

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES  
HELD IN THE  
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH  
ON 7 MARCH 2016**

**Present:** Councillors: Harrington (Chairman), Murphy (Vice-Chairman), Brown, Sanders, Okonkowski, and J R Fox.

**Also Present:** Keith Lievesley Independent Co-opted Member  
Philip Nuttall Independent Co-opted Member  
Cllr Thulbourn Chairman of the Design and Implementation Group

**Officers in Attendance:**

Gary Goose	Head of Communities
Oliver Hayward	Head of Business Management and Commercial Operations
Cate Harding	Community Capacity Manager
Charlotte Palmer	Environment, Transport and Future City Manager
Richard Mayes	Principal Passenger Transport Contracts and Planning Officer
Alison Stuart	Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services
Paulina Ford	Senior Democratic Services Officer

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stokes and the following Independent Co-opted Members: Henry Clark and Joe Dobson.

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

There were no declarations of interest or whipping declarations.

**2. Minutes of Meeting Held on 11 January 2016**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2016 were approved as a true and accurate record.

**4. Customer Experience Programme – Investment In Communities**

The Head of Business Management and Commercial Operations supported by the Community Capacity Manager introduced the report. The report provided the Commission with an overview of the Investment in Communities Programme (IIC) which was part of the Customer Experience Programme. Members were informed that there were three main things supporting the IIC which were:

- People and Communities Strategy
- Parish Charter
- Customer Experience Programme

Members were advised that four pilot initiatives would be developed to test the focus on community investment which were:

- Primary Prevention
- Selective Licensing
- Assistive Technology
- Development of Social Enterprises

Questions and comments were raised around the following areas:

- Members sought clarification as to what would happen if the pilots did not work. *Members were informed that a range of comparative areas would be identified. An assessment of the capacity that already exists in these communities would be carried out. In areas where there are no existing community groups other structures that might already be in place like Parish Councils will be asked to assist with creating a community group. The pilots were in place to test if this methodology would work and there were different pathways that could be explored to find the best way to proceed.*
- What will happen if there is insufficient capacity within the voluntary sector to support this? *Members were advised that currently there was a great commitment from the specialist professionals and the voluntary sector who all worked together for the greater good of the community. Investing in the community involved more than identifying volunteers and before moving forward a mapping exercise would take place to find out what was currently available.*
- How is the plan for Assisted Technology working and have any gaps been identified? *Members were informed that some homes had been identified however the technology had not yet been installed and it was therefore too early to assess the quality of the service.*
- With reference to diverting delivery of services out to Parish Councils. Members wished it noted that Parish Councils also had diminishing resources and were therefore concerned that the expectation was that Parish Councils would now have to deliver services on behalf of the council. *Members were informed that the expectation was not that the Parish Councils would deliver the services but that they would work with the council to provide the infrastructure of support. The council would therefore like to work with Parish Councils to explore their willingness to look at different ways of working and to work collaboratively to deliver services in clusters if appropriate.*
- Members expressed concern that there will be difficulty recruiting volunteers in this area, particularly if there was a lot of paperwork involved. Support would need to be offered to organisations who find volunteers to make the process easier. *Members were advised that the mapping exercise would highlight the work already carried out by volunteers in the community and beyond and put measures in place to support this further. The aim was to harness what was already happening and encourage volunteers to do more although it was recognised that this cannot be forced.*
- The local community may wonder why this is being done now, how will you convince them to engage in the programme and ensure the volunteers have the capabilities to deliver? *Members were informed that the situation in Peterborough was not unique and that the same issues were affecting other local authorities across the country. It is not assumed that volunteers were willing or have the necessary capabilities required however further investment is being considered to increase the capacity and work will take place at a pace acceptable to the local community. Members were also advised that there had been interest in the programme at a national level from organisations such as the YMCA and Banardos who have secured funding and were specialists in social enterprise.*
- How will the funding be used? *Members were advised the money would go towards supporting activities around recruitment and training of volunteers and co-ordinating volunteers to prevent volunteers being isolated.*
- With voluntary sector funding being cut why are we recruiting in this area? *Members were informed that this is exactly the reason investment in this scheme had occurred and the need to invest in the local community has been recognised. It is intended to build on existing organisations already in place. The role of Parish Councils has been recognised in the part they play in understanding and presenting information on the demographics of their area and it is hoped that work would continue with them to develop the infrastructure.*

