

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES
HELD IN THE
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH
ON 18 NOVEMBER 2013**

Present: Councillors D Lamb (Chairman), D McKean, D Sanders, J Peach, D Harrington
N Sandford and E Murphy

Also Present: Councillor Seaton Cabinet Member for Resources
Sandy Burns DIAL

Officers in

Attendance: Nick Blake Head of Commissioning – Older People, Physical
Disabilities, Sensory Impairment, HIV and Carers
Mark Speed Transport and Planning Manager
Lewis Banks Transport Officer
Ian Phillips Assistant Community Cohesion Manager
Jawaid Khan Community Cohesion Manager
Jonathan Lewis Head of Corporate Property and Children's Resources
Gary Perkins Head of School Improvement
Phil McCourt Legal and Governance Interim
Dania Castagliuolo Governance Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Over and Councillor Peach was in attendance as substitute.

Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman announced that the Cabinet Member for Resources would make a statement to the Commission regarding item 4 'Development of Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic (Pv) Panels (Solar Farms) and Wind Turbines from the last meeting of 16 September 2013. The following key points were highlighted from this statement:

- At the last meeting members felt they had not been adequately engaged in the financial detail of the proposals for wind and solar farms
- The group leaders had discussed the issue and had proposed to have a working group to address the points raised by members as quickly as possible and provide a report to the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities and the Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee
- Each group secretary was to put a name forward to the group.
- It was at the discretion of the working group to decide the Terms of Reference although the group would be expected to investigate:
 1. The Key financial risks of the project
 2. The likelihood of profit
 3. The impact of fracking
 4. If this was an efficient and economic use of land
 5. Dual use of the land
 6. Alternative Schemes
- It was intended that the group would produce a final report for the Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny Commission for Rural

Communities, detailing the work it had undertaken and any recommendations to the relevant Cabinet Member, the Leader of the Council and/or Cabinet

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- The Cabinet Member for Resources clarified that the working group would receive sensitive information regarding wind and solar farms.
- Members queried when this working group would be formed. *Members were advised that the timescales would be set by the working group.*
- Members were concerned that the working group would take the emphasis off what the Commission wanted to achieve. *Members were informed that the benefit of the working party was that members could look at the commercially confidential information which couldn't be viewed in the public meeting.*
- Members commented that the working group was a good idea and suggested that before the working group met a presentation should be given to the Commission to allow the financial detail to be public. *Members were advised that the Director of Strategic Resources would be consulted on how this financial information could be brought back to the Commission. In the meantime the working group could be formed*
- Members commented that the latest advice from Government Ministers was that the project would not be approved due to plans of building it on agricultural land and queried why money was still being spent on it. *Members were informed that there were two elements to the project, which was started in 2012, the guidance did not cover both projects and the money was being spent on wind and solar.*

ACTIONS AGREED

The Commission agreed that:

1. An extraordinary meeting to be organised for the wind and solar farm project to look at the following:
 - A three page detailed breakdown of the top level figures supporting options for Solar Panels and Wind Turbines.
 - An update from the Joint Scrutiny meeting which was held on 2 November 2012 regarding options 1 and 2 in the same format as table 8.2 of that report (attached) showing variance, the 5 year net income and sensitivity analysis for items such as America Farm, design, 2 meter high black panels and mounts, costs for legal/expert consultants if called in by central government departments, reduction in tariff income due to delays and any other project risk items which may delay or impact the final figures
2. The working group to be established as soon as possible.

The Commission agreed for item 8: Scrutiny in a Day: Understanding and managing the Impacts of Welfare Reform on Communities in Peterborough to be moved to item 7.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meetings Held on 16 September 2013

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2013 were not agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Members requested the following to be included:

- Councillor McKean requested that the report be rejected on the grounds that it had not provided the financial information requested from the Commission. He also requested that an extraordinary meeting be held as soon as possible to bring back to the Commission the missing financial information which would include, a three page lower level financial report for both Solar and Wind.
- A vote was taken to reject the report and have an extraordinary meeting, the commission voted in favour (3 in favour, 4 abstentions).

ACTION AGREED

The minutes were to be amended and brought to the extraordinary meeting for approval.

4. Use of Homecare Monitoring Systems – Data

The report was presented at the request of the Commission on access to homecare for people living in rural areas. The Commission asked for an update on the implementation of electronic homecare call monitoring which was presented to the Commission on 17 June 2013.

