

**AGENDA FOR SPARSE RURAL AND RURAL SERVICE
NETWORK
EXECUTIVE AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE RURAL
SERVICES PARTNERSHIP LTD MEETING**

Venue: Number 63 Bayswater Road, London W2 3PH

Date: Wednesday 28th March 2018

Time: 11.30am to 2.30pm

Please note change of venue - this meeting will take place at Number 63 Bayswater Road, London W2 3PH

Details of how to find the venue can be found below:

<http://www.number63.co.uk/find-us/>

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Notes of the Previous Meeting

Held on Monday 15th January 2018 to consider any relevant items.
(Attachment 1)

3. Notes of the Main Meeting

SPARSE Rural Sub SIG meeting held on 29th January 2018 to consider any relevant items.
(Attachment 2)

4. To consider any items arising from the Rural Economy Group meeting

(Attachment 3)

5. Notes from first Regional Meeting/Seminar

(Attachment 4)

6. Proposal to introduce a voluntary contribution into the subscriptions for 2018/19 to facilitate additional cost research relating to rural areas suggested by MCCLG

This proposal was presented under emergency powers but a member of the Executive has asked that it be considered at the full meeting.

7. Initial analysis of Health/Care Group Questionnaire re Priorities

(Attachment 5)

8. Draft Data Sheet to be provided to Members Annually

(Attachment 6)

9. Consideration of a Local Plan Data Service on a charged for basis

(Verbal report)

**10. RSN draft evidence to Communities and Health Joint Select Committee Inquiry
–Adult Social Care Funding**

(Attachment 7 – to follow)

11. RSN response to Needs Review consultation

(Attachment 8)

12. Rural Conference 2018: Draft Programme

(Appendix 9 (a) & (b))

13. RSN Budget 2017/18, 2018/19 & 2019/20

To consider the attached papers.

(Attachment 10)

14. Vacancy for Vice Chair (North East)

15. Report on the Communication Strategy and exploration of available options

16. Discussion re Brexit - Latest Position with Rural Brexit Roundtable Group

Attachment 11 (a) and 11 (b)

17. Industrial Strategy RSN position reflecting on Brexit Roundtable and Rural Economy Meeting

18. Rural Vulnerability Day Update

19. Regional Meetings Update

| Region | Date | Subject | Venue | Date for Agenda | Notes |
|--------|------|---------|-------|-----------------|-------|
|--------|------|---------|-------|-----------------|-------|

| | | | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|---|---|-----------------------|---|
| North East | 25 th May | Future of Rural Areas Priority - Economy | Durham Council | 4 th May | |
| East Midlands | 9 th July | Future of Rural Areas Priority – Affordable Rural Housing | Huntingdonshire Council | 15 th June | |
| North West | 8 th Oct | Barriers to Access Priority – Broadband, Connectivity & Transport | Lancaster Council NB –High venue charge so Nicky is trying Lancashire Council | 14 th Sept | Community Transport Consultation may be out and still live |
| Yorkshire | 10 th Dec | Health & Wellbeing Priority – Adult Social Care & Fuel Poverty | Harrogate Council NB – waiting to see if venue will waive fee | 16 th Nov | Green Paper should be out on Social Care plus Jane's report for Rural England |

20. Peers Group Update (Verbal Report)

21. Any Other Business

MINUTES OF THE SPARSE RURAL AND RURAL SERVICES NETWORK EXECUTIVE AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE RURAL SERVICES PARTNERSHIP LTD MEETING, MONDAY 15th JANUARY 2018 HELD AT THE LGA, SMITH SQUARE, LONDON

Present: - Cllr Cecilia Motley (Chair), Cllr Derrick Haley (Vice Chair – Without Portfolio) Stewart Horne – Federation of Small Businesses, Cllr Peter Stevens (Vice Chair – East), Cllr Kevin Beaty (Vice Chair – North), Cllr Philip Sanders (Vice Chair – County 1), Cllr Sue Sanderson (Vice Chair – Without Portfolio), Dan Bates – Pixel Financial Management

Officers: - Graham Biggs MBE (Chief Executive), David Inman (Director) Andy Dean (Assistant Director)

- 1. Apologies:-** Cllr Robert Heseltine (First Vice Chair Yorkshire), Cllr Janet Duncton (Vice Chair – South East), Revd Richard Kirlew (RSP Chair - Community), Cllr Rob Waltham – Vice Chair (Unitary), John Birtwistle (First Group), Cllr Gill Heath – Vice Chair (County 2), Cllr Peter Thornton (Vice Chair – Without Portfolio), Cllr Roger Philips (Vice Chair – Midlands), Georgina Fung (Youth), Cllr Adam Paynter (Vice Chair South Wwest)

- 2. Notes of Previous Executive Meeting – 25th September 2017**

Agreed as a correct record.

