

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES
HELD IN THE
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH
ON
14 JANUARY 2013**

Present: Councillors D Over (Chairman), D Lamb (Vice-Chairman), D McKean, D Harrington, E Murphy and N Sandford

Officers in Attendance: Peter Wightman Interim Director, Primary Care
Richard Godfrey ICT and Transactional Services Partnership Manager
Jonathan Lewis Assistant Director of Education and Resources
Dania Castagliuolo Governance Officer

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Sanders and Leonie McCarthy

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of interest

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2012 and 19 November 2012

The minutes of the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities meetings held on 17 September 2012 and 19 November 2012 were approved as true and accurate records.

4. Educational Attainment/School Transport in Rural Areas

This report was requested by the committee and covered the following key points:

- School Places
- Education Attainment
- Capital Improvements in Rural Schools
- Transport Policy and Rural Schools

The report highlighted the nine maintained primary schools and one secondary school within rural areas which were:

- Barnack Primary (Voluntary Controlled)
- Castor Primary (Voluntary Aided)
- Eye Primary (Voluntary Controlled)
- John Clare Primary School (Community)
- Newborough Primary (Voluntary Controlled)
- Northborough Controlled (Community)
- Peakirk cum Glinton Primary (Voluntary Aided)
- The Duke of Bedford Primary (Community)
- Wittering Primary (Community)
- Arthur Mellows Village College (Academy)

The Commission was requested to review the information presented and request any further explanation or information required to understand the delivery of education in the rural communities in Peterborough.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members requested clarification on the abbreviations on page 15, Appendix 1. *The Assistant Director of Education and Resources informed the Commission that:*
 - ❖ *FSM = Free School Meals*
 - ❖ *EAL = English as Additional Language*
 - ❖ *MENA = Minority Ethnic New Arrivals*
 - ❖ *SEN = Special Education Needs*
- Members queried why Eye Primary School had received an Ofsted report requiring improvement if it was being monitored regularly. *Members were advised that the Department for Education and Ofsted worked on the basis of published data therefore the report was based upon data from 2010/11. Members were informed that there was a programme in place called Monitoring Support Partnership where a team of experts in school improvement visited the school on a half termly basis to monitor their performance.*
- Members queried what measures were going to be put in place around the growth of Eye with regard to the primary school. *The Commission was informed that the growth of Eye was concerning although the only year group that was over subscribed was year 1 and there were currently spaces in all of the other year groups. Further capacity would be introduced if required.*
- Members queried whether the schools would have enough teachers to support the amount of pupils registering. *Members were informed that the Council was working with schools to provide enough staff to support the pupils.*
- Members queried whether there was much difference in performance between rural and city schools. *Members were informed that the top three performing primary schools in Peterborough were all urban schools. The success of the school depended on what interventions were taking place. On average rural schools were outperforming city schools but they had different types of challenge.*
- Members commented that some schools would push to get pupils to register for free school meals. *Members were informed that at one stage the city was below the national average for free school meals.. The Council had also pushed to get pupils to register for free school meals and now Peterborough was above the national average.*
- Members queried whether the Council supervised the Government Pupil Premiums to identify how schools had spent the money. *The Commission was advised that the Government Pupil Premiums were supervised by Ofsted and the Council, schools also had to publish on their websites how the money had been spent.*
- Members queried what the overall concerns were with schools in rural areas. *Members were informed that the main concern was around funding mechanisms for schools in rural areas as there was no recognised funding for rural schools.*
- Members queried whether the rural primary schools were improving. *Members were advised that schools in rural areas were improving rapidly and the only challenge was how to deal with children who did not speak English although a lot of time and effort was being invested in to this.*
- Members queried why pupils from Lincolnshire were coming to the rural schools. *Members were advised that there were two issues 1) Lincolnshire had reorganised its secondary schools which had created some turbulence and uncertainty among parents. 2) The reputation of some of the rural schools was outstanding and parents preferred their children to attend these schools.*
- Members suggested that the Council should be cross charging for pupils from Lincolnshire to come to Peterborough schools. *The Commission was advised that schools already received £5,000 per student for education therefore they did not receive extra resources for taking children in from outside of the area.*

- Members queried whether the Education Department liaised with the Planning Department to make provisions for growth within the budget. *Members were advised that the Education Department worked closely with the Planning Department to understand the type of developments that would take place including numbers of developments and size. They would then work out how many children would be yielded from a development and this would be applied to the area of the development. The difficulty would be estimating the ages of children who would potentially move in to the new developments. Funding for schools was a direct grant and did not come from Local Government therefore sometimes growth was not easy to fund.*
- Members queried whether there were any statistics on the uptake of the Cycle Purchase Scheme. *The Assistant Director of Education and Resources advised the Commission that he did not have information on the figures around the Cycle Purchase Scheme but he would obtain this information and send it out to members.*
- Members queried the age of the children that the Cycle Purchase Scheme was available to. *Members were informed that there was no age limit on the Cycle Purchase Scheme although they would only qualify if they lived more than two miles away from the school*
- Members queried whether there had been any consideration on restoring public transport in rural areas as it had been reduced significantly in the past. *Members were advised that the Council had been proactive in making sure some of the bus routes they provided were there to support the public. Some routes that were previously school only routes had now been made public which had connected some of the rural communities together. Options were being looked in to.*
- Members commented that the Youth Councillors had previously raised concerns regarding the lack of school transport in rural areas and queried whether the Council was consulting with members of the Youth Council. *Members were informed that Youth Council meetings were attended regularly and officers got challenged on transport. Megariders were now being issued to young people in order for them to use public transport to get to school and back and it also gave them more flexibility with using public transport.*
- Members were concerned that there were not enough pre school places in Eye. *Members were advised that this information would be provided at a later date. Early years provision was run by the private and voluntary sector and the Council was only the commissioner of early year's provision not the provider.*

