

<b>CABINET</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM No. 6</b>
<b>14 JUNE 2010</b>	<b>PUBLIC REPORT</b>

Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor P Hiller (Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Planning)	
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**PETERBOROUGH RURAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2010-13**

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
<b>FROM</b> : Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Planning	<b>Deadline date</b> : 14 June 2010
Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That Cabinet Adopts the Rural Housing Strategy as a supporting document to the Peterborough Housing Strategy</li> </ul>	

**1. ORIGIN OF REPORT**

1.1 This report is submitted to Cabinet following a scrutiny commission for rural community panel meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2009. The Rural Housing Strategy seeks to support the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas of the authority, together with wider rural housing matters. It does not introduce new housing policy, but is a supporting document to the main Peterborough Housing Strategy document adopted in 2008. Consequently, the Rural Housing Strategy is not to be treated as a major policy item and does not require full council approval.

**2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT**

2.1 The purpose of this report is to outlining the scope, purpose and objectives of the Peterborough Rural Housing Strategy. A copy of the Rural Housing Strategy recommended for adoption is attached. The strategy represents a joint response from Peterborough City Council (PCC) and the Greater Peterborough Partnership (GPP) to rural housing issues as identified in the GPP's Rural Vision and Strategy.

2.2 This report is for Cabinet to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 3.2.4: To promote the Council's corporate and key strategies and Peterborough's Community Strategy and approve strategies and cross-cutting programmes not included within the Council's major policy and budget framework.

**3. TIMESCALE**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	<b>NO</b>
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#### 4. THE PETERBOROUGH RURAL HOUSING STRATEGY

- 4.1 The Rural Housing Strategy seeks to empower rural communities to address rural housing issues for themselves. The strategy document focuses upon the three priorities:
- Affordable Housing;
  - Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty; and
  - In-keeping design.
- 4.2 It is written in a style that is designed to make the document accessible, with key concepts clearly explained. The Rural Housing Strategy has not been produced to change policy on issues relating to affordable housing provision, energy efficiency and in-keeping design. Instead, it seeks to give rural communities the necessary contacts, information and opportunities, in order to help them address housing-related issues for themselves.
- 4.3 The document focuses upon the priorities of rural communities in relation to housing. The priorities of the Rural Housing Strategy reflect a number of the objectives of Peterborough Housing Strategy 2008-11, including:
- Providing good quality, affordable housing;
  - The development of mixed and balanced communities; and
  - To promote and implement environmental and energy efficiency standards.
- 4.4 The Rural Housing Strategy also aligns to the four priorities of the Peterborough Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 2008-21 in that it will:
- Empower local communities (link to SCS Priority 2);
  - Help conserve natural resources (link to SCS Priority 3); and
  - Help create better places to live (link to SCS Priorities 2 and 4).
- 4.5 The priorities of the Rural Housing Strategy also compliment the following priorities of the Peterborough Corporate Plan:
- Planning and delivering of a safe, attractive and environmentally friendly city; and
  - Making Peterborough a better place in which to live and work.

#### Summary of the Rural Housing Strategy

- 4.6 As Peterborough's first Rural Housing Strategy, this document outlines a joint response between Peterborough City Council and the Greater Peterborough Partnership to address a number of rural housing issues as first identified in the GPP Rural Vision and Strategy. It provides a rural focus for existing approved planning and housing strategies and delivery proposals for the authority as a whole.

#### Objectives and Priorities

- 4.7 The objectives of the Rural Housing Strategy closely relate to its three key priorities:
- **Affordable Housing** – To increase the supply and methods of delivery of affordable housing in rural areas, for both people local to rural areas and for those looking to move in;
  - **Fuel Poverty and Energy Inefficiency** – To improve the energy efficiency of rural housing stock and to prevent vulnerable households from falling into 'fuel poverty';
  - **In Keeping Design** – To give rural communities a greater voice on how future development best remains 'in keeping' with local character.
- 4.8 The role of the Rural Housing Strategy is to enable and empower those living in rural areas. It will aim to set out the options available to rural communities in order to address the

priorities of the Rural Housing Strategy and achieve its objectives. This strategy will evolve over time as rural communities become more empowered and engaged with its agenda.

- 4.9 The document provides an overview of rural Peterborough, including its demographic profile and other distinct socio-economic features. The document also provides the reader with background information in regards to the three priorities that the Rural Housing Strategy intends to address. A series of actions follow on from each of the chapters that focus upon the three priorities of the strategy. These actions are also summarised in a table towards the end of the document. To help further inform the reader, a glossary of terms (including relevant web links) is also provided.

## **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The following summarise the consultation undertaken to date on the Rural Housing Strategy:

- Feb 2009 to Sept 2009 – Ongoing consultation with GPP Rural Working Group

*Feedback from the GPP Rural Working Group on the draft strategy has been broadly positive. The group played a large role in shaping the document from an initial draft through to a final draft, offering suggestions on key priorities, actions and content.*

- September 2009 – Presentation of emerging strategy to Parish Council Liaison meeting

*Feedback from the Parish Council Liaison meeting was also broadly positive. No amendments were suggested to the strategy at this meeting.*

- October 2009 – Presentation of emerging strategy to Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities

*The Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities offered positive comments on the strategy. The commission commended the strategy and what it is attempting to achieve, whilst also acknowledging the size of the challenge faced.*

## **6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES**

That Cabinet will adopt the Rural Housing Strategy.

## **7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Rural Housing Strategy represents a joint response between Peterborough City Council (PCC) and the Greater Peterborough Partnership (GPP) to address rural housing issues identified in the GPP's Rural Vision and Strategy; lower levels of affordable housing, energy efficiency, fuel poverty and in-keeping design. The Rural Housing Strategy sets out measures that seek to enable rural communities to address rural housing-related issues for themselves, with the assistance of both PCC and the GPP. The focus on empowering rural communities is essential in order to address many of the priority areas of the Rural Housing Strategy. The Rural Housing Strategy sets out measures to connect rural communities with the agencies and services that enable them to address issues, such as a lack of affordable housing for local people, for themselves.

## **8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

The only alternative is not to prepare a Rural Housing Strategy, and instead rely on the GPP Rural Strategy and Vision and existing wider Housing Strategy to delivery these aims. However, it was felt that it would be more appropriate to produce a document which had a separate focus for specific rural housing issues.

## 9. IMPLICATIONS

**Financial:** The Rural Housing Strategy should have minimal financial implications. PCC's membership of the planned Rural Housing Delivery Partnership will cost £2,000 per annum.

**Legal:** No obvious legal implications

**Human Rights:** No obvious human rights implications

**Human Resources:** No additional staff required as a result of the actions set out within the Rural Housing Strategy. Existing resources will be directed as appropriate.

**ICT:** No additional ICT implications

**Property:** No additional property implications

**Procurement:** No additional procurement implications

**LAA targets:** Will contribute towards NI 154, NI 155 and NI 186

**Environmental:** This strategy positively contributes indirectly to environmental issues through (a) its support and assistance on fuel poverty / energy efficiency measures; (b) its support of good quality design of new rural buildings and (c) from the community/social aspect of sustainability, by supporting the provision of affordable homes. As such, the strategy should be regarded as having indirect positive implications (rather than direct implications, because the strategy is mostly about empowering others to take action rather than taking action directly ourselves).

## 10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

- The Peterborough Housing Strategy 2008 -2011;
- GPP Rural Vision and Strategy.