



REPORT TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 15 DECEMBER 2011

REPORT OF THE: HEAD OF TRANSFORMATION
CLARE SLATER

TITLE OF REPORT: SCRUTINY REVIEWS PROGRESS REPORT – ‘POST OFFICES’ AND ‘A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR’

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present the final report of the scrutiny review currently being undertaken, and establish the Terms of Reference for the next review.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members agree the recommendations for the ‘Post Offices’ Scrutiny Review
- 2.2 That Members agree the Terms of Reference for the scrutiny review “Supporting a sustainable Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Ryedale” and agree the membership of the task group and note the date of the meeting.

3.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

3.1 Any risks associated with the reviews are detailed in the report below.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has commissioned a scrutiny review to prepare for any future changes to the Post Office Network in Ryedale.
- 4.2 The Ryedale area was particularly severely affected by the last round of post office closures, with almost half of its branches being either closed or replaced with a mobile or outreach service. Following the last general election a publication was issued by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills ‘Securing the Post office Network in the Digital Age’ stated that ‘There will be no programme of post office closures under this Government’. The Department has confirmed that this statement includes outreach services which accounts for 38% of Ryedale’s Post Office Services.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Surveys have been made available for the public and citizen's panel to complete for the review.

6.0 REPORT DETAILS

6.1 Post Office Review:

The aim of the review was to find practical ways by which Ryedale District Council and its partners can:

- Improve the availability of services in local communities
- Provide an evidence base from which to influence future proposed closures or reductions in levels of service
- To consider the options for delivering these services in future

The draft report of the Post Offices Scrutiny Review Task Group is attached at Annex A.

The recommendations made by the Task group are as follows:

- That the Committee responds to the Department of Business, Innovation & Skills' consultation document on the mutualisation of the Post Office. (This was agreed at the previous meeting of the Committee and has been actioned as the deadline was 12 December 2012).
- Officers continue to work on options for developing a 'front office for local government' with Post Office Ltd.
- Accept any opportunity presented by Post Office Ltd to work in partnership to secure a sustainable future for the network in Ryedale.
- Undertake further research on the mobile/hosted and home service.
- Provide feedback to the Post Office regarding their website and how it could be improved for rural areas.

Supporting a sustainable Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Ryedale

- 7.2 The draft Terms of Reference proposed for this review are attached at annex B.

- 7.3 Volunteers are required for membership of the task group which will meet for the first time on Monday 16th January 2012 at 6.30pm in Meeting Room 1, alternatively the following week either Monday 23rd, Tuesday 24th or Wednesday 25th at the same time.

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Background Papers:

Securing the Post Office Network in the Digital Age
Research summary and other papers available in Transformation Team

Background Papers available for inspection at:

Transformation Team Office – Ryedale House

Appendix B - Terms of Reference

<p>Aim of the Review</p>	<p>The review will make recommendations to the policy committees of the Council on the options available for ensuring a sustainable voluntary and community sector through utilising any available resources in the most efficient, effective and economical way.</p> <p>The review will try to answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the current profile of the VCS in Ryedale? • How sustainable is the sector in Ryedale and what is the role of the Council in this? • How does the Council commission or procure work from the VCS, how is this funded, what is expected and what is the impact of this work? • What expectations are there of the VCS in the current policy and funding environment and how can these best be met whilst delivering value for money for both the Council and the communities of Ryedale? • Is there potential to increase the co-ordination of funding to the VCS both within the Council and with external partners? • Can savings be made from the financial support provided? • Are there any grants that are not cost effective to administer or receive?
<p>Why has this review been selected?</p>	<p>Changes being implemented by the government towards the achievement of 'The Big Society' agenda are placing increasing emphasis on the role of voluntary sector and community organisations. Members felt that the Council needed to review its policies and those of partners and the government in relation to these organisations.</p>
<p>Who will carry out the review?</p>	<p>The review will be carried out by a task group including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of 2 members of the O and S committee (but open to all members of O and S) • The Head of Transformation • The Economic and Community Services Manager • Support will be provided by members of the Transformation Team
<p>How the review will be carried out?</p>	<p>The task group will consider the impact of the Localism Act and Big Society policy agenda on the Voluntary and Community sector and also review the Councils policies in relation to the sector.</p> <p>Consideration would be made of existing data and evidence, national research on the impact of recent policy decisions made by the government on the VCS and any local research undertaken.</p> <p>This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews undertaken previously by the Council • Reviews undertaken by other local authorities • Government policy and the impact of reviews of funding arrangements • Research undertaken by organisations representing the interests of the VCS <p>The task group will also liaise with representatives from the VCS in Ryedale.</p>
<p>What are the</p>	<p>It is expected that the task group will produce a report, summarising the evidence they have gathered and containing specific recommendations for</p>

expected outputs?	the Council and other partner organisations as appropriate.
Timescale	It is anticipated that the group will conclude the outcomes of the review In September 2012. Progress reports will be submitted to the committee throughout the review.