as substitute.

2. Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 June 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2012, were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. Update on Superfast Broadband in Rural Areas

The report provided members with an update on the work being undertaken as part of the Connecting Cambridgeshire to Superfast Broadband Project.

The following key points were highlighted:

- Superfast Broadband would help to boost growth and create jobs, improve health and make life easier, learn new skills for success and support people who needed it.
- The roll out of better broadband services was due to begin in 2013 although it was too early to predict which areas would benefit first as these decisions would form part of the procurement process.
- The Commission were requested to note that the criteria for Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) funding highlighted that the implementation would focus on the areas deemed to be 'white areas' by BDUK to be the areas most likely to benefit from the changes. Although there was no guarantee where the infrastructure improvements would be across the country, some rural areas would be in the 10% not covered by the project to access superfast broadband.

- The project was set to deliver broadband speeds of 25MB per second across 90 percent of Cambridgeshire between now and 2015, the remaining 10 percent of the county would be looking at receiving a minimum of 2MB per second.
- There were two main arms of the project
 1. The demand registration piece
 2. The procurement of Broadband and of the supplier
- The demand registration hit 10,000 registrations. The demand registration would run through to December when the procurement exercise finished and the total figure estimated for registrations is 20,000
- The project had gone out to tender and five suppliers had passed the initial prequalification questionnaire stage
- An event was held to invite suppliers in and talk to them about what was expected from them and explain what the vision was in order to give them a chance to decide whether they wanted to proceed with their bids and all five wanted to continue
- The next stage would be an initial submission from the potential suppliers, which would be received at the end of July followed by a competitive dialogue phase then a supplier should be appointed by December to undertake the project

The following comments, observations and questions were raised:

- Members queried what figure for the demand register would be presented when going out to tender. *The ICT and Transactional Services Partnership Manager advised the Commission that the figure would be around 15,000 to 20,000.*
- Members were advised that the project was to be superfast broadband in the rural areas as well as urban areas and everybody would be on 2MB as a minimum.
- Members requested a break down of the 10,000 registrations by rural areas and Village. *The ICT and Transactional Services Partnership Manager informed the Commission that he would ask the team working on the demand registration for a breakdown of these figures although the actual number of registrations for Peterborough was only 751.*
- Members were concerned that because of the low number of registrations Peterborough would not receive the superfast broadband. *Members were advised that Peterborough would receive superfast broadband as the aim of the project was to upgrade 90 percent of Cambridgeshire.*
- The Chairman asked the Commission for any suggestions they had to advertise the need for superfast broadband in Peterborough. *The Business Transformation Manager informed the Commission that notification had already gone out to all schools and Parish Councils including the website address and how to register.*
- The ICT and Transactional Services Project Manager advised members that the number of registrations was simply to prove that there was a demand for superfast broadband in Cambridgeshire this would not affect which parts of Cambridgeshire would be issued with superfast broadband by the supplier.
- Members were concerned that without a high number of registrations from Peterborough the supplier would not feel it necessary to supply Peterborough with superfast broadband as they would not be gaining any business there. *The ICT and Transactional Services Project Manager advised the Commission that the supplier who would deliver the superfast broadband would not necessarily deliver it based on the number of registrations as this would be discussed as part of the competitive dialogue. He also informed the commission that the state funding allocated to this project currently only allowed the superfast broadband to go out to white areas that do not have very good broadband and this would initially exclude the City centres of both Cambridge and Peterborough..*
- Members queried how prioritisation was going to be carried out. *The ICT and Transactional Services Project manager advised the Commission that this query could not be answered until proposals from the companies had been seen and the competitive dialogue had been completed*
- Members commented on the importance of superfast broadband for silver surfers as they may not have had the ability to go out to do their shopping therefore they could do it

online and suggested they approached pension organisations and churches to inform them of superfast broadband and the requirement for registrations

- The Social Inclusion Manager informed the Commission that with the help of the Business Transformation Manager and the ICT and Transactional Services Project Manager they could draw up a plan for ways to advertise the need for superfast broadband in Peterborough and this could be presented at September's meeting
- Members questioned how they were going to obtain the interest of elderly residents in Rural Areas. *The Social Inclusion Manager advised members that a lot of work was currently being carried out with the voluntary sector and organisations such as Age Concern UK and care organisations. This would be covered in the plan.*

ACTION AGREED

The Commission requested that:

1. The ICT and Transactional Services Partnership Manager provide a breakdown of the number of people that have registered for superfast broadband from rural areas.
2. The Social Inclusion Manager work with the ICT and Transactional Services Partnership Manager and the Business Transformation Manager to write an action plan to promote the need for people in Peterborough to register for superfast broadband. This to include all diverse groups. To be presented to the Commission at a meeting in September.