The following key points were highlighted:

- Electronic call monitoring systems recorded information on homecare calls by logging when a call started, when it ended and which worker provided the support. This made it possible to monitor whether people were receiving their planned support at the expected duration. Consequently, any shortfall or increase in expected support could be identified and responded to.
- Concerns had been raised in relation to people living in rural areas not receiving the expected support due to care workers cutting calls short to enable them to travel between calls.
- A review of homecare delivery in rural areas had been carried out using electronic call monitoring (ECM) data supplied by homecare providers and cross referencing this information against frameworki, the adult social care case recording system.
- Information provided a snapshot view over a four week period for providers on the Council's Independent Living Support Service's framework and aimed to give a view of care delivered against planned hours broken down by village, using postcode data held on frameworki.
- There was considerable variation across the villages, this appeared to be mainly due to case specific issues.
- The total number of actual care hours delivered was 94% of the total planned hours. This in line with the original estimates based on experience of other areas implementing ECM that indicated between 88% and 97% of planned care was delivered on average.
- There had been a steady increase in Direct Payment uptake over the period 2007 to 2013 across all areas with the rate of uptake in rural areas within Peterborough being slightly slower than in urban areas.
- There did not appear to have been a significant increase in rural Direct Payment receipts since 2012.

The Commission was asked to note and comment on the contents of the report.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members queried if any consultants had been employed to undertake work around the Homecare Monitoring Systems. *The Head of Commissioning for Older People, Physical Disabilities, Sensory Impairment, HIV and Carers advised Members that there had been no interims employed for the future of direct payments scheme although there were interims in place within the Adult Social Care Team.*

- Members commented that an item was discussed previously where members were concerned that care in rural Communities was not up to standard due to travelling times and queried whether ECM data could give an idea of where the council were with regard to the project and what the plan was with residents receiving ECM Systems. *Members were advised that the plan was for all residents receiving homecare to have an ECM system installed, there were over 1000 people receiving homecare*
- Members commented that ECM systems should be fitted in sheltered housing as well as residential housing.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Commission agreed for the Head of Commissioning to:

- Report back to them on the proportion of time the interims have been employed and how much they cost the council.
- Provide information on the number of people in rural areas whose support is monitored using an Electronic Call Monitoring System.

5. Passenger Transport Services in Rural Areas

The report had been requested by the Commission and outlined the passenger transport arrangements for the rural areas in Peterborough following the changes implemented on 1 October 2013, including any to the Call Connect service. The report provided Members with information on the current situation. Officers were monitoring the situation regarding the implications of these changes including increased journeys by cars from areas affected by the changes. A presentation was delivered to the Commission and the following key points were highlighted:

- There had been an agreed budget reduction from £1.1 million to £600k
- The real cost would be £1.9 Million – Local Link operated at a considerable loss
- Reviews, Equality Impact Assessments and Passenger surveys were conducted
- The consultation of the Medium Term Financial Strategy was sent to all city Councillors, The Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities, The Transport Forum, Cross Party Advisory Group, Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee and to additional Cross Party Advisory Group meetings
- The subsidised services pre 1 October were:
 - Local Links (all services)
 - Stagecoach Voluntary Partnership Agreement (Citi evening from 20.30 Mon – Saturday & from 17.30 Sundays and Bank Holidays, some daytime services on route 24 and some Sunday services on route 37)
 - Demand response services (Community Link, Rural Dial-a-ride, Call Connect and Royal Voluntary Services)
 - Luxecabs 342
 - Kimes 9
- In rural areas, the subsidised passenger transport service funding ceased to the following services:
 - Kimes 9
 - Stagecoach 37
 - Luxecabs 342
 - All Local Link services
- Changes to services from 1 October were as follows:
 - No changes to Kimes 9 or Stagecoach 37
 - Local Links and Luxecabs 342 ceased operating
 - No other reductions at this time
 - Delaines altered their 201 service to serve Kings School in the morning
 - Call connect would be operating on first four Sundays in December

- Stagecoach won the tender to deliver new services from 1 October
- There were three new services added – 20, 21 & 22
- Route 22 served the following rural areas:
 - Ashton
 - Maxey
 - Etton
 - Glington
 - Peakirk
 - Milking Nook
 - Newborough
- All rural areas had access to a service
- Most rural areas had a timetables service, the exceptions were the following:
 - Ufford
 - Wothorpe
 - Thornhaugh
 - Marholm
- All four areas had access to Call Connect and Rural Dial-a-ride
- Officers had been monitoring the service from the bus station and feedback from residents
- Officers were attending the Peterborough Bus Users Group (BUGS) meetings
- No further changes were planned at present