Arising out of Minute 14 (Parliamentary Groups) it was reported that Jo Churchill MP had joined the Whips Office in the recent re-shuffle and therefore could no longer chair the APPG or host the Rural Vulnerability Day

- 3. Notes of Last Main SPARSE Meeting – 20th November 2017**

Noted

- 4. To consider any items arising from the Social Care and Health Group and the AGM of 20th November 2017.**

It was felt the Social Care and Health Group had been a very successful meeting. A Survey Monkey exercise would now be undertaken with members to inform the April meeting of the priorities in respect of future work.

- 5. RSN Budget 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20**

A new employee, Jon Turner, would, as previously agreed by the Executive be joining RSN on the 5th April. Provision for him had been built into the estimates for 2018/19 and beyond.

Not all the charges had been paid. Some 10 Authorities remained outstanding. The adoption of a Purchase Order system by many Authorities had caused difficulties as memberships were very different to the usual financial allocation topics.

It was intended that Jon Turner would be initially asked to undertake RSP recruitment.

Members accepted the estimates. They also asked that investigation be made as to whether RSN could present a Local Plan Statistics Service at an additional cost. It was agreed that a report be brought back to the Executive in March.

6. Provisional Settlement 2018/19

Graham Biggs updated members on the latest position. Members considered the draft response in detail.

The draft response as drafted was agreed by them. The Chair and Officers were due to meet the new Local Government Minister later on the 15th.

Dan Bates outlined the work Pixel were doing on behalf of the RSN in restating the values associated with the various aspects of the current needs formula.

7. Taking the AGM Strategy Forward.

Members were told that the arrangements for the Regional Meetings were gradually being put together. How these meetings were intended to proceed was outlined. Peter Thornton hoped to Chair the North West meeting but if this did not prove possible, Sue Sanderson agreed to do it.

A position statement was intended to go out to all member Authorities in April. As a part of that service a data sheet for all Authorities relating to the Authority as a whole - not individual rural wards, was intended to accompany it. A draft of this would be presented to the March Executive' meeting. Given the suggestions in 5 above, it was felt two lists would now be involved (a) the one that was circulated with the Annual Report and secondly, the Local Plan statistical information that could be purchased for additional payment.

8. Discussions regarding Brexit – Latest Position with the Rural Brexit Roundtable Group

Graham Biggs updated the meeting in respect of the current position that had been reached. The Roundtable group would be meeting on 20th February and a report would be made to the next Executive.

9. Engagement with Other Bodies

Graham obtained the consent of the Executive that he, on behalf of the RSN, should act as a member of the Executive of the National Rural Crime Network and as a Director of the National Centre for Rural Health & Care.

10. Industrial Strategy

This would be considered at the next Executive in March following the Rural Economy Group meeting on 29th January.

11. Rural Vulnerability Day

David Inman detailed the RSN's objectives of this exercise namely to establish a defined Rural day in the Parliamentary calendar and to establish a group of MPs who were prepared to argue rural issues relating to "vulnerability" as they emerged.

The day appeared to be going well. Overall notified attendance was very good at some 50 people and there would be nine exhibitors. The event would be held in the Clement Atlee room at Portcullis House, one of the larger rooms at Westminster. Copies of the Agenda for the day would be circulated to the Executive.

12. LGA Fire Conferences and Rural Fire Group

It was decided that a session would be held after the formal conference for rural Councillors and Chief Fire Officers attending. It would seek to rekindle the debate about the fire formula where it was felt that SPARSE Rural had a lot to offer. The event would also seek to cover the Rural Vulnerability agenda and other current rural issues.

13. Thoughts in Respect of 2018 Conference Theme

The Cheltenham Ladies College might be a possible venue for the Drinks Reception this year.

It was intended that greater emphasis this year should go to the 'learning' aspect of the Conference with Kerry organising a series of workshops. The draft programme would be presented to the next Executive. The theme might be something like 'Delivering Rural Services Differently. The Opportunities for Innovation in Service Delivery across Public, Private and Community/Voluntary Sectors'.

14. Economic Session and SPARSE Rural SIG Meeting

The draft Agenda, including for this new style Economic session, was discussed. The meeting on the 29th January would be an important one and it was hoped that members would react similarly to the Health and Social Care meeting when a very proactive session about the shape of future Agendas had taken place.

The SPARSE meeting would need to consider how the March Executive could shape the most proactive response possible with regard to current DCLG consultation as to the content of the future needs formula.

15. Website

A sheet was circulated briefing the Executive on the current position regarding the website Update

16. March Executive

The following would be on the Agenda:

- (1) Report on the Communication Strategy and exploration of available options.
- (2) Industrial Strategy –
- (3) Statistics for Authorities (see 5 above)
- (4) Draft 2018 Rural Conference Programme
- (5) RSN response to the DCLG Needs and Resources Consultation which closes on 12th March

Notes of last SPARSE Rural Special Interest Group meeting

Title: Rural Services Network Special Interest Group

- **SPARSE Rural Sub SIG meeting**

Date: Monday 29 January 2018

Venue: City of Westminster Archives Centre, 10 St Ann's Street, London SW1P 2DE

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

| Item | Decisions and actions |
|------|-----------------------|
|------|-----------------------|

SPARSE Rural Sub SIG Meeting 1.15 to 2.30pm

Members moved onto the meeting of the SPARSE Rural Sub SIG.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted as read.

