

SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES	Agenda Item No. 4
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Report of the Executive Director of Operations

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PETERBOROUGH WOMEN’S ENTERPRISE CENTRE

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a brief background to the establishment of the Women’s Enterprise Centre (WEC), and the aims and objectives of the WEC in response to a request from the Scrutiny Commission on the work undertaken or is planned to be undertaken to engage with women in rural areas.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To review the details of the Women’s Enterprise Centre and to make any appropriate recommendations for future development.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

- 3.1 The Economic Participation Programme and in particular the activities of the project link directly the achievements of the Local Area Agreement and National Indicators as listed below:

LAA priority	Regenerating Neighbourhoods
LAA outcome	National Indicator NI153 – working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods

LAA priority	Increasing Economic Prosperity
LAA Outcome	National Indicator NI151 – Overall employment rate NI166 – Average earnings of employees in the area NI171 – VAT registration rate

4. BACKGROUND

Background to the establishment of the WEC

- 4.1 Peterborough City Council is working together with the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) to enable people to achieve their potential in work or self employment as outlined in the Investing in Communities (IiC) Business Plan 2007-11. The aim of the programme is to ensure that the most deprived communities can achieve their full potential and therefore contribute to, and benefit from, sustainable economic growth in the Peterborough Area.
- 4.2 The Women’s Enterprise Centre project was borne of an idea from the Leader of the Council, following the “Inspiring Women” conference. The Economic Participation Programme had identified unallocated funding, which was being advertised across Peterborough for organisations with potential project ideas which fit the EP programme criteria to apply for funding.

- 4.3 The leader and the chief executive drew on the experience of an external organisation to draw up a business case and selected a venue for a Women's Business Centre. This business case was submitted to the Economic Participation Programme along with other projects from both internal and external organisations as an application for the funding.
- 4.4 The application progressed along the EP programme application process, until it was approved by the Neighbourhood Regeneration Strategic Board and EEDA on 29 October 2009.

The WEC's aims and objectives

- 4.5 The objectives for this project are:
- To create a centre of excellence for the support and development of women starting and running their own business
 - To provide economic opportunity for women in order to enhance their contribution to the regional economy
 - To Improve opportunity, social inclusion and wealth for women
 - To raised awareness of and increased access to support
- 4.6 The outcomes from this project will be:
- A centre and outreach provision were services are accessible to women from all sectors of society regardless of any special requirements or ethnic background.
 - high quality services to facilitate opportunities for women to succeed in their chosen field.
 - women who want to start or grow a business, or progress within their chosen career are given the support and encouragement they need to succeed

Any work undertaken or planned to engage women in rural areas

- 4.7 The aim of the Economic programme is to ensure the most deprived communities can achieve their full potential and therefore contribute to, and benefit from, sustainable economic growth in the Peterborough Area. Research shows that the most deprived areas as evidenced by the indices of Multiple Deprivation are:
- Dogsthorpe
 - East
 - Paston
 - Central
 - Ravensthorpe

- 4.8 The project recognises that there are issues of deprivation in rural areas that have are not identified by the indices of Multiple Deprivation. And whilst the funding does not target specifically women in rural communities, the centre accommodates every woman who walks into the centre, irrespective of where they live in Peterborough.

Any other work specific to supporting women's enterprise in rural areas

- 4.9 The project staff can work with the Scrutiny Commission to develop a programme of activities that will actively support enterprise for women in rural areas.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 The Scrutiny Commission are asked to consider the information on the Women's Enterprise Centre and to make any appropriate recommendations for future development.

6. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

- 6.1 Investing in Communities (IiC) Business Plan 2007-11
Evidence Base 2006

7. APPENDICES

7.1 None.

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