5. Funding for Rural Areas

The report was presented to the Commission at the request of the Chairman who expressed concern that rural areas within the city could have been missing out on funding opportunities.

The report provided the Commission with details of funders whom whilst not having a specific rural community focus, would fund projects in rural areas providing they met the funder's criteria.

The following comments, observations and questions were raised:

- Members queried whether the Funding Central magazine was in the public domain and if not could they send copies to voluntary organisations. *The Business Transformation Manager advised members that Funding Central was in the public domain and could be passed on to voluntary organisations.*
- The Social Inclusion Manager agreed with the Commission that she would work with voluntary Organisations when applying for funding as this would avoid an influx of funding applications and requests.
- Members commented on how useful and informative the Funding Central magazine was and asked for an updated copy and if a copy could be emailed to the Commission on a monthly basis. *The Business Transformation Manager advised the Commission that the latest copy of the Funding Central Magazine would be emailed to each of them and to Parish Councillors monthly.*

ACTION AGREED

1. The Commission agreed that the Social Inclusion Manager worked with Peterborough Communities Voluntary Sector with regard to funding applications.
2. The Commission requested that the Funding Central Magazine be emailed to all Members of the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities and all Parish Councillors. The most recent issue to be emailed as soon as possible.

6. Overview of Emerging Changes to Planning Obligations (S106/POIS) and Details about a Proposed New Development Levy for Peterborough (Community Infrastructure Levy – CIL)

The purpose of the report was to provide a high level overview of the emerging changes to the way developer contributions were collected through the planning system as a result of regulatory changes to the existing approach. The proposal was to ultimately adopt a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) although a number of stages of consultation and an independent examination would be required before the council could achieve this.

A CIL Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule was currently being prepared and would be reported to Cabinet on 24 September 2012 for approval for the purpose of public consultation. The document and supporting papers relating to it would be in the public domain after 4 September 2012 therefore the report was used to brief members in general terms on the CIL and by ramification changes to changes to the Planning Obligations system. A full report on CIL would be presented to the Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee on 6 September 2012.

The following key issues were highlighted:

- Whilst optional, choosing not to adopt a CIL would severely constrain Peterborough's ability to secure developer contributions towards infrastructure going forwards.
- Whilst a CIL is effectively a new form of 'tax on development, it was not strictly additional to existing requirements but rather it was partially replacing existing mechanisms, namely POIS. It would be set according to careful modelling and research in to what is technically viable and genuinely necessary to accommodate our growth targets without making development across the district unviable. This would be tested through an independent examination of proposals.
- It was legally and morally justified to seek to secure contributions for shared infrastructure from the private development sector since we all utilise it and benefit from its provision.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members queried whether a meeting would be acceptable with a Parish Councillor who would be representing all Parish Councils to discuss ideas of what villages would like to see for future infrastructure. *The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services advised members that this was already happening within the Community Action Plans and there would not be another consultation with Parishes and communities to ask what developments they would like as this work had already been completed. When the list of Community Infrastructure and the preliminary draft charging schedule had been completed there would be a round of Parish Council meetings to explain CIL to them.*
- The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services highlighted that requests for CIL funding would need to be evidence based as they would be tested through an independent examination. However there may be projects that would not be eligible for CIL funding but could possibly be obtained from other sources of corporate funding
- Members were concerned that plans would be agreed by the Council which villages would not be happy with. *Members were advised that parishes would be able to have their say as long as the requests were evidence based also there would be five percent of CIL money given to communities to spend on what they liked.*
- Members queried when the meetings with the Parish Councils would take place. *The Team Leader for Research and Information informed members that the earliest for this meeting would be in the Autumn*
- Members suggested that only five percent of CIL money going to local communities was a bit modest. *The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services informed members that the overall tab currently stood at 1.5 billion pounds to 2026 and development would not pay for all of the infrastructure costs therefore there would always be external funding sources for other projects.*

