

SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES	Agenda Item No. 4
13 JULY 2015	Public Report

Report of the Head of Housing and Health Improvement

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RURAL OVERVIEW

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities with an overview of key strategic issues of concern for rural communities. The report describes what activities are already happening and explores some opportunities for how additional interventions could help to address these concerns within the current challenging financial landscape.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee scrutinise the content of this report.
- 2.2 That the Committee recognises the activities and initiatives contained in this report and agrees to scrutinise progress in relation to directly meeting the needs of the rural communities. Consequently, lead officers will be asked to prepare regular briefing notes for the Committee on these issues.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Officers have presented to the Commission throughout 2014/2015 common themes and issues of concern within rural communities which have been identified via the network forum of Parish Councils.
- 3.2 At the request of the Committee a draft Rural Vision and Parish Charter have been co-produced with representatives of the Parish Council Liaison. Consultation will remain live until 31 July 2015.
- 3.3 An action plan has been developed by the Working Group of the Parish Council Liaison to capture the range of current and pending initiatives that have the potential to impact on the rural communities of Peterborough. This will be monitored by the group on a monthly basis and items of concern will be escalated to the Commission for strategic support and/or scrutiny.

4. KEY ISSUES

Current strategic issues of concern, as identified at the Commission's July 2015 meeting are:

- 4.1 The economic decline of rural communities.

The Commission have highlighted concerns about the increasing economic decline of rural villages. Previous reports to the Commission have highlighted common themes felt across all rural areas that may be contributory factors or have a negative social impact as a consequence of this decline. These issues include an increase in crime and antisocial behaviour, weak digital connectivity, lack of affordable housing, inadequate public transport links, and insufficient activities for young people.

All of these issues are reflected in the working action plan that support the Rural Vision and a range of initiatives are underway at an operational level to address this.

Of significance, the success of Opportunity Peterborough and Rutland County Council's bid for *LEADER funding under the Rural Development Programme, jointly funded by DEFRA and the European Agricultural Fund, will provide a structured approach that will positively impact on these issues as a result of supporting Defra's priorities:

- Support of increasing farm production
- Support for micro and small business and farm diversification
- Support for rural tourism
- Provision for rural services
- Support for cultural and heritage activity
- Support for increasing forestry productivity

LEADER is a well-established method of providing additional funding at a local level and will guarantee a bottom up local approach to developing the strategy and how this is implemented. Critically, it will involve a local public and private partnership to operate as a Local Action Group that can drive the principle of asset based local development through innovation, co-operation and networking.

Opportunity Peterborough has recruited a Programme Facilitator to oversee the delivery of the LEADER programme, and the first Local Action Group meeting will take place on 24th July. A pipeline of suitable projects is already being developed and it is expected that Defra will release the funds in September 2015. It is at this point that the programme will be able to start reviewing applications.

4.2 Working with Rural communities in relation to devolved services

The rural areas of Peterborough are fully parished and in recognition of this, the Scrutiny Commission is championing the development of a Parish Charter to reflect the valuable role Parish Councils play in rural communities. As a document in its own right, this agreement is a demonstration of the council's strong commitment to improve the joint working relationship with all rural and urban Parish Councils so that services are delivered more effectively to meet the needs of the local community.

The Charter reflects the council's belief that Parish Councils can be very effective by influencing and shaping the decisions that affect their communities in the following ways:

- They offer a means of devolving certain services and of revitalising local communities
- They can represent the views of their area and effectively influence the development of policies and services
- They can provide valuable feedback on how Council services are working in their area and how changes in policy are likely to affect the local community

The community capacity team have been promoting the principles of devolved services to Parish Councils via the annual Parish Conferences and direct negotiations with those Parishes that wish to explore this opportunity further.

Going forward the council aims to:

- Develop and publish criteria against which requests for the devolving of services to Parish Councils will be considered.
- Formally consider and respond to requests from Parish Councils for the devolving of services.
- Respond to requests from the Parish Council to 'enhance' a service provided by Peterborough City Council through payment of a contribution (or other means agreed).

- Put in place formal agreements, including financial arrangements, to clarify the arrangements and deliver enhanced services within the agreed terms.

Parish Councils will be under no obligation to take on services and the community capacity team are developing a full programme of 1-2-1 advice and support, active learning opportunities, workshops and business planning support.

4.2.1 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The CIL is a new planning charge to help deliver infrastructure needed to support development of the area. In simple terms, this 'levy' means that any retail development over 100m², or any size of residential development, if it involves the creation of a new dwelling, in Peterborough will have to pay the city council a financial levy. The city council will collect the money from the liable party (usually the developer or owner) and then spend it on new 'infrastructure' which the city needs to grow sustainably. The levy must be used for supporting development of an area by 'funding the provision, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure.'

