

SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES	Agenda Item No. 4
8 June 2010	Public Report

Report of the Solicitor to the Council

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REVIEW OF WORK UNDERTAKEN IN 2009-2010

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Commission with review of the scrutiny work undertaken, and the outcomes of this work, in the 2009-2010 municipal year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Commission considers the 2009-2010 year in review and makes recommendations on the future monitoring of these items where necessary.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities was established by Council at its annual meeting on 18 May 2009. During its inaugural year, the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities considered:

- a) **A Rural Definition** – the Commission agreed the following definition to describe ‘Rural Communities’ to ensure scrutiny function was focussed correctly:

“Rural areas are wards with a significant rural character and also wards with important areas of countryside”.

This definition was recommended to the Leader of the Cabinet for use to identify rural areas and communities when discussing rural policy or developing strategies that would affect rural areas of the city.

- b) **Fix it Van** – the Commission considered the role of the Fix It Van service and its relevance to the rural communities.
- c) **Langdyke Trust** – the Commission was requested to identify any areas of good practise and make recommendations about the future establishment and benefits to rural communities of land trusts and how these trusts could be supported by the City Council.
- d) **Rural Economy** – the Commission received a report on the role that Opportunity Peterborough has played in supporting the rural economy and businesses.
- e) **Signposting** – the Commission received a report outlining the issues relating to the use of traditional style direction signs (finger posts) in the rural areas of Peterborough rather than the current ‘aluminium plate’ type signs
- f) **Traffic Mitigation** - The commission received a report concerning speed limits on rural roads, outside schools and also casualty data for rural areas.

- g) **Bus Routes** – Review for Rural Communities - The commission received a report about the proposed Bus Service Review and its affects on bus services for rural areas in order to consult and provide comments on the proposals
- h) **Rural Housing Strategy** - The commission received a report outlining the scope, purpose and objectives of the emerging Rural Housing Strategy. The commission was requested to give comment and feedback, support the principles and consider how it could support the strategy.
- i) **Fly Tipping** - The commission received a report on the impact of fly tipping and the Council's actions to tackle it within the rural areas of Peterborough and to allow opportunity for these actions to be scrutinised.
- j) **Cycle Routes** - Members received a report on the Council's actions to provide cycling opportunities to rural areas including opportunities to encourage cycling between villages and to schools, improve cycleways, cycle stands and options for re-charging points for electric bikes.
- k) **Rail Links** - The commission received a report on Council actions and efforts to increase rail provision in rural areas. The commission was requested to scrutinise the report and recommend ways to improve and increase activity to achieve greater rail provision.
- l) **School Admissions in rural areas** - The commission received a report advising it of the Council's approach and efforts to ensure rural school places are maintained and of any successes or obstacles experienced.
- m) **Children's and Youth Centre Provision** - The commission received a report on how Children's Services were being transformed and the impact that new ways of working and delivering services would have on children and young people in rural communities in Peterborough.
- n) **Climate Change – Rural Actions** – the commission received a report on outlining the current and future actions that could be undertaken to address the impacts Climate Change may have upon the rural communities of Peterborough.
- o) **Play Provision** - received a report outlining the provision of play facilities in rural areas. The Commission was requested to scrutinise the current provision and make recommendations towards its improvement.
- p) **Business, Employment and Training** - The Commission received a report outlining the work that has been undertaken to improve business, employment and training provision in rural areas.

3.2 For the information of the Commission, copies of recommendations reports submitted to the Commission throughout the year are attached.

4. **KEY ISSUES**

4.1 The Commission is asked to consider the work undertaken the Commission's first year and makes recommendations on the future monitoring of any of these items where necessary.

5. **IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Any implications are contained within the individual responses to the recommendations.

6. **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

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

6.1 Minutes of the meetings of the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities held on:

27 July 2009, 5 October 2009, 23 November 2009, 25 January 2010 and 22 March 2010.

7. APPENDICES

- 7.1 Appendix 1, Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities – Responses to Recommendations for 2009-2010.

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