- Members were concerned that the Parish Councils did not understand the importance of CIL and had been confused by presentations at Neighbourhood Committee meetings. *The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services informed members that the presentations that had recently taken place at the Neighbourhood Committee meeting was for a recent consultation on the Statement of Community Involvement which had been completely separate to CIL.*
- Members requested information on the process of completing the lists for CIL and what evidence base was expected. *Members were informed that there was an evidence list already in existence outlining the infrastructure required for growth in the city which had already been tested through the process. The evidence list supported the Planning Obligations Implementation Scheme (POIS) and was background to the core strategy putting Peterborough City Council ahead of most Local Authorities as Peterborough City Council had not had a roof tax or a development tariff system in place which was beneficial for the city. Peterborough had been engaging with communities and a number of other services e.g. Vivacity, Ambulance Service, Police, Fire Service and statutory undertakers as they all have defined infrastructure needs.*
- Members queried what would happen to the remaining POIS money that was placed into a pool to be used on Neighbourhood infrastructure. Certain villages had to bid for POIS money left in the pot when they required more urgent infrastructure due to growth. *The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services advised the Commission that was the Council's policy that had been agreed by full council.*
- Members queried who decided where the money would be spent. *The Head of Planning Transport and Engineering Services informed that members would decide where the money was spent within the community.*
- Members queried whether once POIS had moved to CIL decisions could be changed on plans for infrastructure. *The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services advised members that CIL had more flexibility on what the money was spent on.*
- Members were concerned that the Town and Country Planning Act stated that any funding granted from POIS to a specific area/development was to be spent in that area. *The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services informed members that effectively the Town and Country Planning Act stated that it must be proved that the money required through section 106 was necessary to complete the development.*
- Members were concerned that Neighbourhoods were losing out as they were unable to use development funding until the budget they have through Neighbourhoods had run out. Was this going to change. *The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services stated that this was the Council's Policy which members had decided and agreed to and that the £25,000 of neighbourhood budget was effectively funded by CIL*

ACTION AGREED

The Commission noted the report.

7. Update on Community Action Plans

The purpose of this report was for the Commission to note and update progress on the Community Action Plans.

Members of the Commission were asked to note the contents of the report and confirm their support or otherwise for the purpose of the Community Action Plans and their function within the structures of the Neighbourhood Committees, local communities, the council and wider partner service delivery.

The following key points were highlighted:

- Three Assistant Neighbourhood Managers had been appointed for each of the three Neighbourhood areas.

- The aim was to make sure that the Community Action Plans developed for rural neighbourhoods recognised the unique nature of the rural community which would be different from the other Community Action Plans.
- Concerns that the current Community Action Plan for the North and West area were not entirely suitable for each village.
- The draft Community Action Plans were written in March 2012 but were still a working progress.
- Each area needed to log developments that were needed in the area and prioritise the priority projects.
- Neighbourhood Delivery Team meetings were going to be set up in villages for officers to discuss rural issues and monitor the projects within the Community Action Plans
- The Assistant Neighbourhood Manager would be visiting Northampton District Council to talk to them about their Community Action Plans and work from their template.
- The Assistant Neighbourhood Manager would be based within the rural areas to help the Neighbourhood Management Team become more accessible specifically whilst trying to implement the Community Action Plans and Community LED Plans.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members commented that they would prefer that officers were based in the office coordinating the team that would produce the evidence for what would be required within the community action plans.
- Members were concerned that one of the issues in the past had been ward data from Census information . The age demographic profile needed to be collected as per the parish not the ward. *The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager advised Members that this issue would be considered as this was one of the distinct natures of rural areas*
- Members queried how many Community Action Plans had been received so far out of the twenty four wards. *The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager advised Members that they had received seven Community Action Plans matching the Neighbourhood Committee areas and there would be twenty four ward profiles completed*
- Members queried how the very small villages would get involved. *The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager advised that these were the type of issues that needed to be addressed in rural areas. The Assistant Neighbourhood Manager would need to be contacted in order to discuss a mechanism of incorporating the views of the very small villages.*

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report.

8. Forward Plan

The latest version of the Forward Plan, showing details of the key decisions that the Leader of the Council believed the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would be making over the next four months, was received.

The Commission noted the Forward Plan and was advised that the latest forward plan for August to November was to be published on 17 July 2012. The Chairman therefore requested that the most up to date copy be emailed to him when published.

ACTION AGREED

A Copy of the latest forward plan to be sent to the Chairman.

9. Work Programme

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2012/13 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

ACTION AGREED

1. To confirm the work programme for 2012/13 and the Governance Officer to include any additional items as requested during the meeting.
2. The Commission also requested that:
 - The Provision of Primary Care report scheduled for September is to include within the report what the impact of the change over from Primary Care Trusts to Local Authorities in April 2013 was going to be regarding carers in rural areas.
 - The Affordable Housing report to be presented at the November meeting of the Commission should include an explanation on how the decision was made to have affordable housing in rural areas.
3. The Commission agreed that the Social Inclusion Manager provide a briefing note explaining how public health would link in with Neighbourhoods.

10. Date of Next Meeting

17 September 2012

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 8.45pm

CHAIRMAN

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