The commission was asked to note the content of the report and make comments and observations.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members commented that the Eye and Thorney Parish Council was not consulted on the withdrawal of the Thorney to Whittlesey Luxecabs bus service and suggested that the Parish was contacted to explain why.
- Members commented that the table within the slide was misleading as it showed there were nine journeys with Stagecoach22 when in reality there were four journeys in one direction and five in the other. *The Transport and Planning Manager assured the Commission that this was not deliberately misleading and he would make sure that it was clear in future.*
- Members suggested that a review of the services should be conducted after twelve months and the officers should come back to the Commission with an updated report.
- Members commented that on page 17 of the report it stated that the Commission would be provided with the results of the Local Link Equality Impact Assessments once they had been completed, these had not yet returned to the Commission. *Members were informed that the Equality Impact Assessments could be viewed on the Council website. There were extremely large documents and would be difficult to present at a meeting.*
- Members commented that they had not received any complaints from constituents regarding the bus services so far and they felt the transport team had done a good job.
- Members were concerned that the service on the 37 route could fail and wanted to assure their constituents that the service would continue. *Members were advised that this could not be guaranteed as the operators could change it but they would give the council time to respond.*
- Members commented that the Stagecoach funding had been cut by £89,000 and queried if they would still continue services for a period of time. *Members were advised that the 24 and 37 services had been stopped, although £200,000 had still been invested in to the night time services.*
- Members commented that the rural services were from Monday to Saturday and queried why Call Connect couldn't operate on a Sunday to allow People from rural areas to shop in the city on a Sunday and vice versa for people from urban areas. *Members were*

advised that this was due to the budgetary restraints and the more services that were added the more money would need to be spent.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Commission agreed for the Transport Infrastructure Planning Manager to:

1. Liaise with Councillor Bartlett from Thorney Parish Council to explain to him why the Parish had not been consulted on the withdrawal of the Thorney to Whittlesey Luxecabs Service
2. Bring this item back to the Commission in 12 months' time to give an update on how the services are running
3. Provide a briefing note to the Commission on the statistics for the use of Call Connect
4. Check records to clarify if the issue with Pioneer Park had been resolved and the Issue with school children from Eye missing their bus as there was insufficient time to catch it when they arrived at the bus station
5. Speak to demand response regarding the possibility of Call Connect operating on a Sunday for residents in rural communities
6. Provide the Commission with the Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA's) that were conducted as part of the bus service review
7. Provide clarity on the subsidy that was previously paid to the 37 service on Sundays and Bank Holidays (subsidy ceased on 1 October 2013)

6. Disability Issues in Rural Communities

The report was presented to the Commission to review the findings of the disability access audits conducted in six rural localities.

DIAL Peterborough commissioned About Access Ltd to undertake audits in Eye, Glinton and Wittering. The access reports provided a detailed overview for each of the villages with recommendations and priority actions identified. The report identified a number of common issues and recommendations that were likely to be replicated across all villages within Peterborough. These would include:

- Increased provision of dropped kerbs
- Tactile paving at pedestrian crossings and dropped kerbs
- Removal of 'A' boards from pedestrian walkways/routes
- Regular cut back of vegetation on pedestrian routes
- Removal of bollards unless they were absolutely necessary. Bollards should be a height of 1000mm with good contrast colour to background and incorporating contrast colour band
- Providing adequate blue badge parking bays (these should equate to at least 6% of total parking spaces in car parks)
- Notice boards should be at a level that people in wheelchairs can read, using 14 point print and mixed lower case and capital letters
- Bus shelters should be provided on both sides of the road if possible
- Avoidance of gravel paths as they were a slip hazard
- Maintenance/regular checks of pedestrian routes to avoid trip hazards
- The use of gratings should be reviewed with an intention of replacing any existing ones with less discriminatory methods of keeping animals out of public areas

Any remedial works would require capital investment and may mean some of these recommendations were not affordable at this time, although, urgent consideration should be given to priority one recommendations. However, incorporation this information in to planned

or future maintenance would keep future costs to a minimum by reducing the amount of remedial work needing to be carried out.

