

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES  
HELD IN THE  
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH  
ON 17 NOVEMBER 2014**

**Present:** Councillors Stokes (Chairman), Brown, Sanders, Harrington, Murphy, Okonkowski and J Fox.

**Officers in Attendance:**

Cate Harding	Community Development Manager
Ray Hooke	Performance and Information Analyst
Adrian Chapman	Assistant Director for Communities and Targeted Services
Wendi Ogle-Welbourn	Director for Communities
Dania Castagliuolo	Governance Officer

**1. Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations**

There were no declarations of interest

**3. Minutes of the Previous Meetings Held on 20 October 2014**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2014, were approved as an accurate record.

**4. Scoping the Development of a Rural Strategy**

The Commission was considering the development of a Rural Strategy for Peterborough to have a framework within which to highlight and support the strategic needs of rural communities across the city. The report was introduced by the Performance and Information Analyst to provide Members with a proposed structure for this strategy.

The Performance and Information Analyst and the Community Development Manager delivered PowerPoint presentation to the Commission. The following key points were highlighted:

- Peterborough's Rural areas was made up of:
  - 5 Wards
  - 24 Parishes
  - 21,776 residents = 12% of the total population
  - 26,307 Hectares = 77% of the total land mass
  - Growth in population over the last 10 years of 2,678 people (10% of the overall city growth)
- Rural areas had a higher rate of population in all age bands over the age of 40 than the citywide average.
- Rural areas consisted of 93% White British compared to a citywide distribution.

- According to the 2001 – 2011 Census, the areas that noticed the most significant increase in their White British population, with the exception of the planned growth in the Hamptons, was predominantly in rural areas.
- Over the next 20 years, rural areas of the city were expected to grow in population by a further 15% with an anticipated overall population of 25,000 people.
- Two thirds of the growth would be in the next 10 years.
- There were currently 9,250 dwellings in rural wards, this was forecast to increase by 14% (1,300) to 10,550 in the next 20 years.
- According to the 2011 Census, there was a disproportionately lower rate of people living in Social Rented houses within rural wards than their urban counterparts.
- The rural wards of Peterborough typically accounted for 5.3% of all crime, and 5.6% of victim based crime across the city.
- The disproportionate anomalies of significance were Burglary non-dwelling (9.6%), Theft from Vehicle (9.3%) and Vehicle Crime (9%).
- Offences which assisted in these increased proportions were theft of heating oil and diesel.
- Anecdotal evidence suggested that these offence types remained considerably unreported and were likely to have higher rates than what crime data could actually provide.
- There were 24 wards in Peterborough. The 5 rural wards were all inside the top 10 least deprived wards in Peterborough.
- All bar one of the rural wards had lower deprivation than the national average score of 18.39 (and Eye and Thorney was only 0.17 greater than the national average).
- Glinton & Wittering and Northborough and fell within the top 20% of the national chart of deprivation, with Barnack narrowly missing out on this. The other 2 rural wards, Newborough and Eye & Thorney, were outside the top 50% of this national chart.
- If all 5 wards were fused in to 1 ward it would be comfortably within the top half nationally and would also be half as deprived as the average for Peterborough.
- It could be argued that Glinton & Wittering, Northborough and Barnack were the least deprived wards in Peterborough.
- Barriers to Housing (Physical and financial accessibility of housing/wider barriers) and geographical sub domain (Distance to Services) ranked poorly in rural areas, compared to citywide and national levels.
- Common themes across Peterborough's rural communities:
  - Heritage
  - Public Transport
  - Rural Policing
  - Biodiversity
  - Traffic Calming
  - Young Peoples Activities
  - Rural Economy
  - ICT Connections (Rural Broadband)
  - Affordable Housing
- Parish Councils played a vital role in providing leadership in all rural communities across Peterborough.
- There were 27 Parish Councils, 24 of which were within the rural wards of Peterborough.
- There were many strategies across the Council. All existing and future strategies must be rural proofed to ensure national drivers were integrally and equitably included in policy development and programme implementation.