2 Minutes of Last Meeting 20 November 2017

The Minutes of meeting 20 November were noted and accepted.

3 Minutes of Executive Meeting - 15 January 2018

The note of the last Executive meeting was noted and accepted.

4 Provisional Finance Settlement 2018/19

Members noted an update on the Provisional Finance Settlement and details of the recently submitted RSN response to the consultation. The following key issues were noted:

- The transitional grant has been stopped.
- Inclusion of council tax In the calculation as to how government funding cuts should fall was unfair to rural areas
- Points had been raised with the Minister further to the last Executive meeting and it was felt that there he had a good understanding of the issues faced by rural communities. However, members noted that the Minister was adamant that all aspects of the new Needs Formula being developed should be backed by evidence. RSN had asked to should be contacted by government officials to give an indication of how they wished this to be collected and for which services.

Action:

RSN colleagues to remind Civil Service contacts that they are awaiting input as to what service costs they need captured and how evidence should be provided.

- Members raised concerns at the complexity of the formulas used and noted details of timelines for consultations.

5 Fair Funding Review

Members noted the preliminary report from PIXEL on the Fair Funding Review.

Members were encouraged to respond individually to the consultation, although a national average position will be sent as a response from the SIG. They discussed the data set which was needed to warranty justification for funding and which is therefore a big part of the current consultation. Members noted that the formula will be simplified but that rural authorities, best placed to provide evidence of impact, must respond with individual examples.

Where previous issues had been raised, members noted some successes and changes to the consultation. The Consultation will close on 12 March and the RSN will circulate a draft response to members for comment before submission.

Members were encouraged to note that their own input will be vital to impacting and reinforcing the rural case.

Action:

Members to individually respond on behalf of their own authorities and to ensure that their own individual finance officers follow the thread and are made aware of any issues.

6 Any other Business

There was no other business and the meeting was closed.

Attendance

| Name | Representing |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Graham Biggs | RSN |
| David Inman | RSN |
| Cllr Cecilia Motley | RSN |
| Andy Dean | RSN |
| Richard Quallington | ACRE |
| Cllr Les Kew | Bath & North East Somerset Council |
| Claire Walters | Bus Users UK |
| Cllr David Ireton | Craven District Council |
| Darren Peters, Staff Officers | Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue |
| Greg Macdonald, Head of Economic & Commercial Development | East Northamptonshire Council |
| Henry Lee, External Research & Policy Co- ordinator | Hastoe Housing Association |
| Cllr Roger Phillips | Herefordshire County Council |
| Ashley Curzon | Isle of Wight Council |
| Helen Harris, Economic Growth Manager | Leicestershire County Council |
| Cllr Mark Whittington | Lincolnshire County Council |
| Heidi Turnbull | Maldon District Council |
| Alan Gray, Economic Development Manager | North Kesteven District Council |
| Steve Blatch, Chief Executive | North Norfolk District Council |
| Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick | North Norfolk District Council |
| Robert Heseltine | North Yorkshire Council |
| Janice Rose | Northumberland County Council |

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| Malcolm Leading | Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils |
| Cllr Yvonne Peacock | Richmondshire District Council |
| Cllr Cameron Clark | Sevenoaks District Council |
| Revd Richard Kirlew | Sherborne Deanery Rural Chaplaincy |
| Cllr Gwilym Butler | Shropshire Council |
| Gill Heath | Staffordshire County Council |
| Peter Stevens | St Edmundsbury Council |
| Matt Jones | Suffolk County Council |
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| Cllr Philip Sanders | West Devon Borough Council |
| Ian Knowles, Director of Resources | West Lindsey District Council |
| Cllr Owen Bierley | West Lindsey District Council |
| Cllr Andrew Hadley | West Somerset Council |
| Gordon Dwyer, Senior Economic Development Officer | West Somerset Council |
| Cllr Janet Duncton | West Sussex County Council |
| Steve Brain, Programmes & Performance Manager | Worcestershire County Council |
| Katie Ainsworth, Project Manager – Worcestershire LEADER Programme | Worcestershire County Council |

Notes of RURAL ECONOMY GROUP meeting

Title: Rural Services Network Special Interest Group

- Rural Economy Group meeting

Date: Monday 29 January 2018

Venue: City of Westminster Archives Centre, 10 St Ann's Street, London SW1P 2DE

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

| Item | Decisions and actions |
|------|-----------------------|
|------|-----------------------|

Rural Economy Group Meeting 11.00am to 12.45pm

The Chairman welcomed members and noted apologies.

1 Why are we setting up this new Group?

Graham Biggs, RSN Chief Executive, opened up the meeting with a summary of current work under the remit of rural services network, Rural Assembly and the SPARSE Rural Sub SIG and outlined the reasoning for setting up this new group and its purpose.

