

<b>SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 6</b>
<b>22 March 2010</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## **Report of the Executive Director of Operations**

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### **Business, employment and training in rural areas**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To scrutinise Council actions to improve and enhance business, employment and training opportunities in rural areas.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities is looking at a forward vision for rural areas and trying to ascertain the current and possible future employment provision for the areas.
- 1.3 In the past there has been focused targeted work in the City Centre and Urban areas. The Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities wish to examine what work the Council is undertaking to address skills, employment, business and training opportunities in the Rural areas.
- 1.4 Currently through consultation within the City Council, Opportunity Peterborough and Business Advice organisations, it appears that whilst skill, employment, business and training resources are available across the City including the Rural areas, there is no targeted work or research currently being undertaken in this area.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 To request that the Rural Working Group form a sub group, facilitated by the North West Neighbourhood Development Officers, to look at Skills, Employment and Training for Rural Communities. Through this group developing a targeted action plan with specified outcomes. This action plan to have a standing agenda item at the Rural Working Group meetings for monitoring purposes.
- 2.2 For North West 1 Neighbourhood Management Neighbourhood Development Officers to identify, map and record past, current and future employment and training opportunities including self employment and volunteering opportunities in the Rural areas.
- 2.3 To seek opportunities to address the gaps identified in provision and produce a report and action plan on how to improve opportunities for employment in Rural areas (including “rural” skills).
- 2.4 To work with Parish Councils and local residents to identify any visions, desires and thoughts on how their rural economy should look in terms of planning and development.
- 2.5 To request that Neighbourhood Management for the North West Area undertake Employment and Training research and engagement activities for the Rural Communities. This work to include partner Business Development Agencies including Opportunity Peterborough, Business Link etc and EEDA as part of their community action planning process and delivery.

### **3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT**

#### **3.1 *Empowering Local Communities (SSC03)***

- To increase the number of people who feel they can influence decisions in their local area by being engaged in a Rural Vision regarding Employment and Training opportunities
- Increasing the number of people engaged in Volunteering Opportunities through work with the Neighbourhood Management Team to identify Volunteering Opportunities in the Rural Areas and support those agencies to work with local people.

#### ***Increasing Economic Prosperity (GO01)***

- Increasing the overall employment rate in Rural Areas by identifying employment opportunities
- Increasing the average earnings of employees by assisting employers and employees to access training and development opportunities
- Increasing VAT registration rate by ensuring that Business have support for start up and identifying those businesses that are not VAT registered

#### ***Increasing the Use of Sustainable Transport (EC02)***

- Increasing the access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling

#### ***Improving Skills and Education (OI04)***

- Increase the working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher by working with employers increase skills and development through training provision within Peterborough.
- Increase the working age population qualified to at least Level 4 or higher by ensuring access to training and development opportunities are made available

#### ***Growing our Environmental Business Sector (EC03)***

- Increasing the number of Environmental Goods and Services sector companies by identifying opportunities for growth in the Rural Areas

### **4. BACKGROUND**

4.1 A need to address future vision for Rural Economy was identified through the Scrutiny Committee for Rural Communities following a request for further exploration of the issue made by Cllr Over. The importance of Rural economy was also recognised in the GPP Rural Working Group's Vision and Strategy. As yet, progress in this area is slow and it is unclear what the scope and role of business support in rural areas should be. We know we have agriculture, self employment (working from home) and small scale industry, but we need to ascertain whether additional support, above and beyond that offered by business link and Opportunity Peterborough is required. Significant investment has been made in rural economy support in our neighbouring districts through the Fens Adventurer Rural Development programme.

### **5. KEY ISSUES**

5.1 The Commission need to consider that the proposed approach; including research, engagement and follow up action is appropriate to develop rural economy in Greater Peterborough.

## **6. IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Human resources, the Neighbourhood Development Workers would need to include this work as part of their activities in the NW1 area. A request for support and officer time would need to be made to the Rural Working Group.

The report focuses solely on the Rural areas identified in the Rural North (North & West 1 Area).

## **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Opportunity Peterborough  
Greater Peterborough Partnership  
NWES  
Neighbourhood Management Team

## **8. NEXT STEPS**

- 8.1 For the Scrutiny Committee to task the NW1 Neighbourhood Management Team with taking this issue forward and working with the Rural Working Group to develop an action plan to deliver the outcomes outlined above and any other identified need to achieve the outcomes above through consultation with Parishes, Rural Working Groups and residents in the Rural Areas.

## **9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- 9.1 Rural Working Group – Rural Vision and Strategy.  
National Indicator Set for Peterborough's Local Area Agreement (2008-11)

## **10. APPENDICES**

- 10.1 None.

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