The Commission was asked to note the contents of the access audits and the issues contained therein and consider commissioning the Directorate of Growth and Regeneration to develop an investment plan to address the recommendations in the access audits.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members commented that they were happy with the good quality of the report.
- Members commented whether the access audit reports had been carried out in Thorney yet. *The Assistant Community Cohesion Manager advised Members that only three reports had been commissioned in Eye, Glinton and Wittering.*
- Members queried how the recommended removal of street furniture that was causing obstruction would be dealt with. *Members were advised that reasonable allowance for disabilities ought to be made and it would be against the law not to comply if or where there was a known problem.*
- Members suggested that it would be useful for the access audit documents to be sent to the Parish Councils for them to consider when completing their neighbourhood plans.
- Members suggested that the recommendations from the access audit reports was stored on a database which could then be sent to highways to aid them with future planning.
- Members queried what the likelihood was of the recommendations being dealt with. *Members were informed that it depended on finances as to when the work on these potential problem areas would be carried out.*

ACTIONS AGREED

The Commission agreed for the Assistant Community Cohesion Manager to:

1. Send the Disability Access Audit reports to Parish Councils for inclusion when considering their Neighbourhood Plans
2. Identify who takes responsibility for disability issues in Peterborough and if there is an Officer in place to deal with this
3. Provide a costed plan for the work identified within the report.

7. Scrutiny in a Day: Understanding and Managing the Impacts of Welfare Reform on Communities in Peterborough

The report provided an update to all Scrutiny Committees and Commissions on the progress being made towards organising the Scrutiny in a Day event on 17 January 2014. The following key points were highlighted within the report:

- The working group had developed a draft programme for the day, which was attached to the report. It was proposed that the day was organised in two halves –the morning sessions would be development sessions and therefore closed to the public and media, whilst much of the afternoon sessions would be held in public.
- Ahead of the event further information would be issued to all scrutiny members setting out evidence, data and other information that would help inform the day itself.
- In addition members were now asked to suggest key themes relevant to their Committee or Commission, or that were drawn from their own experiences of their work in wards, that could be part of the focus of the day.
- The working group had recommended that each Committee or Commission, during the afternoon sessions, focused on two or three key lines of enquiry to retain focus and to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Members were asked to:

- Review the progress being made, especially the plans for the day itself, and suggest other content that was relevant to their own Scrutiny Committee or Commission
- Suggest a small number of key themes relevant to their Scrutiny Committee or Commission that they would especially like to focus on during the combined Scrutiny event.

ACTIONS AGREED

1. Members of the Commission suggested that the following items were included in Scrutiny in a Day:
 - Access to Food banks
 - Rural poverty and accessibility
2. The Commission suggested that all Councillors were invited to the event and not just scrutiny members.
3. The Commission suggested that a review of the programme be carried out to allow as much of the event as possible to be held in public.

8. Educational Attainment

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members requested that consideration was given to the impact that the closure of children's centres would have on the pre-school age children. *The Head of Corporate Property and Children's Resources informed Members the championing of Pre Schools remained in place*
- Members queried why Eye, Thorney and Newborough showed as deprivation areas during the children's centre review. *Members were advised that all in terms of free school meals were below average*
- Members referred to Appendix 1 of the report and expressed their concern as it showed that Eye was mostly underachieving. Eye had been vulnerable for the last two OfSTED reports and members queried how this was being resolved. *The Head of School Improvement advised Members that the data was from one cohort of children in Eye. It was discovered that the teaching was inadequate in previous years and those teachers were no longer at the school. The children now needed to catch up academically. An improvement was now being noticed and the Head and Deputy Head were strong and there was a far more informed governing body. The School was engaging well with Head Teachers from other schools and they had received £10,000 funding for training and leadership. The latest data anticipated that the standards for next year would be higher. As the school required improvement they received regular monitoring visits which had so far produced good reports.*
- Members were concerned that in September there would be a bulge year and queried what provisions were being put in place for this potential problem. *The Head of Corporate Property and Children's Resources advised members that there was a predicted 79 children in the catchment area which may present the need for an extra class. The governing body had been consulted and if they were in agreement then the extra class would be created. There was no concern over the bulge class impacting on the school.*
- Members were concerned that the children who would be moving to secondary school would not get in because of their poor attainment and queried whether there was anything in place to help them. *Members were advised that secondary schools were good at working with primary children who would be attending their school and they would be working with them early on. The Head of School Improvement advised Members that children from the cohort also attended Easter and summer schools.*

ACTIONS AGREED

The Commission agreed:

- To receive a briefing note regarding plans for **Eye Primary School**.
- That a further update be brought back in 12 months.

9. Forward Plan of 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.

10. Work Programme

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

ACTION AGREED

To set up an extraordinary meeting to look at the financials of the wind and solar farm project for 16 December 2013.

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 9.55pm

CHAIRMAN

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