Members agreed with the establishment of the Rural Economy Group

2 What should the Remit of the Group Cover?

Members discussed and agreed the remit of the group which aims to cover all matters related to and impacting on rural economies.

3 Current issues

Mr Biggs invited the group to discuss challenges in common and to share ideas and examples of best practice.

Members raised the following issues:

- Some had attended the recent LGA Councillors' Forum and referred to the speech by the attending Minister, Rishi Sunak MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. They agreed that a proper evidence base was vital in the profile of rural issues and, especially, financial representations.
- Members noted that a digital connectivity group had been set up under the remit of the People and Places Board of the LGA and were concerned that the RSN Sub SIG would end up duplicating work. Mr Biggs reminded members that the LGA Group would be focussing on both rural and urban issues and therefore, there was a danger that rural issues might be overlooked.
- Members were concerned that they have no representation on the People and

Places Board and agreed that RSN colleagues should talk to the Board to identify any similar initiatives and in particular those related to rural economies.

- Connectivity generally remains an important issue across rural areas
- Transport provision in rural areas especially is still a major issue – this needs to be urgently addressed and is a key issue affecting residents and businesses. They agreed that subsidies are often not available and noted detrimental impact on residents of stoppages of vital services, such as dial a ride.
- Members referred to business rates and agreed that the impact on rural GDP was a huge part on National GDP. In rural areas. Authorities where many small businesses are not liable to pay must be raised and considered
- They agreed that there were issues around other industries too – including people and skills, utility supplies and provisions and there was therefore a need to take a more strategic approach in lobbying government about all services to rural areas – not just broadband.
- Members noted that bus services are also utilised by young people trying to reach entry level employment or training and is therefore key to improving the economy. Members agreed that rural transport issues are not just about buses – implications arise and have an impact on the rural economy if working age people cannot get to work they will move as there is no alternative – this is a major damage to rural economies. Fairer funding for transport in rural areas was raised
- The Brexit impact of the loss of ERDF funding and the establishment of the Shared Prosperity Fund were both raised as important issues
- Members discussed housing issues and how to fund affordable housing. Affordable Housing in National Park areas was a particular challenge
- Rural master planning –and the need for a much wider definition of Infrastructure was raised. Capacity of the Electricity supply, the stance of the Regulator created major disadvantage in rural areas and impacted detrimentally on the return on investment re employment land and buildings..
- Sustainability needs to be properly defined in the rural context and supported according to individual areas and what is right for them in particular in order to be sustained. Land, and getting planning consent, for business diversification were referred to
- Members discussed ‘air band’ and issues around coverage. Agreeing that there are still problems.
- Attracting families to locate to and remain in rural areas was referred to. It was commented that through Countryfile etc. many people are rurally minded but not rural people minded
- They agreed that communication is of vital importance, particularly with regard to rural deprivation and that large organisations need to be called upon to raise the profile of particular issues with differences between those affecting urban and rural areas as part of their remits. Engagement is vital – particularly with MIND etc. – people misunderstand the meaning of deprivation – they include hidden issues such as depression and loneliness, isolation etc. Urban vulnerability is different to rural vulnerability.
- Members referred to recent work of the Jo Cox Commission – but agreed that much of it will be about urban issues and little (if any) on rural.
- The future of agriculture was discussed – members were concerned that traditional farming will stop – there isn’t the realisation of how much the rural and national economies are currently dependent on continuation of its existence the issues in Upland areas and supply chain were highlighted. Some analysis of Defra’s 25-year plan was warranted.
- Members made the point that community buses are run by volunteers and community shops are very good – work should also endorse the very good

things that rural areas have and benefits to the local population not just focus on the problems.

- Evidence of how the positives impact GDP should also be included in any work.

Members agreed that the new group will be of value but will need to be aware of existing work being done by CCN and DCN and LGA People and Places Board. Members agreed that connectivity is the most major concern and that rural areas are really struggling which impacts greatly on businesses in particular.

Mr Biggs referred to the RURAL BREXIT round table, set up to discuss the possible impact of BREXIT on rural areas. He outlined details of groups involved – he summarised details of previous meetings and agreement was reached that rural white paper of 2005 should be re-addressed to look at success and sustainability. The RSN is doing this. They also agreed in principle that a rural strategy should be introduced post BREXIT by the government. They are seeking to articulate issues which may inhibit or benefit rural economies. They hope to build a plan to argue the rural case for an appropriately funded and accepted strategy covering at least 10 years.

Members were informed that a draft strategy should be available at the next meeting for them to consider – and allow sufficient time to work on its content further to members' input. Members discussed the Shared Prosperity Fund and questioned how it would be distributed.

Members agreed that looking at ways in using existing parliamentary channels to try and raise these points and move government and urban opinion to raise the perception of how rural areas live. Was essential They agreed that fundamental attitudes about rural living need to change and they discussed how engagement with the media will help address this. Rural areas should be promoted and work done to attract more people to rural areas – although the issue of connectivity is a major issue. They agreed that public perception of living in rural areas is a particular problem due to the media and television.

