

SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES	Agenda Item No. 4
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Report of the Commercial Services Director

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THE FIX-IT VAN SERVICE

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider the role of the Fix It Van Service and its relevance to the rural communities and to decide whether this is a service that is fit for purpose and meets the needs of the localities it serves.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1
- The service continues to be provided with two vehicles in its current format.
 - All Parish and rural communities be encouraged to take the opportunity to make better use of the service and become involved in its operations
 - That we continue to use the Fix It Van brand
 - That we request the Parish Council Liaison Committee to consider: are there any other services that could be provided through the Fix It Van Service?

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Fix It Van Service was introduced in 2001 to provide a dedicated service for the rural areas following concerns from residents in Parishes in those areas that they received little support from the Council or value from their Council Tax.
- 3.2 The service is operated by two vehicles with a single operative in each that is dedicated to working in the rural areas. The vehicle is branded with a Fix It Van logo alongside the City Council identity and is built on a 3.5 tonne GVW chassis so that they are easily identifiable. The vehicles are equipped with a range of tools and equipment and the operatives are trained to undertake a variety of tasks: This can include litter picking, painting, strimming, pruning, graffiti clearance and any other minor repairs or maintenance to public property etc.
- 3.3 The vehicles have a pre-determined rota (as set out in Appendix A) and are allocated to individual Parishes on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week. Monday and Friday are kept clear for dealing with larger jobs and other routine matters such as regular fly-tips in rural locations and bigger jobs that cannot be dealt with on a Parish's normal allocated days.

3.4 The Parish Clerk or another notified contact is provided with a list of the dates when the vehicle will be in their locality and in many instances arrangements are made for the operative to visit the Parish Clerk in order to receive specific requests for work. Parish Clerks are also able to contact the Service Help Desk or Peterborough Direct to request assistance or for specific work to be undertaken. In addition, there is an e-mail address: fixitvan@peterborough.gov.uk. Some Parish contacts have a close working relationship either with the operatives or the management team and we provide the wide variety of contact routes as a way of ensuring that the work is undertaken as speedily as possible.

3.5 The cost of the Service is as follows:

Salaries	£38,000
Holiday and Sickness Cover	£4,700
Transport	£11,500
Overheads	£5,400

3.6 The existing vehicles are due for replacement at the end of March 2010. This is now, therefore, the opportunity to review the Service and decide whether it is fit for purpose, continues to serve a useful function and should be continued and/or reduced or extended.

3.7 Consideration should now be given to the following points:

- (a) Is this service still relevant and appropriate for the communities it serves?
- (b) Is the current level of resource sufficient, too great or too little?
- (c) How can all Parishes be encouraged to use the service rather than passively accept the work that is provided as a default?
- (d) If the service is to be continued, are there additional other opportunities or facilities that it could offer?
- (e) Is the current brand of the Fix It Van one that needs amending, strengthening or is it now recognised as part of the village life and embedded into community consciousness?

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 At this stage no consultation has taken place. Members may consider they wish to consult more broadly with the rural Parish Councils over the future delivery of this.

5. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

5.1 None

6. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Examples of the current routing arrangements of the two Fix It vehicles.