Previously, developers were required to make a contribution towards new infrastructure under the council's Planning Obligations Implementation Scheme (POIS). Changes in legislation make tariff based systems such as POIS unlawful after 6 April 2015. CIL is a new mechanism for securing these funds which came into effect on 24 April 2015.

The definition of infrastructure is included in the Planning Act 2008 but infrastructure covers a wide range of things including: transport schemes, flood defences, schools, hospitals and other health and social care facilities and parks, green spaces and leisure centres.

It will replace [Section 106 planning obligations](#) for many forms of infrastructure, although Section 106 agreements can still be used for site-specific mitigation measures and for affordable housing provision.

It is essential that we provide new infrastructure at the same time as we build new housing and business development. Life in Peterborough would become very challenging if we didn't provide appropriate infrastructure.

The council's community capacity team work closely with elected members, Parish Councils and community groups to identify the community infrastructure needs within each ward. Information gathered by the team is registered in a ward based 'project bank' which is a valuable information base to evidence community needs and therefore operates as a mechanism to influence how CIL, generated by local development, can be allocated in the area.

The team have developed effective working relations with planning, growth and regeneration teams to ensure that this evidence of community need is recognised. Additionally the team wish to work closely with all Parish Councils to develop 'forward plans' to highlight their area priorities. Should CIL not be available in an area there would still be an opportunity to bid for funding from other sources.

5. **IMPLICATIONS**

None.

6. **CONSULTATION**

The Rural Vision and Parish Charter are in live consultation. The documents were co-produced with the Parish Council Liaison Working Group who will continue to monitor progress on thematic matters that impact on rural communities via a working action plan. On-going engagement opportunities with Parish Councils is available via the quarterly Parish Council Liaison, representatives of which are now co-opted to the Commission

7. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

That the committee discusses the contents of the report to highlight any elements they wish to interrogate further to ensure the activity fully meets the needs of rural communities.

8. NEXT STEPS

That the Commission request regular updates from lead officers on identified areas of concern.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

10. APPENDICES

1. Year on year comparison of rural crime rates

***LEADER is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). It's a French acronym which roughly translates as 'Liaison among Actors in Rural Economic Development'*

APPENDIX 1

June 2013 to May 2014

Ward	Total Crime	Victim Based Crime	Serious Acquisitive Crime	Burglary - Dwelling	All Violent Crime	Robbery	Vehicle Crime	Criminal Damage	Domestic Violence	Alcohol Related Incidents	ASB
Northborough	70	66	21	6	5	0	15	10	10	5	19
Barnack	82	80	16	7	7	0	9	15	14	14	47
Glinton & Wittering	240	225	62	10	38	6	46	32	63	50	124
Eye & Thorney	335	313	71	16	44	3	52	60	107	60	165
Newborough	106	97	16	4	10	0	12	25	30	15	61
RURAL TOTAL	833	781	186	43	104	9	134	142	224	144	416
URBAN TOTAL	14180	12580	2024	605	2838	194	1225	1968	4350	3571	9705
UA TOTAL	15013	13361	2210	648	2942	203	1359	2110	4574	3715	10121
% Rural of total (UA)	5.5%	5.8%	8.4%	6.6%	3.5%	4.4%	9.9%	6.7%	4.9%	3.9%	4.1%
% Urban of Total (UA)	94.5%	94.2%	91.6%	93.4%	96.5%	95.6%	90.1%	93.3%	95.1%	96.1%	95.9%