Action:

Discussion on the Industrial Strategy to be carried forward to the next Rural Assembly meeting on 9 April, as well as more discussion on the work of the Rural BREXIT Roundtable.

4 Industrial Strategy: What should the Rural response be?

Members had discussed some of these issues within the last item.

5 Items put forward by members

Apologies were received from Cllr Peter Thornton who had raised Rural Broadband and from Ian Hunter, Littoral Rural Arts Trust.

On behalf of Ian Hunter it was reported that CaDRE – Creative and Digital Rural Economy - R & D initiative is going ahead with a Creative Rural Economy conference planned for Tate Britain in the early Autumn

Members noted the following updates:

- Cllr Andrew Hadley, Lead Member for Economic Growth & Tourism and Gordon Dwyer spoke about the work of the South West Rural Productivity Commission

and development of a task force set up to feed into, and progress key priorities around the work of the commission. Further updates would be provided at future meetings.

Further information and the reports can be found at:

<http://heartofswlep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/HotSW-14332-A4-Overview-report-digital-doc-FINAL.pdf>

<http://heartofswlep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Evidence-Report.pdf>

- They also gave an oral report on the work of their Opportunity Department for Education Programme in trying to increase social mobility and increase opportunities for disadvantaged young people. Members noted issues particular to West Somerset and details of current progress and estimated delivery.
- Clare Walters, Chief Executive Bus Users UK, discussed perceptions regarding the use of buses in rural areas. She spoke about how different areas have been creative in providing transport and referred to different schemes set up to ensure that the system is available and outlined the impact of the lack of these services including problems including accessibility to education, to work, and health and welfare of local residents. She referred to legal duties for provision of subsidies and the impact of withdrawing these on local communities. Research is to be carried out, once fully funded, aiming to show whether or not reducing public transport increases the adult social care budget and harms rural economies.

Members agreed that lobbying must show the impact on urban communities if rural connectivity is not enabled. Quality of life in rural areas will hugely diminish if this is not sustained. They also discussed issues around lack of further education and getting commitment for transporting young people to areas which have further education facilities, agreeing that it will be difficult to attract families with young children if they have concerns about their future education. Discussion continued as Ms Walters provided an operator's perspective and discussed the difficulties faced where there are not enough people reliant on the services to justify supply. There were problems around investment, enabling skills and costs and they noted that business growth is a different dynamic in a rural area which therefore means that they will not get the amount of investment as in the cities to take that risk. Devolution is key – it is vital to have the evidence about building investment in rural areas – there is also an issue about resistance from local people. There are always going to be issues around infrastructure.

Mr Inman offered the services of SPARSE to help Ms Walters with evidence and information and the Chair thanked her for her contribution.

- John Birtwistle, Head of Policy, UK Bus, First Buses – had sustained an injury at the weekend and had sent apologies.
- Janice Rose – Northumberland CC – gave an uplifting presentation on (a) North of Tyne Devolution Deal; and its rural ambitions and (b) a perspective on the proposed Borderlands Deal covering Northumberland, Cumbria, Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway. There was a real possibility that the North of Tyne Devo. Deal to become a Rural Champion for England. Contact details Janice Rose Northumberland CC Janice.rose@northumberland.gov.uk Tel 01670 624 747

There was no other business.

Attendance

| Name | Representing |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Graham Biggs | RSN |
| David Inman | RSN |
| Cllr Cecilia Motley | RSN |
| Andy Dean | RSN |
| Richard Quallington | ACRE |
| Cllr Les Kew | Bath & North East Somerset Council |
| Claire Walters | Bus Users UK |
| Cllr David Ireton | Craven District Council |
| Darren Peters, Staff Officers | Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue |
| Greg Macdonald, Head of Economic & Commercial Development | East Northamptonshire Council |
| Henry Lee, External Research & Policy Co- ordinator | Hastoe Housing Association |
| Cllr Roger Phillips | Herefordshire County Council |
| Ashley Curzon | Isle of Wight Council |
| Helen Harris, Economic Growth Manager | Leicestershire County Council |
| Cllr Mark Whittington | Lincolnshire County Council |
| Heidi Turnbull | Maldon District Council |
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| Cllr Cameron Clark | Sevenoaks District Council |
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| Cllr Gwilym Butler | Shropshire Council |
| Gill Heath | Staffordshire County Council |
| Peter Stevens | St Edmundsbury Council |
| Matt Jones | Suffolk County Council |
| | |
| Cllr Philip Sanders | West Devon Borough Council |
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| Cllr Owen Bierley | West Lindsey District Council |
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| Cllr Janet Duncton | West Sussex County Council |
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| Katie Ainsworth, Project Manager – Worcestershire LEADER Programme | Worcestershire County Council |

RSN West Midlands Regional Seminar**12th February 2018****Stafford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford ST16 3AQ**

Thank you to Stafford Borough Council for kindly hosting this event

(Attendance had unfortunately been determined by who had been able to travel. Conditions had been made very difficult by the ice and snow that had descended over- night)

