

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES  
HELD IN THE  
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH  
ON 7 JULY 2014**

**Present:** Councillors Stokes, Brown, Okonkowski, Sanders, Harrington, J Fox and Johnson

**Officers in Attendance:** Wendi Ogle-Welbourn Director for Communities  
Karen S Dunleavy Governance Officer

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Murphy. Councillor Johnson was in attendance as substitute.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes of the Previous Meetings Held on 1 April 2014**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2014, were approved as an accurate record.

**4. Review of 2013-14**

The report was introduced by the Governance Officer on the work undertaken during by the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities in 2013 – 2014. Members of the Commission were invited to review, comment and make any recommendation on future monitoring to be undertaken in the Municipal Year 2014 – 2015.

The Director for Communities advised Members that an update on the Impact of the Welfare Reform for Rural Areas, as discussed at Scrutiny in a Day would be presented to the Commission later in the year.

There were no recommendations raised for future monitoring.

**5. Work Programme 2014 - 2015**

The Director for Communities introduced a report on the Work Programme for 2014 - 2015, which had suggested items for consideration by the Commission.

**ACTION AGREED**

Members considered the Commission's Work Programme for 2014 - 15 and agreed to the following items for inclusion:

- (i) To scrutinise the effectiveness of the Council's Housing Strategy, social housing allocations policy and relevant planning policies with a view to enabling young people and families to remain living in the rural community;
- (ii) To scrutinise the availability of digital resources in rural areas to ensure that communities were not digitally excluded;
- (iii) To scrutinise the effects that rural isolation and loneliness had on older people, taking into account the impacts of welfare reform, including the ability to access advice and information;
- (iv) To scrutinise the impact of welfare reform on young people in rural locations, including their more limited access to services;
- (v) To scrutinise the sustainability of Parish Councils – suggested in order that the Council and PCC partners were cognisant of the pressures faced by Parish Councils and that the Council was doing all it could to ensure their long term viability and sustainability;
- (vi) To scrutinise the role of Parish Councils and rural community organisations and their contribution to the social capital of Peterborough, with a view to ensuring the Council maximise the opportunities available to them where appropriate;
- (vii) To scrutinise the impact of crime and disorder in rural areas, and the measures, policies and actions in place to minimise crime and fear of crime;
- (viii) To scrutinise the effectiveness of Council services, external agencies, mechanisms and processes involved in delivering services to rural communities, including:
  - Amey;
  - Vivacity;
  - Cambridgeshire Constabulary;
  - British Transport Police;
  - Primary, secondary and adult education providers;
  - Voluntary sector agencies;
  - Social housing providers;
  - Council Planning services;
  - Council Highways services; and
  - Public transport providers.

Members also highlighted particular areas of interest to be included within each respective report:

- Vulnerability of school children aged 16 – 18 and the reasons behind truancy; the support being provided to those children Support being provided to Parish Councils by the City Council following grant funding cuts;
- Exploration of the opportunity for Parish Councils to volunteer for PCSO roles with the support of the Police and City Council - Community Safety Team to compile a report and provide details of the Police Officer contacts;
- Social housing - opportunities in rural areas for families with village connections detailing the priority criteria;
- A visit from the Police Crime Commissioner on specific items in relation to the provision for Rural areas on:
  - The utilisation of redundant Police properties;
  - Police resources; and
  - Response call out times.
- Medium Term Financial Plan – Support for social vulnerabilities for rural areas compared to urban areas; and
- Impact on patient appointment attendance following the recent transport cuts – Clinical Commissioning Group.

## **7. Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

The Commission received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Key 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 Decisions and requested further information on the following:

- The vision for older people; and
- Strategy for people with dementia and their carers – briefing note to outline support on the provision for rural areas.

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

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, 1 September 2014.

*The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 7.50pm*

CHAIRMAN

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