

Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board

Partnership Scrutiny – Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

16 February 2010

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider the outcomes of the scrutiny review of the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and to agree the recommendations to Executive.

The draft report will be circulated separately to Members.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note the briefing on the review of representation on Outside Bodies.
- (2) Consider the draft report (circulated separately to Members of the Board) and agree the draft report be circulated to Officers for comments.
- (3) Agree that the Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager in consultation with the Chairman of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board be delegated to agree any amendments to the report prior to submitting to the Executive.

Details

1 Partnership Scrutiny: Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

- 1.1 The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board has been undertaking a scrutiny review of the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council.
- 1.2 All evidence gathered throughout the review has been circulated separately to Members. It will form Volume Two of the final report. The evidence has been gathered through: background briefings; site visits;

question and answer session with the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive of Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and Cherwell District Council' Portfolio Holder Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural and Strategic Director Environment and Community.

- 1.3 At the Board's January meeting Members agreed the following recommendations:
 - a) That it be noted that the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council is an important partnership which should continue and be regarded as critical to the delivery of the rural agenda.
 - b) That a Service Level Agreement for the urban/rural and community transport elements of the partnership be adopted.
 - c) That the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board should monitor progress against each of the above recommendations and review the situation, initially in September 2010.
- 1.4 At the meeting Members deferred agreement of the following recommendations subject to further clarification regarding the role and involvement of elected Members on the Council's partnerships and as appointed representatives on outside bodies:
 - a) That an annual programme of aims/objectives (aligned to the Rural Strategy Action Plan and the Council's corporate priorities) be agreed with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and regularly reviewed and monitored.
 - b) That the role and involvement of elected Members in the Council's partnership be clarified and strengthened.
 - c) That the elected Member representative should work closely with urban and rural services officers and community transport officers to provide overall steer and direction.

2 Review of Representation on Outside Bodies

- 2.1 In spring 2009 the Executive requested further information setting out how the Council will effectively support member representatives on partnerships and all outside bodies, including providing appropriate training, strengthening staff support for members, advice on council policy with regard to issues within the remit of partnerships and outside bodies and providing feedback mechanisms from issues raised on partnerships on outside bodies.
- 2.2 In response to the specific issues raised by the Executive, a project group was formed. The objectives of the group are attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 In addition, in advance of 2010/11 the Leader of the Council has

commissioned a review of the current councillor representation on outside bodies to establish if this is an appropriate level of commitment and a good use of resources.

2.4 The Chairman will brief the Board at the meeting on the current state of this work.

3 ORCC Report on Community Transport Provision

3.1 As a further piece of evidence, Members will wish to note that as a result of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review of Concessionary Travel in spring/summer 2009, the Portfolio Holder commissioned research into the feasibility of introducing alternative community transport schemes in those parts of the district where residents do not benefit from the concessionary bus pass, national travel tokens or the Dial-A-Ride service. The research was conducted by the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and the report is attached at Appendix 2.

3.2 The piece of work is an example of the move towards a more proactive role that the Council is taking in the partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council.

4 Conclusion

3.3 This completes the work of the Board's scrutiny review into the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council. Subject to Member's agreement, the Board's report will be submitted to Executive in April 2010.

Implications

Financial: There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Legal: There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Risk Management: There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Themes

A district of opportunity; A safe and healthy Cherwell

Executive Portfolio

Councillor Nigel Morris
Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Review of Representation on Outside Bodies – Objectives
Appendix 2	Report on community transport provision in Cherwell district (Report of Oxfordshire Rural Community Council)
Background Papers	
Draft Report:	
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