Attendance

| Name | Organisation |
|---|---|
| Cllr Roger Phillips | RSN Vice Chair for the Midlands |
| David Inman | RSN |
| Cllr Cecilia Motley (a.m.) | Shropshire Council |
| Cllr Lee Chapman (a.m.) | Shropshire Council |
| Cllr Les Caborn | Warwickshire County Council |
| Cllr Mark McEvilly | Herefordshire Council |
| Cllr Frances Beatty MBE | Stafford Borough Council |
| Chris Cowcher, Community Manager | ACRE |
| Cllr Alan Seldon | Herefordshire Council |
| Cllr Jeremy Pert | Staffordshire County Council |
| Nicola Swinnerton, Rural Development & Access Manager | Staffordshire County Council |
| Cllr Ann Edgeller | Stafford Borough Council & Staffordshire County Council |
| Allan Reid, Consultant Public Health | Staffordshire County Council |
| Cllr Jack Kemp | Stafford Borough Council |
| Samantha Taylor, Health & Wellbeing Initiatives | Stafford Borough Council |
| | |

1. Welcome .

The Chair, Cllr Roger Phillips, welcomed people to the first RSN regional meeting. He thanked those attending for having taken on the conditions on a difficult day to be there.

He stated that all the meetings would comprise presentations on a particular topic and discussion after lunch would be to agree an RSN position and /or work on the topic under discussion. He felt that it was important here that the Meeting's deliberations contributed to the RSN response on the intended Social Care Green Paper. The meeting was really important from that viewpoint alone in his view.

2. Format and Reason for the Regional Meetings.

David Inman RSN Director explained the thinking behind the Executive's decision to hold annual regional seminars.

By its very characteristic rural areas were often peripherally located. It was appreciated therefore that Councillors from some authorities might find it difficult (and expensive in these financially

difficult times) to attend meetings in London. These meetings represented maybe a half -way house for some. They would however have specific work task and in no way would replicate the London meetings.

Additionally the Executive had agreed there would be specific bulletins for the Council's nominated representative at the AGM of Authorities and there would also be specific bulletin for rural councillors to ensure that, whether they were able to get to meetings or not, they were kept in touch with, and involved with, the work of the RSN. (This service would be in addition to the weekly Digest, the mid -week topic bulletin and the commentary of Hinterland at the end of each week.)

The Rural Services Network were the sole organisation in England specifically still dealing with rural service provision and governance matters and it was vital that all authorities with rural areas continued to be engaged with them. The need was now greater than ever as services were put under pressure through the cut backs.

The Rural Services Network, in addition to its strong community group, was looking to strengthen its lines of communication in Westminster in the hope of firmly getting across the rural viewpoint across a range of areas. The Rural Fair Share Group of MPs had been successful and now the RSN was forming a rural Peers Panel and Rural Vulnerability Group of MPs. This was in addition to the APPG on Rural Services which the Group ran. The Group did now feel they were in a position to seek to persuade parliamentarians on rural issues.

3. PRESENTATIONS

The meeting received presentations from on the topic of Health Statistics from Nicola Denis and Tom Bell.

(A) NICOLA DENNIS – Senior Knowledge Transfer Facilitator – Public Health England

Nicola very helpfully took members through the data that NHS England recorded across a range of different areas. The data was detailed down to mainly District level. She explained how the tool kit was designed to work and how it could be useful in terms of both area and overall breakdowns. She illustrated just how the data was capable of interpretation to provide statistical information across from a health, professional and individual viewpoint.

(B) TOM BELL- Lecturer- University of Central Lancashire.

Tom had had a background spanning both commerce and the NHS. In his view the NHS were paying insufficient attention to the keeping, cataloguing and maintenance of important medical and social data. In his opinion this was particularly relevant in rural areas where because of more sparse topography and different patterns of population important messages were not being either established and subsequently heard. He asked for members to assist in a process seeking to identify shortcomings in present data compilation.

Tom also felt the NHS was being slow to take advantage of available technologies. His view was that people may be far more responsive than people were predicting to having 'technological time' with medical advisers than travelling considerable distances and have to wait for what were relatively

brief consultations on medical issues. The NHS in his view were falling behind other countries in this regard.

Ivan Annibal referred to the call for rural research projects from the National Institute for Health Research which can be found on their website with a deadline of 24 July. He said he would be happy to advise members the RSN on some of the opportunities if members were interested. He also raised the value of linking to local Academic Health Science Networks and the RSN exploring a national relationship with them as he knew they are currently open to rural engagement.

4. Issues from the Seminar Session

5. Issues on the Subject of Health and Social Care which were of current concern in the Region.

6. Call for Evidence for the Inquiry into the Long Term Funding and provision of Adult Social Care to feed into the Governments forthcoming Green Paper.

Due to the inclement weather conditions members decided to run the agenda items together.