- How will the community understand what the programme is about, what the council do, what the council will not do and what is expected of the community and how much will it cost compared to previous years? *Members were informed that £200,000 of new money had been earmarked for the first phase of the project to be phased in as existing contracts expire and £1 million a year would be forthcoming from Adult Social Care and Health.*
- Under Building Block 10 Health and Social Care Services, Barnack Ward fits into Stamford, how will this work? *Officers present did not have the information available and informed Members that this element was being covered by the Adult Social Care team.*
- What was the timeframe for the project? *Members were advised that pilot studies were in hand and results would be known in June/July 2016. Depending on the results of the pilots it was anticipated that implementation would take place in August 2016.*
- Members commented that voluntary groups had not been consulted with regard to the People and Communities Strategy and wanted to know if a consultation would take place prior to the pilot? *Members were informed that the pilots were already underway. It was explained to Members that the Innovation Partnership which was a group of people representing all organisations including voluntary groups and therefore a co-production group would help to design the building blocks and detail. Whilst there had not been a formal consultation other organisations had been involved in this piece of work.*
- How will external bodies be able to have full input without a consultation? *Members were informed that the pilots would be evaluated with sector partners who specialised in this area of work.*
- Members discussed at length if a recommendation to go out to consultation should be put forward. *Members were informed that the Communities Strategy which had been produced in conjunction with a cross party Task and Finish Group had already been through the appropriate governance process and had been to the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee for approval before going to Cabinet. One of the recommendations of that Committee to Cabinet was that further consultation was required. However the report being discussed at this meeting was not the People and Communities Strategy but part of the Customer Experience Programme which was Investment in Communities. Officers confirmed that representatives from the voluntary sector were involved in the groups working on the Investment in Communities Programme.*
- After further discussion Members decided that the item should be noted and that no recommendation would be made at this time.

## **ACTION AGREED**

The Committee noted the report.

## **5. Rural Transport**

The Environment, Transport and Future City Manager accompanied by the Principal Passenger Transport Contracts and Planning Officer introduced the report which provided the Commission with a short overview on rural transport in relation to the Local Transport Plan. The report included information on:

- Road Safety
- School Travel
- Sustainable Travel
- Business Transport and Passenger Transport

Questions and comments were raised around the following areas:

- How much of the £100,000 available will be diverted to Rural Transport? *Members were informed that the £100,000 would cover a number of measures and about a third would go on the route into the rural areas.*
- Members asked for an update on the Call Connect Service which operated in the west of Peterborough? *Members were advised that Call Connect was put in place following the*

*Bus Service Review in 2013. Since then there had been an increase in demand which had resulted in the purchase of an additional 20 seater bus. There were initial concerns when Call Connect replaced the traditional timetabled bus service but the call centre that handled the service had received positive feedback from service users. Service users could now travel between 7am and 7pm Monday to Saturday which was an improvement on the timetabled service.*

- How does the Call Connect Service compare with the limited scheduled service in the other rural areas? *Members were informed that each service has its own advantages. Call Connect was better able to cope with a change in demand. Most noticeable was that commuters have been reluctant to change to a demand responsive service however where the change had occurred response had over time been positive.*
- Has the Number 22 service been monitored for capacity and would Call Connect be able to accommodate this? *Members were informed that figures within the Route 22 area would need to be analysed in order to answer this.*
- Could Kingfisher buses, mainly used for transporting the disabled be utilised during the day in between dropping people off in the morning and returning for them at night? *Members were advised that information regarding this would need to be looked into.*
- Members commented that a resident had called the council following an operation which rendered her unable to drive and she was given the number for Dial a Ride. When she contacted them they were unable to accommodate her. Why was this? *Members were informed that there are two sections to Dial a Ride one for urban areas and one for rural areas called Octaine. Officers requested further information to enable them to be investigate the issue further.*
- An update was requested on road traffic accidents. *Members were advised that this information was not available but could be provided. Members were informed that last year had seen a downward trend in road traffic accidents however this year it had been stable. A lot of work was being done in rural areas targeting young drivers.*
- Members referred to paragraph 4.5.3, Children and Young People and commented that young mother's needed to be educated in driving in rural areas. Councillor Harrington, seconded by Councillor Sanders recommended that a targeted piece of work be done on educating young mothers with regard to driving in rural areas. *Members were informed that this issue had not been identified as an issue or priority but a piece of work could be done to see if this was an issue and target this group of drivers.*

## **ACTION AGREED**

The Commission agreed to note the report and requested further information on the following:

1. A report on route 22 specific area and travel patterns.
2. Information on whether Kingfisher Buses could be used during the day.
3. Data with regard to the number of road traffic accidents in rural areas.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Commission recommended that a targeted piece of work is undertaken to educate young mothers driving in rural areas.