It was proposed that the rural strategy contained the following key sections:

- Aims and Objectives
- A Sense of Place
- Demographics and Performance Data

- National, Regional and Local Drivers
- Current activities Directly Linked to Supporting Rural Communities
- Common Themes
- Community Capacity
- SWOT Analysis for Rural Communities
- Governance and Accountability
- Action Plan or Work Programme

The Commission was asked to:

- Debate the requirements for a rural strategy, noting work already underway to support rural issues.
- If a rural strategy was agreed, debate the content of the scoping report in order to agree the purpose, content and format of the proposed rural strategy.
- Consider how best to engage with the Parish Council Liaison group to explore how they may contribute to the development and then management of the rural strategy.
- Consider how they may support the activities currently underway in Peterborough that support the rural communities.
- Consider the resource requirements necessary to deliver against a new rural strategy, identifying any options to enhance existing resources where necessary.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members suggested that Eye was removed from the rural strategy. *The Assistant Director for Communities and Targeted Services responded that any issues highlighted and agreed at the meeting would be included within the strategy.*
- Members were concerned that the total crime rate for rural communities was nearly half as much as in urban areas however, there was no policing in the rural communities.
- Members suggested charging the parish precepts to sustain the cost of having a village special constable.
- Members suggested that judging by the statistics presented, the strategy should include aims and objectives for Housing Deprivations and Education. *The Performance and Information Analyst informed Members that the data presented to them was from 2010, there was going to be a refresh in 2015, therefore, it would be interesting to revisit the subjects in June 2015 and review the fresh data.*
- Members queried what the living environment referred to. *Members were advised that this referred to the indoor living conditions.*
- Members commented that Parish Councils did not feel that they were listened to with regards to planning. As a result of this plans were currently in place which presented all of the issues which the Parishes had predicted. *The Community Development Manager responded that it was important that the views of the parishes were acknowledged. The Council now had the opportunity to reengage with the Parish Councils. Discussions with Parishes had taken place on how to strengthen the voice of the parishes.*
- Members commented that due to the independence and pride of residents of rural communities they may miss out on opportunities. Rural residents needed to be encouraged to get involved in external activities.
- Members suggested that Tenant Farmers could be invited along to meetings of the Commission in future.
- Members suggested that the Council engaged more with Parish Councils regarding emergency planning as they had more knowledge and experience with the subject.

## **ACTION AGREED**

The Commission agreed for the Performance and Information Analyst to:

- Advise the Commission if any of the forecasted 14% increase of dwellings in rural areas had been approved.
- Advise the Commission of an indicative figure of the amount of private rented properties there were in the rural areas.

The Commission agreed for the Assistant Director of Communities and Targeted Services to:

- Circulate the 2006 Rural Vision and Strategy Document.
- Brief the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Services.

The Commission agreed for the Community Development Manager approach Parish Councils for nominations for co-opted members.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Commission recommended that the Director of Growth and Regeneration explored the possibility of having an additional planning committee which would look specifically at rural planning applications and issues.

### **5. Scrutiny in a Day – One Year on**

The Assistant Director of Communities and Targeted Services introduced the report to update the Commission on proposals for reviewing the joint Scrutiny in a Day on the impacts of Welfare Reform.

The Commission were asked to agree to hold a further joint scrutiny event on 9 January 2015, to review the progress made against the lines of enquiry developed at the Scrutiny in a Day event.

## **ACTION AGREED**

The Commission noted the report and agreed to the proposal of a further joint scrutiny event.

### **6. Forward Plan of Executive Decisions**

The Commission received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Executive Decisions, which contained key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the forthcoming month. 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 Forward Plan of Key Decision and requested further information on the following decisions:

- Extra Care Housing
- Award of Contract for Build of a Waste Transfer Station

- Award for of Contract for Build of a Household Recycling Centre
- Future of Solar and Wind Projects
- Libraries and Community Centres

## **6. Work Programme**

Members considered the Commission's Work Programme for 2014/15 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

### **AGREED ACTION**

Members noted the work programme and agreed for the Cabinet Member for Housing and planning Services, who now had a new responsibility for rural communities, to be invited to future meetings.

## **7. Date of the Next Meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, 12January 2014.

*The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 9.00pm*

CHAIRMAN

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