The following they felt were important:-

- Members totally agreed with Tom Bell that the present way statistical information was kept meant that there was few clear ways that the situation as it related to rural areas, certainly in the rural areas of the West Midlands, could be accurately identified and monitored because information tended to be kept in such a general way. They agreed with the presenter that pressure needed to be brought on Government and the NHS for statistics to be kept in a fashion that would give a true insight into the problems in rural areas and in a way that allowed those problem areas to be monitored.

The problem areas as they detailed them (which also should have relevance for the RSN input into Green Paper process) were:-

1. The lack of data so often in anything lower than District level. Parish data would, it was felt, really help parishes to look further at their role in terms of community care.
2. Lack of data on farming suicides
3. Lack of data on the extra time and mileage occasioned by care and contact officers operating in rural areas with the resulting 'non- contact time'
4. The number of self-employed people in rural areas who found difficulty in taking time off and was a factor in late diagnosis
5. The lack of the use of technology availability in the NHS which it was felt many people would avail themselves of, as opposed to undertaking really difficult journeys.
6. The lack of true data of patient journey times to their nearest GP, the nearest clinic and the nearest hospital. If changes were being proposed by the NHS, decisions should be taken cognoscente of such data.
7. The fact that many rural people were 'asset rich but cash poor'.
8. Concern that early diagnosis was being prevented by the travel difficulties that were now increasing significantly

9. The suspicion that many 'missed appointments' were occasioned by transport problems- statistics needed to be broken down rural –urban so that this was capable of being more accurately recorded and monitored.
10. The fact that seemingly ready identification by postcode allowing easier urban- rural breakdowns was not more fully employed.
11. Consideration about wider use of a scheme so seemingly successfully employed in East Lindsey
12. The fact that 'rural pride' wasn't in anyway factored into any considerations.
13. The form of Community support often encouraged by ACRE required greater publicity- however it had to be acknowledged that community self- help could only go so far.
14. Schemes needed to be considered about how possibly parish councils could be galvanised. They might be able to assist in a monitoring role if they could be persuaded to be more proactive
15. It was felt that the basic poverty in many rural areas was not being identified and that schools might have statistics that identified rural poverty that were possibly not being harnessed- like free meals and failure to join in school trips where a cost was involved.
16. Travel distance (and costs) to schools were in danger of creating child health problems as they were increasing
17. There was a danger that cuts were in turn resulting in cutbacks that took out some of the limited rural evidence that had been available. An Audit of what data bases had disappeared and why might be very informative.
18. As was pointed out by Tom Bell there was an Academic Health Science Network. There were 13 branches across England who could make bids for research and liaison with them might be something worth exploring by authorities and indeed these regional gatherings.
19. The meeting felt that with the current focus on Social Care the problems building up in the Child Care arena were not being looked at sufficiently. In the view of many members the difficulties here were already worse than in Social Care and with continuing budget cuts the situation in this area was becoming very difficult. In their view government also needed to consider this area.
20. The members wished to emphasise the importance of ALL authorities inputting into the Green Paper consultation. Often the perceived importance of the inputs from various sectors was determined by the number and not just the quality of individual responses. As practically all authorities had scrutiny committees RSN were asked to encourage every principal council to consider making their thoughts and views known.
21. Members felt that a simple instruction to people claiming travelling expenses or entering time sheets to record their hours spent in travelling to destinations and then recording time spent at the destination would provide important information capable of being compiled into a strong case about rural financing.

7. Next Actions.

It was felt that it would be good if the Regional meeting could do some '**task and finish work**' work around the question of **rural health information** it might be able to introduce some useful input into the search for a better system that was capable of producing more meaningful statistical evidence. (It was noted that government continually called for evidence when funding considerations were

being looked at.) (-it may be that West Midlands could double up with another region perhaps the South West in attempting to do this work-)

Members would therefore receive up- dates for their thoughts and comment by e mail in relation to this work area as it developed over the coming months and the subject would again be on the agenda for the next Regional meeting in February/March 2019.

8. Meeting Apologies.

The following were received:-

Apologies

| Name | Organisation |
|--|--|
| Graham Biggs | RSN Chief Executive |
| Cllr Roy Aldcroft | Shropshire Council |
| Cllr Polly Andrews | Herefordshire Council |
| Cllr Bob Banks | Worcestershire County Council |
| Cllr Shirley Barnett | Lichfield District Council |
| Cllr Barry Bond | South Staffordshire Council |
| Cllr Peter Butlin | Warwickshire County Council |
| Cllr Eric Drinkwater | Lichfield District Council |
| Lynn Eccles, Director of Communications & Strategy | National Federation of Sub Postmasters |
| Cllr Arnold England | Telford & Wrekin Council |
| Cllr Liz Eyre | Worcestershire County Council |
| Cllr Ian Fletcher | Telford & Wrekin Council |
| Cllr Veronica Fletcher | Telford & Wrekin Council |
| Cllr Simon Geraghty | Worcestershire County Council |
| Cllr Karen Grinsell | Solihull MBC |
| Cllr David Harlow | Herefordshire Council |
| Cllr Paul Harrison | Worcestershire County Council |
| Cllr Gill Heath | Staffordshire County Council |
| Cllr Peter Hogarth MBE | Solihull Council |
| Cllr Diana Holl-Allen | Solihull MBC |
| Cllr David Humphreys | North Warwickshire Borough Council |
| Cllr Tony Jefferson | Stratford District Council |