8.10pm at this point Councillor Sanders left the meeting

## **6. Alternative Governance Arrangements**

The Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services accompanied by Councillor Thulbourn introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update on the next steps following Council's decision on 27 January 2016 to confirm its earlier decision to adopt a hybrid model of governance to take effect from the Annual Council meeting in May 2016.

Questions and comments were raised around the following areas:

- Members noted that there would only be 3 committees with 10 members on each committee and asked what the other 30 councillors would be doing and was concerned that smaller political groups would not get a place on any of the committees. *Members were informed that there would still be the other regulatory committees and also there would be more task and finish groups formed where other councillors could get involved. Proportionality would be applied to each committee which may mean that smaller groups may have one member on each committee.*
- Members commented that 10 was too small a number and it might be more beneficial to have a larger number of Members and/or Co-opted Members on each committee.
- Members commented that they would not want the Parish Council Liaison meetings to replace the representation currently held on the Rural Commission by the four Co-opted Members.
- Members were assured that Paragraph 5.14 of the report recognised the importance of having Co-opted Members on the new Scrutiny Committees to reflect additional skills, knowledge and experience and outlined the ability to have up to four non-voting members in addition to the statutory co-opted Members.
- Members queried how the Co-opted Members would be appointed. *The Chairman of the Design and Implementation Group responded that the co-opted members would be invited by the committee to become a co-opted member and the best way to be chosen would be to engage with the Scrutiny Committees.*
- Members sought clarification as to whether the Scrutiny Committees would determine who their own Chairman would be and whether the Scrutiny Chairmen would be a member of the administration or the opposition? *The Chairman of the Design and Implementation Group responded that these issues would be decided by the Group Leaders and then presented before Full Council after the election.*
- Members commented that in order to scrutinise effectively the Scrutiny Chairmen should not be members of the ruling administration.
- Members queried when the Wandsworth Model which was originally put forward had been altered to form the Peterborough Model? *The Chairman of the Design and Implementation Group responded that the outcome of the process was what had been considered rather than the structure of the model. Although the Peterborough model differed in structure to the Wandsworth model, the outcome of both processes remained the same in that it would be pre-decision scrutiny. The new model would allow Members to focus on a few substantive issues over the year and would enable the Committees to undertake more intensive reviews. This would therefore decrease the amount of reports received by the Scrutiny Committees.*
- The Chairman of the Design and Implementation Group commented that Members would receive training on the new model and rural issues would be embedded in the three Scrutiny Committees.

Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Fox, put forward a recommendation that the new Council in the new municipal year introduce a governance system that is more inclusive and collaborative than the current or proposed new hybrid system and that the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committees should not be members of the ruling administration.

The recommendation was put to the vote and agreed (4 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention)

Councillor Harrington put forward a recommendation that one of the four co-opted members of each scrutiny committee is a rural Parish Councillor to ensure rural communities are represented.

The recommendation was unanimously agreed.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee recommend that the new Council in the new municipal year:

- a) Introduce a governance system that is more inclusive and collaborative than the current or new hybrid model and that the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committees should not be members of the ruling administration.
- b) That one of the four Co-opted Members of each Scrutiny Committee is a Rural Parish Councillor to ensure that rural communities are represented.

## **7. 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 Executive Decisions and requested further information on the following:

- Peterborough Highways Contract – Skanska – KEY/11JAN16/02
- Joint Enforcement Team – KEY/22FEB/16/03

The Chairman thanked the Commission for all the work that had been accomplished over the past year and said that it had been a privilege and pleasure to preside as Chairman of the Commission. The Commission had made some credible recommendations and had highlighted rural concerns. The Chairman also thanked officers for their work in supporting the Commission and thanked the Co-opted Members for their valuable contribution to the work of the Commission.

*The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 9.15 pm*

CHAIRMAN