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**Report to**  
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2005

**Report of**  
Councillor Mrs Rutter

**Title**  
Report Back on the Work Of Outside Bodies – Local Government Association - Rural  
Commission

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### **1 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 At their meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2005, the Cabinet approved a process of reporting back to the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on the work of those outside bodies appointed to by the City Council. This reports sets out details of the work of the Local Government Association General Assembly over the preceding twelve months and details of attendance by the City Council's representatives.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the City Council continues to appoint a representative on the Local Government Association Rural Commission.

### **3 Information on Work of Outside Body**

- 3.1 The purpose of the Commission is to:
- Provide the forum in which rural authorities can discuss matters of common concern and exchange good practice and experience;
  - Assist the LGA take into account the needs, priorities and aspirations of rural authorities in formulating and promoting its policies;
  - Help the LGA to promote the role and interests of rural authorities and the ability of those authorise to meet the needs of the communities they serve.
- 3.2 The Commission held a two day conference in September, 2005. Attendance at the Conference provided an insight into what is happening nationally in our rural communities. Although seemingly remote to Coventry, it became clear that rural economies are very important to our economy and well-being; for example, the erosion of our coast lines and the lack of funding to build storm defences, plus the plan to build thousands of houses in the Green-Belt 'Flood Plains', seems of little consequence to Coventry, but in thirty years time we might have a rude awakening!

#### **4 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointment**

- 4.1 The appointment gives an understanding of the impact changes in rural areas may have on the City. Although there are limited rural areas within Coventry, we should be more aware of the big picture. The decline in agricultural income has a knock on effect that will see huge price increases in our supermarkets and will destroy a way of life which generations of families have lived and work in. This in turn sees a decline in tourism and the ongoing closure of rural services.
- 4.2 Sharp rises in house prices caused by second home and commuter immigration means that rural property prices are 15% above the national average, local people are priced out of the market. The result is undermining the balance between economic and social regeneration, and protecting our natural environment for this and future generations.

#### **5 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment**

- 5.1 Councillor Mrs Rutter is the City Council's representative on the Local Government Association Rural Commission, Councillor Harrison is the named substitute. There has been one meeting of the Rural Commission in the last twelve months which was attended by Councillor Mrs Rutter.
- 5.2 There is no remuneration associated with the appointment.

#### List of background papers

##### Proper officer:

Author:	Telephone
Councillor Mrs Rutter	024 7659 1578
(Any enquiries should be directed to the above)	

##### Other contributors:

Alison Townsend, Scrutiny Team	024 7683 3080
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##### Papers open to Public Inspection

<b>Description of paper</b>	<b>Location</b>
Schedule of City Council Appointments to Outside Bodies	CH61