ACTION AGREED

The Commission requested that the Assistant Director of Education and Resources provide the Commission with the following information:

- statistics on the up take of the Cycle Purchase Scheme
- details on the position of Eye Pre-school with regard to capacity

5. Update on Superfast Broadband

The purpose of this report was to provide the Commission with an update on Superfast Broadband within rural areas following the last report to the Commission in July 2012.

The two main aims of the project were:

1. The Demand Registration Piece
2. The procurement of Broadband and of the supplier

Since July 2012 there had been a number of campaigns that had taken place in Peterborough to increase the Demand Registration take up across the area, these included:

- E-mails sent to all Citizen Panel members (850+) and contacts at the hospital, Fire and Police Authorities, Peterborough City College, Serco, Vivacity, Enterprise Peterborough, Peterborough Environment City Trust and Perkins to add to their internet sites for their staff to view.
- Numerous press releases in the Peterborough Telegraph
- 12,100 leaflets sent to residents in white areas
- A3 posters distributed to Supermarkets, Doctors surgeries, libraries and community centres
- Adverts placed on Facebook and Twitter
- Full page articles in The Viewer, The Hampton Viewer and the Hampton Gazette
- Links added to the Council's website to Connecting Cambridgeshire
- Links on the Council's internal website
- Serpentine Green and East of England Showground display stands
- Mobile text messages to over 1000 Council handsets promoting the campaign
- Display stands at Business Focus group and the Parish Conference
- Display stands at the Council's Chief Executive staff briefings
- Display stands at the Greater Peterborough Partnership Annual Forum
- Broadband Champions meeting with Fengate representatives
- Leaflet distribution to all premises within Fengate
- Posters and leaflets delivered to all primary and secondary schools in the 'white areas'
- Resource pack containing vital information handed to all Parish Councils within the 'white areas' at the Parish Conference

The final figure for Demand Registration across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire was 23,676 of which 3158 (13.34%) of the registrations were from Peterborough. The Demand Registration Campaign ran through to 31 December 2012. The procurement process and evaluation was still underway and the preferred supplier of the Broadband would be appointed early in the New Year.

The Commission were requested to endorse the work undertaken as part of the Connecting Cambridgeshire to Superfast Broadband.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members commented that the House of Lords Communications Committee had carried out an enquiry into superfast broadband. Whilst they were supportive of the Government's initiative in trying to extend broadband they also stated that Government Policy had become too preoccupied with the delivery of high speed broadband and not that broadband was as widespread as possible. Members asked if the Council were happy that the Superfast Broadband Project addressed these concerns. *The ICT and Transactional Services Partnership Manager advised the Commission that he was confident that all concerns had been covered within the project.*
- Members queried a press release that they had recently seen which reported that Cambridge had received a Government Grant for superfast broadband and asked how that affected the overall number on the Demand Register, had that been taken in to account with the current tenders and was the rural area still being prioritised. *Members were informed that the funding Cambridgeshire had been granted was for a different project. The Demand Registration figures were for across the entire county therefore it would not make any difference to the figures.*
- Members queried whether Lincolnshire villages were being funded by Cambridgeshire's successful bid. *Members were advised that the agreement needed to be adhered to in order to obtain Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) funding, which stated that there was a ten kilometre overlap in to each county.*

- Members queried whether the BT Broadband stickers that had been appearing on cabinets lately were associated with the Superfast Broadband Project. *Members were informed that it was completely separate. Every year BT advertised the areas they were moving in to and the areas they were not moving in to would be deemed 'white spots' where the Superfast Broadband Project could intervene. BT put stickers on the green cabinets because they were not only trying to promote the fibre going in to the area but also their services.*

ACTION AGREED

The Commission noted the report.

6. Provision of Primary Care in Rural Areas

This report was presented at the request of the Commission to provide further detailed information relating to the current commissioned Primary Care Services in the rural area of Peterborough.

