

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES
HELD IN THE
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH
ON 15 JULY 2013**

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

Officers in Attendance:

Simon King	General Manager for Cambridgeshire, East of England Ambulance Service
Lorna Hayes	Regional AGM for Community Partnership
Cate Harding	Community Development Manager
Paulina Ford	Senior Governance Officer
Dania Castagliuolo	Governance Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Sanders.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Community First Responders in Rural Areas

The report was presented to the Commission to provide it with information on the Community First Responder Scheme.

The following key points were highlighted:

- Within rural Peterborough there were Community First Responder groups based at Yaxley, Wittering, and Whittlesey;
- Over 260 calls had been attended to during the year 2012/13;
- Volunteers were actively being recruited to set up a Community First Responder group in Eye;
- Community First Responder groups volunteered hours when they were within the community, they did not provide 24/7 cover; and
- The initial Community First Responder equipment was purchased through a charitable donation and the Ambulance Service provided replacement equipment.

The Commission was asked to support the on-going work of Community First Responders within rural communities and to look at the possibility of Automatic External Defibrillators within rural areas for public use.

The following comments, observations and questions were raised:

- Members queried what methods were used to gain public interest and how donations were obtained. The Regional AGM for Community Partnership *Informed members that in some communities people were very interested and they were given advice and help on becoming Community First Responders. It was promoted using Social Media and word of mouth most commonly.*
- Members suggested that the subject was also discussed with Parish Councils.

- Members queried how often Community First Responders were used as they may have hesitated to assist due to the lack of Good Samaritan Law for the scheme. *Members were informed that there were over 1200 people volunteering on the Community First Responder Scheme across the region, 22500 patients had been helped last year and the Community First Responders managed to bring back 22% of patients at the scene. The British Heart Foundation were working hard to look at legislation, they were actively promoting the issue and advising that it was acceptable for people to assist. There was current work being carried out around education and this needed to be included within the curriculum.*
- Members commented that people were fearful of the Health and Safety culture and queried where these messages were coming from as there had not been a single case in the UK where a person was sued. *Members were informed that this fear came from the American culture and the best way to tackle this was through education and to make sure that all First Responders knew that they could not cause harm to somebody using the defibrillator as it would not deliver a shock if it was not needed.*
- Members queried what the cooperation was between Anglia and the East Midlands with regards to the rural areas. *Members were informed that Peterborough was the nearest place for Ambulances to run from although they usually worked on a village by village basis and would send the nearest Community First Responder and the nearest Ambulance.*
- Members queried what the likelihood was of having Community First Responder groups across all rural areas. *Members were informed that the NHS trust's plans were to expand coverage across the region. This would not be a quick project as it took nine months to a year to set up a group and areas would need be looked in to and prioritised. They were also currently investigating different ways to get the Automatic External Defibrillators in to communities.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Commission recommended that Cabinet note that many lives had been saved by the defibrillator in public places Scheme Nationally and requested that Cabinet called upon government to introduce the Good Samaritans Law for this Scheme to promote more lives being saved.
2. The Commission Recommended that Parish Councils investigate the issue around lack of Community First Responders in rural areas and take any necessary action to improve the number of Community First Responders
3. The Commission recommended that Neighbourhood Services investigate the possibility of locating Automatic External Defibrillators in community centres and village halls within rural areas.

4. NHS 111 Service

The Chairman advised the Commission that there were no officers present to deliver this report and that the Commission would meet at a later date to discuss questions for the NHS 111 Service to answer.

5. Support for the Development of Community Centres and Village Halls

The Community Development Manager introduced the report which provided the Commission with information on the support available for the development of community centres and village halls in rural areas, and set out an overall direction of travel for further work throughout the year.

The Commission was asked to:

- Agree to further, focussed work being carried out over the next few months to ensure that the specific issues and opportunities relating to rural community assets were fully

explored and that a report was brought back to the Commission at a future date during the municipal year; and

- Ask the Parish Liaison Committee to include a session on community assets in rural areas at this year's Parish Conference event.

The following comments, observations and questions were raised:

- Members were concerned that previously the Neighbourhood team was larger and responsible for only three wards, now the team was smaller, responsible for a larger area and were aiming to improve the service across the city and queried how this would be achieved. *The Community Development Manager informed members that this would be achieved with consolidation and by working more accountably internally through Neighbourhood Management and relationships with Councillors and Community Representatives. The service would be streamlined better and requests would be passed on to the right department in order to obtain a speedier response or resolution.*
- Members suggested that Council liabilities could be reduced by passing the ownership of community centres and village halls on to Parish Councils and community groups and asked if this was something Neighbourhood Services were going to pursue. *Members were informed that this was a fundamental piece of work and alongside Neighbourhood Services, work was already being carried out with Parish Councils to ensure that roles and responsibilities were recognised and correctly coordinated. Neighbourhood Services would also be looking at reviewing all assets across the city to investigate whether there was feasibility for Parish Councils to take on responsibility.*
- Members queried how Neighbourhood Services would obtain funding for all of the ideas that were laid out in the report and who would provide the services. *Members were advised that the report recognised that there was a need for an overall review of the Community Centres and Village Halls.*
- Members queried whether it was possible for Parish Councils to be informed on how they could fund, organise and obtain a village hall. *Members were informed that the Community Development Manager was in the process of developing an understanding of rural needs and would be able to give future guidance to Parish Councils on how funding could be obtained.*
- Members queried whether Parish Councils should be encouraged to develop neighbourhood plans as this could enable them to be entitled to 25% of funding through the Community Infrastructure Levy. *Members were advised that some parished areas had applied to become a designated area for Neighbourhood Planning. If this proceeds the parishes would have a greater allocation of 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy. It was important for Parish Councils or Community led organisations to identify priority issues with supporting evidence of these needs to attract external funding to an area.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Commission recommended that Neighbourhood Services supported the work of Parish Councils in evidencing priorities which would enable them to more easily access funding.
2. The Commission recommended that the Community Development Manager provided training/information sessions to the Parish Councils regarding Community Asset Transfers if required.

6. Scrutiny in a Day: A Focus on the Welfare Reform

The purpose of this report was to set out proposals to hold a cross-scrutiny committee event that would focus on the impacts of welfare reform. This event would be held in order to understand and mitigate against the breadth of impact on individuals, families, communities and businesses. It was noted that the Welfare Reform Team was also looking for nominations from each committee to form a working party to help plan and provide input for the day.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- The Committee noted the proposal for a Scrutiny in a Day event.
- Councillor Over was nominated to be on the working group
- Councillor Murphy agreed to be a substitute for the working group

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission welcomed the initiative and endorsed the report.

6. Notice of Intention to Take Key Decisions

The Commission 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 Commission's work programme.

ACTION AGREED

The Commission noted the latest version of the Council's Notice of Intention to take key Decisions.

7. Work Programme

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

ACTION AGREED

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

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 8.40pm

CHAIRMAN