

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 September 2014

ACCESS TO SERVICES IN MARKET TOWNS AND RURAL AREAS ISG – 12  
MONTH REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY

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RECENT REFERENCES:

OS60 –Access to Services in Market Towns and Rural Areas ISG – Final Report– 21  
January 2013

CAB2459 - Final Report of the Findings of the Informal Scrutiny Group on Access to  
Services in the Market Towns and Rural Areas - Recommendations for Cabinet – 13  
February 2013

PHD471 – Final recommendations of the Access to Services in the Market Towns  
and Rural Areas– 20 June 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The final recommendations of the Access to Services in Market Towns and Rural  
Areas Informal Scrutiny Group (ISG) were considered by Cabinet in February 2013  
and an amended set of recommendations were agreed by the Leader via Portfolio  
Holder Decision Notice in June 2013.

This report summarises progress against these recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee notes the progress made to date in implementing the  
recommendations of the Access to Services in Market Towns and Rural Areas  
Informal Scrutiny Group and raises any issues with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

## THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 MAY 2014

### ACCESS TO SERVICES IN MARKET TOWNS AND RURAL AREAS ISG – 12 MONTH REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

#### REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY

#### 1 Background

- 1.1 The Access to Services in Market Towns and Rural Areas informal scrutiny group (ISG) reported the outcome of their review to The Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2013 (Report OS60 refers). Following further discussion at Cabinet, a set of amended recommendations was agreed via PHD500 – Final recommendations of the Access to Services in the Market Towns and Rural Areas ISG. Appendix 1 sets out progress made in delivering these recommendations.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

#### 2 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND PORTFOLIO PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

- 2.1 Improving Access to Services is a specific priority set out in the Community Strategy.

#### 3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 3.1 The recommendations set out by the ISG do not require any further resources than existing staff time.

#### 4 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 There are no significant risks arising from this report or the recommendations of the ISG.

#### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

#### APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 - Progress against the Access to Services in Market Towns and Rural Areas Informal Scrutiny Group's recommendations

**Progress against the Access to Services in Market Towns and Rural Areas Informal Scrutiny Group's recommendations**

No.	Original ISG recommendation	Progress/Current status
1	The City Council should design a standard template/advert to be used in Parish Magazines and other community publications to promote the contact details for the local member/s and other useful telephone numbers such as the waste collection hotline, out of hours etc	A standard template advert was developed, designed and distributed to Members.
2	The template will be populated with each Members details and Members encouraged to have it published in the relevant publications in their area	This action has been completed and most Members chose to have collective adverts in multi-member wards.
3	In order to support implementation of a) and b) all Members should be surveyed in order to refresh the existing list of community publications available in their ward	Members have up-to-date knowledge of the community publications in their wards and use of the advert templates is usually determined by Members themselves, sometimes in consultation with Communications.
4	Members should be advised of the information leaflets available and supplies provided upon request	Members are advised on request and supplies can be provided.
5	An out of hours ansaphone facility should be included on the main City Council telephone number	A menu option has been added for callers to press 2 which will take them through to Central Control when they call out of hours. This will put them through to a person which was felt to be a better solution.
6	The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken for the Hampshire Home Choice scheme should be reviewed with particular attention paid to those applicants who are not computer literate or elderly. The assessment should include input from local	Work has been carried out to review the EIA which was previously carried out in 2013. It is currently awaiting validation which will involve Age UK.

	representatives from Age UK. Any recommendations arising from the refreshed assessment should be implemented	The HHC Operational Procedures have also been finalised which set out the process to be followed if an applicant does not have access to the internet.
7	That Cabinet have very careful regard when allocating core grants to voluntary organisations to the contributions those organisations make towards assisting people at home (as they were undertaking work that the Council was unable to provide itself)	<p>Currently the core funded organisations which support the aim to assist people at home (directly or indirectly) are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens' Advice Bureau</li> <li>• Home Start Winchester</li> <li>• Home Start Meon Valley</li> <li>• Age UK</li> <li>• Winchester Live at Home</li> </ul>
8	The City Council should write to Hampshire County Council and request better promotion of the Village Agent scheme, particularly amongst District Councillors who should receive direct contact from the local volunteers	<p>The Hampshire Village Agents programme, which is delivered by Age Concern Hampshire, has grown and developed significantly since the ISG review, particularly in the area of promotion and general communication which is a key priority for members of the project steering group.</p> <p>Liaison with local parish councils has proved to be one of the key success factors in helping to identify and recruit suitable volunteers, as have visits to local organisations such as voluntary care groups, safer neighbourhood teams, good neighbour schemes, lunch clubs, GP surgeries, neighbourhood watch and many more. The scheme is also publicised in parish newsletters, where many Village Agents have regular columns, and parish websites. A newsletter has also been developed – the second edition was published in the Summer.</p> <p>Part of the induction and training process for all new volunteers covers the importance of developing positive relationships with existing local networks, including district Councillors. Village Agents</p>

		are currently active in five areas within the Winchester District namely, Bishops Waltham, Denmead, Hambledon, Twyford and Wickham. A number of other areas are actively pursuing the scheme including Waltham Chase, Wonston, Kings Worthy, Otterbourne, Soberton, Southwick and Boarhunt, and Owslebury.
9	Further training should be offered to Members on the Hampshire County Council Trigger Tool and its use in assessing the home and fire safety needs of older persons	The Trigger Tool is supported by an interactive training session which aims to raise awareness of the issues that might be encountered when visiting an older person in their own home. As requested by the ISG a Trigger Tool training session has been organised for elected Members on Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> September at 6.00 pm in the Walton Suite – this training will also include a Dementia Awareness session. An e-learning package is also available for those unable to attend one of the face to face training sessions.
10	City Council services should be reminded to exploit opportunities to provide face to face promotion and consultation particularly in the rural areas through village shows, fêtes and Parish meetings.	Services will be advised of this via the Communications Team and the Research & Consultation Officer.
11	The City Council should encourage the use of community buildings for local decision making including planning consent applications which involve viewing sub committees	When feasible, the Council uses local community buildings for viewing sub committees, with one being held in West Meon last year. However since the introduction of pre-emptive site visits these do not occur regularly and the technology required to support such events is not always available in the more rural community buildings.