TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR NEEDS OF RURAL COMMUNITIES REVIEW

Title
Needs of Rural Communities Overview and Scrutiny Review.

Purpose & Objectives
The purpose of this review is to recommend ways in which the Council could help to overcome issues of rural isolation in the provision of Council services. The review will specifically concentrate on how people in rural communities gain *access to information*.

Scope
Review to specifically include:
- The two selected villages in rural areas to be used as representative case studies for this review are (1) Nempnett Thrubwell and (2) Bishop Sutton.
- Identification of current council communication channels and methods of access to council information in rural areas.
- Consideration of new & emerging technologies (e.g. BT Internet public information points, digital TV), the influence that the council has on their provision/location and the uses that could be made of them to support access to council information.
- How, in principle, co-location of council services could help to address this issue; for example, how the 'pub is the hub' initiative could be used to achieve co-location of facilities, services and information; whether Post Offices, village shops, churches, etc. would be viable sites for co-location of council service information.
- Make recommendations on what facilities/activities are required to enhance access to information.

Excluded from this review
- Extending beyond provision of Council services
- How we can work with neighbouring authorities to deliver services in some rural areas on a joint commissioning basis
- Solutions to meet shortfalls for example – the revie team will not enter into discussions with public transport providers or the Post Office to work up the solutions to address the rural isolation issue.

Current service provision
- A wide range of Council departments currently provides services to rural communities.
- Recognise interfaces & areas of potential overlap with, and gaps in, existing Council initiatives such as the Customer Access Programme.

Constraints
- This will be a medium sized review and will therefore be constrained so that completion is achievable within six months
- Resources available to this review will include:
  - The O&S panel members
  - One O&S project officer to oversee the activities of virtual teams established from the appropriate service(s) at 2 days per week
  - Service resources to be agreed by the Overview & Scrutiny Project Officer and senior officers.
  - A Steering Group (to be agreed)
- Review must be managed within budget

- This review will be carried out in accordance with B&NES O&S toolkit and O&S project management processes

Outline Plan

Date	Stage	Deliverable
September 2002	Agree TOR and Review Objectives	TOR Final Version
September	Start the Review	Project Pan
October	Research	Research Summary
November	Consultation	Consultation Results
November	Interview Witnesses	Witness summary
December	Draw initial conclusions	Interim Report
Jan / Feb 2003	Agree Findings & Recommendations	Final Report