

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES
HELD IN THE
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH
ON 16 JUNE 2015**

Present: Councillors Stokes, Brown, Sanders, Harrington, Murphy, Okonkowski and J R Fox.

Also Present:	Councillor Peter Hiller	Cabinet Member for Planning & Housing Services
	Joe Dobson	Independent Co-opted Member
	Keith Lievesley	Independent Co-opted Member
	Henry Clarke	Independent Co-opted Member
	Phillip Nuttall	Independent Co-opted Member

Officers in Attendance:	Adrian Chapman	Service Director for Adult Services and Communities
	Robin Sissons	Head of Community and Safety Services
	Paulina Ford	Senior Democratic Services Officer
	Gemma George	Democratic Services Manager
	Dania Castagliuolo	Democratic Services Officer

1. Election of Chair

The Democratic Services Manager advised the Commission that as agreed at full Council on 20 May 2015, the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committees and Commissions fell to the individual Committee or Commission to make these appointments.

The Democratic Services Manager requested nominations from the Commission for the position of Chair of the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities.

Councillor Sanders nominated Councillor Harrington and Councillor Brown seconded the nomination.

There be no other nominations, Councillor Harrington was therefore, elected by the Commission as Chair of the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities for the 2015/2016 Municipal year.

2. Election of Vice Chair

The newly elected Chair of the Commission requested nominations from the Commission for the position of Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities.

Councillor Sanders nominated Councillor Murphy and Councillor Okonkowski Seconded the nomination.

There be no other nominations, Councillor Murphy was therefore, elected Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities for the 2015/2016 municipal year.

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillor Henry Clark and Parish Councillor Joe Dobson

4. Declaration of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of interest or whipping declarations.

5. Minutes of Meeting Held on 16 March 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2015 were approved as a true and accurate record.

6. Appointment of Co-opted Members

The report was introduced by the Senior Democratic Services Officer to request that the Commission considered whether they wished to retain Henry Clark, Philip Nuttall, Joe Dobson and Keith Lievesley as co-opted members to the Commission.

The Co-opted Members were appointed by the Commission at their meeting in January 2015 for the purpose of providing input in to the development of the Rural Vision and Parish Charter document and their term of office was for the remainder of the 2014/2015 municipal year.

The Commission was asked to consider the continued membership of the four Co-opted Members to the Commission as independent Co-optees with no voting rights for the 2015/2016 municipal year. This would be reviewed on an annual basis.

ACTION AGREED

The Commission agreed to retain the four Co-opted Members and the Co-opted Members agreed to remain as Co-optees on the Commission.

At this point Councillor Sanders left the meeting.

7. Rural Communities: Introduction, Overview and Work Programme 2015/2016

The Service Director for Adult Services and Communities introduced the report which set out the approach to be taken at the first Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities meeting of the municipal year. Members were presented with an overview of the issues, opportunities, priorities and challenges in connection with the rural communities theme, with the aim of establishing a Work programme for the forthcoming municipal year. The Service Director for Adult Services and Communities delivered a PowerPoint presentation to the Commission. **(Attached at Appendix 1).**

The Commission was asked to discuss the detail contained within the presentation and to agree a work programme for the forthcoming municipal year.

Questions and comments were raised around the following areas:

- The LEADER programme.
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for Parish Councils
- The overall budget should be brought before the Commission in advance.
- Developing Services for Parish Councils.
- Communications
- Farming Issues
- Crime in Rural Communities

ACTION AGREED

The Commission noted the report.

8. Review of 2014/2015 and Future Work Programme 2015/2016

The Senior Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which provided the Commission with a review of the work undertaken during 2014/2015 and delivered a PowerPoint presentation which included the following key points:

Good scrutiny should follow the following principles:

- Provide a critical friend and challenge the executive policy makers and decision makers.
- Enable the voice of concerns of the public.
- Contain independent minded governors, who lead and own the scrutiny role.
- Drive improvement in public services.

The following makes scrutiny successful:

- Ownership – Member led and Officer driven.
- Focus – Clear work programme and objectives.
- Research – Getting to know the real issues.
- Innovation – Engaging in different ways.
- Reputation – Being recognised for adding value and making an impact, tackling issues of direct relevance to local people.

The Commission should ensure that all work carried out by them:

- Is focused and relevant to the remit of the Commission.
- Makes a positive impact on services.
- Promotes good practice.
- Challenges underperformance.
- Acts as a catalyst for change.
- Deals, where appropriate, with relevant partnership issues.
- Provides strong and clear recommendations to Cabinet or Council to enable positive outcomes.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer advised the Commission of the Alternative Governance Arrangements and how it was important for the Commission to think about the following going forward:

- How scrutiny could help to influence change within new governance arrangements.
- This was an opportunity for the Commission to work together to help design the new model of governance by thinking about what the new model would mean in terms of:
 - Number of scrutiny committees
 - Number of meetings
 - Terms of reference
 - Ways of working
 - How they would fit in to the whole process of reporting in to Cabinet/Council
- Think of it as an opportunity for scrutiny to make an impact and to add real value to the organisation.

The Chair invited the Commission to make suggestions for items to include within the 2015/2016 work programme.

ACTION AGREED

1. The Commission agreed for the following items to be added to the 2015/2016 work programme:
 - Overview of the Budget
 - Alternative Governance
 - LEADER Programme
 - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
 - Decline of Villages
 - Rural Crime/Refresh of Crime Statistics
 - Farming
 - Incinerators in Rural Areas
 - Fit to Rent Homes in Rural Areas
 - Farms Estate Strategy
 - Rural Economy
 - Maintenance of Rural Footpaths
2. The Commission agreed to receive a briefing note update on the rural broadband scheme.

9. 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:

- Offtake Arrangements for Power from the Energy from Waste Plant
- Fit to Rent Scheme

10. Date of the Next Meeting

The Chair advised the Commission that the next meeting was scheduled for Monday, 13 July 2015.

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 8.05pm

CHAIRMAN