The following key points were highlighted:

- The main GP Practices in the rural areas of Peterborough were Ailsworth and Thorney Medical Practices.
- Ailsworth Medical Practice's total patient list size as at 1 October 2012 was 2338. Thorney Medical Practice's total patient list size as of 1 October 2012 was 7531.
- A branch of Ailsworth Medical Practice was at Newborough which currently had a patient list size of 650.
- Castor was a small branch of Park Medical Centre which provided minimal services in Castor.
- Eye Surgery was a branch of the Thorney Medical Practice.
- Patients were able to access services at the main practices when the branches were closed.
- In the event that practices wished to close they would be required to inform the Primary Care Trust of their intention and consideration would be given to the impact of the closure.
- The rural practices currently had lists open to new registrations and there was no indication that this position would change.
- There were community pharmacies located in Thorney, Eye and Newborough.
- Many pharmacies provided home delivery services for patients.
- NHS Peterborough commissioned Primary Dental Services using NHS regulations and contracts.
- There was one dental practice located in Eye Village from which NHS Peterborough commissions dental services.
- Patients who did not attend a dental practice and were seeking care were advised to contact PALS who held the most up to date information regarding the practices which currently had capacity.
- There were no longer registered lists of patients attached to dental practices and it was possible for patients to access dental practices closer to where they lived.
- In the case of patients living in rural areas they could choose to seek dental services from practices located in Whittlesey, Ely, March, Huntingdon and the Isle of Ely.
- NHS Peterborough commissioned other dental services from Cambridgeshire Community services which included:
 - ❖ Community Dental Services for patients with special needs
 - ❖ Domiciliary Dental Services which were accessible to Peterborough patients meeting specific clinical criteria
 - ❖ Dental Access Centre in Midgate Peterborough

- ❖ For those patients resident outside of Peterborough City, Cambridgeshire Dental Access Centres operated at three locations in Cambridge, Huntingdon and Wisbech
- Private dentistry was not commissioned by NHS Peterborough and therefore they were, unable to provide information on the location of any Dental Practice that solely provided private dental services.
- There were no Opticians located in Peterborough Villages although there were a number of Opticians who provided domiciliary services.
- For patients with access to IT, NHS Choices provided comprehensive information relating to GP's and Dentists, which included location, opening hours and services offered.
- There were no planned changes to the services located in the Peterborough rural areas.
- Responsibility for commissioning Primary Care services transferred to the National Commissioning Board on 1 April 2013.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members queried what action was going to be taken with regard to full patient lists and the growth of Eye and Thorney. *The Interim Director of Primary Care advised the Commission that the Primary Care Trust relied on GP Practices to highlight any areas of concern that had not already been highlighted as they only had a small team working with one hundred GP Practices in Peterborough.*
- Members commented that some of the partners within rural practices were close to retirement and queried what action was being taken to ensure the practices continued running. *Members were informed that there was not a clear plan for Ailsworth Medical Practice with regard to retirement although through the Primary Care Strategy Process a second partner had been formalised and a succession plan was in place. Thorney Medical Practice had three partners who were not at retirement age therefore they were not showing as a danger and they also had a recruitment profile in place.*
- Members were concerned that Newborough would have no growth and queried if the practice would remain open if they did not have enough patients. *Members were informed that when the Primary Care Trust handed over to the National Commissioning Board they would advise them to keep the Newborough practice although it would be their decision with regard to the future of practice. There had been no word of capacity issues in Thorney and Eye Practices but they would be contacted to clarify.*
- Members queried whether patients really did get a choice as to which surgery they attended as practices operated in a restricted manner in rural areas. *Members were informed that every practice had an area identified to indicate where they could accept patients from. This was largely driven by the practicalities of home visiting and patients could register with the practice if they were in the catchment area. Rural practices had tighter geographical reaches due to the practicalities of home visiting.*
- Members queried what the terms Provider, Performer and Registrar indicated within the report when referring to Doctors. *Members were advised that the provider related to the contract holder, the Performers were the salaried Doctors within the practice and the Registrars were Doctors in training.*
- Members commented that the Council had three defibrillators but nobody was trained to use them. They suggested that regular training was needed in order to use them and it was important to have people trained on how to deal with the onset of strokes and heart attacks.
- Members commented that Eye had brought two refurbished defibrillators with part of their CLF funding this year and were currently training people on how to use them,

there was also a first responder initiative starting in Eye on a voluntary basis. This could be something that other rural areas could be interested in.

ACTION AGREED

The Commission requested that the Interim Director of Primary Care provide the Commission with the following information:

- The geographical reach of the surgeries in rural areas.
- Whether there was still a defibrillator Scheme in place.

The Interim Director of Primary Care to contact Eye and Thorney surgeries to enquire whether they had reached capacity and report back to the Commission.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission recommends that the Scrutiny Commission for Health Issues looks into the provision of Community First Response and first aid provision in rural areas.

7. Notice of Intention to Take Key Decisions

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Notice of Intention to Take Key Decisions, containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the following four months. Members were invited to comment on the Plan and, where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's work programme.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the Notice of Intention to Take Key Decisions and agreed that there were no items for further consideration.

8. Work Programme

Members considered the Commission's Work Programme for 2012/13 and discussed possible items for inclusion. Members requested that the Public Transport in Rural Areas item due to be presented at the meeting in March include the following three aspects of public transport:

1. The commercial bus service
2. The bus service provided by the Council
3. Call Connect

ACTION AGREED

To confirm the work programme for 2012/13 and the Governance Officer to include any additional items as requested during the meeting.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 26 March 2013

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 8.50pm

CHAIRMAN

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