



REPORT TO:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	3 OCTOBER 2013
REPORT OF THE:	HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES CLARE SLATER
TITLE OF REPORT:	TOPIC FOR THE NEXT SCRUTINY REVIEW
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present members of the committee with some suggestions for the topic of a scrutiny review, to be undertaken following completion of the current review.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That members of the committee agree:
- (i) the topic for the next scrutiny review;
 - (ii) the membership of the task group for the review; and
 - (iii) the date of an initial meeting of the task group to develop the scope and initial terms of reference for the review, for agreement at the next meeting of the committee.

3.0 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The key to a successful scrutiny review is agreeing a clear scope and terms of reference before embarking on the actual review.
- 3.2 The task group will undertake the work on the review and require a minimum of two members of the committee but open to all members of the Council.
- 3.3 The first phase of each review will inform the scope and terms of reference.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

- 4.1 There are no significant risks associated with this report. The risk with any scrutiny review is that the scope is too wide and the terms of reference not clear.

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT AND CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Undertaking Scrutiny reviews contributes to the delivery of corporate aim 5 (to Transform the Council) and strategic objectives 9 (to know our communities and

meet their needs) and 10 (to develop the leadership, capacity and capability to deliver future improvements).

- 5.2 Consultation with relevant partners, members of the public or any other parties the members decide would help to inform the review will be undertaken as part of the review. The task group will prepare the plan for this as an integral part of the review.

REPORT

6.0 REPORT DETAILS

- 6.1 At the previous meeting of the committee a number of ideas for a suitable topic for the next scrutiny review were discussed. A common theme across the topics discussed was the value of community rights within the Localism Act 2011.

- 6.2 The Localism Act 2011 includes a number of 'Community Rights' these are listed below and further information can be accessed by using the links:

- [Community Right to Bid](#)
- [Community Right to Build](#)
- [Community Right to Challenge](#)
- [Community Right to Reclaim Land](#)

- 6.2 The following topics are suggested by officers for consideration for the next review:

(i) Localism and Fuel Poverty

In August 2013 the government set out a new definition of fuel poverty, which it plans to adopt. The new definition will be that a household will be defined as 'fuel poor' if:

- Total household income is below the poverty line (taking into account energy costs); and
- Energy costs are higher than typical.

The Department for Energy and Climate Change published a detailed report in August to explain the change in definition- [Link to report](#)

The current definition of a 'fuel poor household' is that a household would need to spend 10% of their income on energy a year. Ryedale currently has 26% of households who are fuel poor under this definition and has the third highest levels after Eden and Derbyshire Dales. Under the revised definition Ryedale has 11.1% of households in fuel poverty and is ranked 150th out of 329 areas.

Ryedale has a the highest proportion of Hard to Treat Homes (those homes which are of solid wall construction and are off-gas networks) in York and North Yorkshire

The key drivers behind fuel poverty are:

- The energy efficiency of the property (and therefore, the energy required to heat and power the home)
- The cost of energy
- Household income

A review could be undertaken to investigate the potential within the community rights for communities to develop sustainable solutions to some of their fuel needs, with studies of examples of communities using the powers to develop such solutions and research into the potential for communities to collaborate to develop local energy solutions.

(ii) Use of the Community Rights to date

A review could be undertaken of the use made of the various community rights in other local authority areas, and an exploration of the potential to encourage use of the rights for the benefit of communities in Ryedale.

6.4 Empty Properties and Homelessness

The strategies in place to address Homelessness and the number of Empty Properties have been provided to members and links can be found at the end of this report. Whilst an investigation into the use of empty homes to alleviate homelessness was suggested as a possible topic for a scrutiny review, a question and answer session for members with the Housing Services Manager may be a more suitable route for investigating this issue and explaining the work the Council undertakes in reducing the number of homeless presentations and the number of empty properties and any relationship between the two.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The following implications have been identified:

- a) Financial
None currently. Support to the review working groups will be provided by the Transformation Team
- b) Legal
None
- c) Other (Equalities, Staffing, Planning, Health & Safety, Environmental, Crime & Disorder)
None at this stage, equality impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the review process.

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Background Papers:

The Localism Act 2011

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5959/1896534.pdf

Community Rights:

- [Community Right to Bid](http://www.gov.uk/government/policies/giving-people-more-power-over-what-happens-in-their-neighbourhood/supporting-pages/community-right-to-bid) - www.gov.uk/government/policies/giving-people-more-power-over-what-happens-in-their-neighbourhood/supporting-pages/community-right-to-bid
- [Community Right to Build](http://www.gov.uk/government/policies/giving-people-more-power-over-what-happens-in-their-neighbourhood/supporting-pages/community-right-to-build) - www.gov.uk/government/policies/giving-people-more-power-over-what-happens-in-their-neighbourhood/supporting-pages/community-right-to-build
- [Community Right to Challenge](http://www.gov.uk/government/policies/giving-people-more-power-over-what-happens-in-their-neighbourhood/supporting-pages/community-right-to-challenge) - www.gov.uk/government/policies/giving-people-more-power-over-what-happens-in-their-neighbourhood/supporting-pages/community-right-to-challenge
- [Community Right to Reclaim Land](http://www.gov.uk/government/policies/giving-people-more-power-over-what-happens-in-their-neighbourhood/supporting-pages/community-right-to-reclaim-land) – www.gov.uk/government/policies/giving-people-more-power-over-what-happens-in-their-neighbourhood/supporting-pages/community-right-to-reclaim-land

DECC Updated Fuel Poverty Report (August 2013):

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/226985/fuel_poverty_report_2013.pdf