June 2014 to May 2015

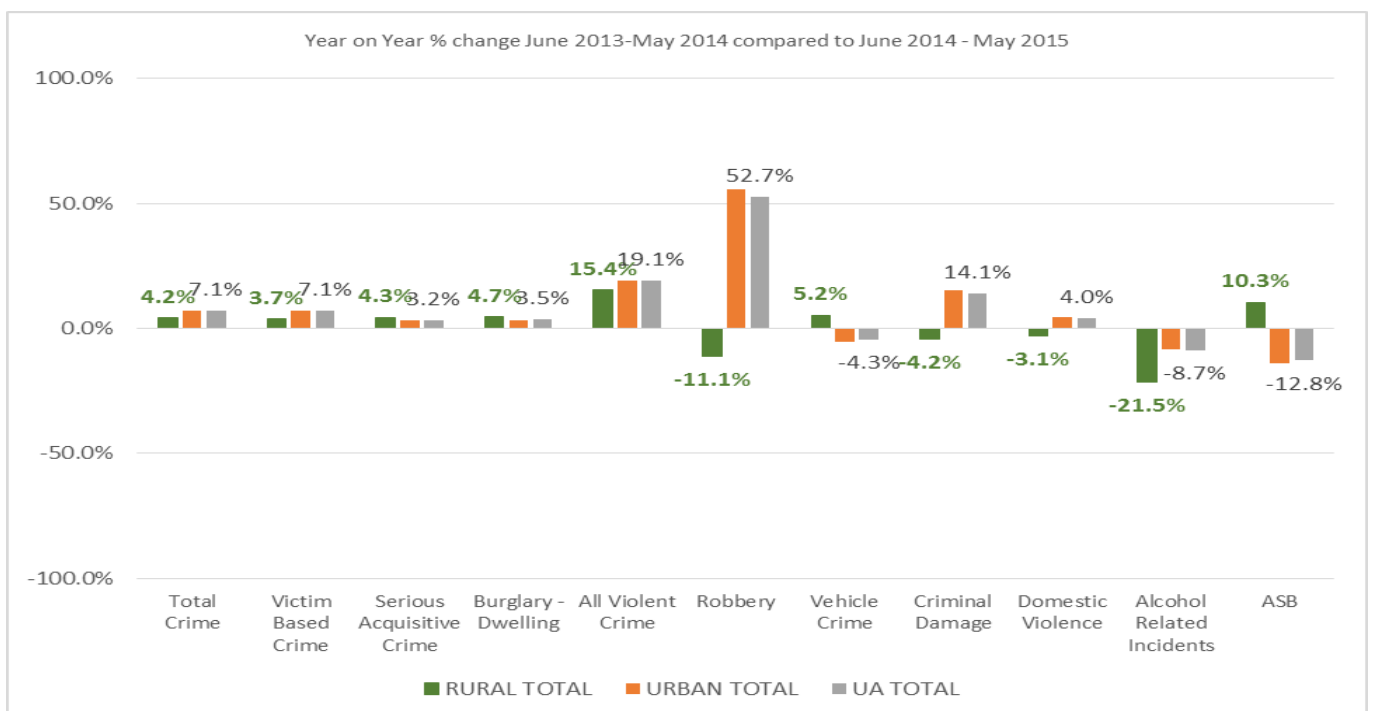
Northborough	63	56	20	5	8	1	14	9	14	3	30
Barnack	77	75	25	8	10	0	17	6	22	6	27
Glinton & Wittering	253	242	71	18	30	1	52	30	57	34	137
Eye & Thorney	344	317	57	9	52	6	42	73	94	58	220
Newborough	131	120	21	5	20	0	16	18	30	12	45
RURAL TOTAL	868	810	194	45	120	8	141	136	217	113	459
URBAN TOTAL	15217	13496	2087	626	3385	302	1159	2271	4541	3279	8364
UA TOTAL	16085	14306	2281	671	3505	310	1300	2407	4758	3392	8823
% Rural of total (UA)	5.4%	5.7%	8.5%	6.7%	3.4%	2.6%	10.8%	5.7%	4.6%	3.3%	5.2%
% Urban of Total (UA)	94.6%	94.3%	91.5%	93.3%	96.6%	97.4%	89.2%	94.3%	95.4%	96.7%	94.8%

Year on year difference - Count

Northborough	-7	-10	-1	-1	3	1	-1	-1	4	-2	11
Barnack	-5	-5	9	1	3	0	8	-9	8	-8	-20
Glinton & Wittering	13	17	9	8	-8	-5	6	-2	-6	-16	13
Eye & Thorney	9	4	-14	-7	8	3	-10	13	-13	-2	55
Newborough	25	23	5	1	10	0	4	-7	0	-3	-16
RURAL TOTAL	35	29	8	2	16	-1	7	-6	-7	-31	43
URBAN TOTAL	1037	916	63	21	547	108	-66	303	191	-292	-1341
UA TOTAL	1072	945	71	23	563	107	-59	297	184	-323	-1298

Year on year difference - % Change

RURAL TOTAL	4.2%	3.7%	4.3%	4.7%	15.4%	-11.1%	5.2%	-4.2%	-3.1%	-21.5%	10.3%
URBAN TOTAL	7.3%	7.3%	3.1%	3.5%	19.3%	55.7%	-5.4%	15.4%	4.4%	-8.2%	-13.8%
UA TOTAL	7.1%	7.1%	3.2%	3.5%	19.1%	52.7%	-4.3%	14.1%	4.0%	-8.7%	-12.8%



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