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Richard Kirlew | Sherborne Deanery |
| Rita Lawson, Chief Executive | Tees Valley Rural Community Council |
| Cllr Roger Lees | South Staffordshire Council |
| Dr John Linnane, Director of Public Health | Warwickshire County Council |
| Cllr Johnny McMahon | Staffordshire County Council |
| Cllr David Minnery | Shropshire Council |
| Cllr Peter Nutting | Shropshire Council |
| Elaine O'Leary, Chief Executive | Northamptonshire ACRE |
| Cllr Mary Rayner | Worcestershire County Council |
| Cllr Clive Rickhards | Warwickshire County Council |
| Cllr Carolyn Robbins | Rugby Borough Council |
| Cllr Chris Saint | Stratford-on-Avon District Council |
| Peter Shipp, Executive Chairman | EYMS Group Ltd |
| Cllr Bob Sleigh | Solihull MBC |
| Cllr Gail Sleigh | Solihull MBC |
| Cllr David Smith | Staffordshire County Council |
| Cllr Mike Smith | Stafford Borough Council |
| Cllr Paul Snape | Staffordshire County Council |
| Cllr Ray Sutherland | Stafford Borough Council |
| Paul Sutton, Director of Assets & Development | Shropshire Housing Group |
| Sarah Taylor, Events & Projects Officer | Plunkett Foundation |
| Cllr Peter Tomlinson DL | Worcestershire County Council |
| Cllr David Tremellen | Shropshire Council |
| Cllr Carolyn Trowbridge | Stafford Borough Council |
| Cllr Rebecca Vale | Worcestershire County Council |
| Cllr David Watkins | Malvern Hills District Council |
| Cllr Victoria Wilson | Staffordshire County Council |
| Cllr Mark Winnington | Staffordshire County Council |
| Cllr Susan Woodward | Staffordshire County Council |



Priority List for Health and Social Care Group

At the first meeting of the Health and Social Care Group held in November 2017, a number of areas in relation to rural health and social care were discussed. It was decided to carry out a survey of members to assist the group to choose carefully over the areas where it was felt RSN could work to the greatest advantage and prioritise activity.

The survey has been sent to all that were invited to the meeting in November and the following information has been gathered.

Respondents were asked to select their top 3 areas from a wide list of areas. The results have meant that one area came out top with three additional areas sharing the second place spot.

- Need for preventative measures rather than focusing on ill health – Public health funding is reducing
- Focus on early intervention – this can be difficult if people don't present for support early due to access and transport problems
- Sustainability of the care market in rural areas
- Demographics – the increasingly ageing population

Reasons for choosing these as the areas for work to focus included:

Early intervention and preventative measures are fundamental in helping to reduce a higher cost re hospital stay and greater infirmity. For this, the right preventative measures need to be in place, and the right support available when needed that will enable people to remain independent. Social integration and support networks are a fundamental requirement for a reasonable quality of life but are becoming increasingly to maintain.

There is a role for the third sector, town and parish councils and other elements of the public sector. Public health funding is not decreasing at the rate that funding for social care is decreasing, as it remains ring-fenced. There is an opportunity for Public Health to play a more fundamental role in preventing rural isolation and deprivation, as this is a key determinant of health.

The social care market has a significant problem with recruitment and retention of staff, especially in rural areas. Sustainability of the care market may therefore depend on the development of alternative care and support systems, ones which provide more attractive jobs.

Respondents were also asked to provide Good Practice examples of work in their rural areas. These will all be fed back to the Rural Health & Social Care Group but included:

- <https://www.connecttosupporthampshire.org.uk/home>

- Social prescribing is developing - Haverhill, Leiston Community Partnership which includes DCLG funded social prescribing (<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/news/leiston-to-benefit-from-social-prescribing-pilot/>)
- National Centre for Rural Health and Care Business Plan

South Hams (Predominantly Rural)

| | Date of indicator | Aim of Indicator | South Hams | Predominantly Rural | Urban with Significant Rural | Predominantly Urban |
|--|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Median Full Time Workplace based Gross Annual Pay | 2016 | Higher | £22,808 | £25,643 | £27,447 | £28,217 |
| Total JSA Claimants as a proportion of resident population ages 16-64 | Dec 17 | Lower | 0.50% | 0.55% | 0.65% | 1.02% |
| Gross Value Added (balanced) per head | 2016 | Higher | £23,847 | £21,460 | £24,945 | £29,290 |
| English Indicators of Deprivation (barriers to Housing & Services) | 2015 | Lower | 23.4 | 24.1 | 20.2 | 20.8 |
| Ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile gross annual workplace based earnings | 2016 | Lower | 10.6 | 9.1 | 9.4 | 9.3 |
| GCSE & equivalent achievements of pupils at the end of KS4 Average attainment 8 score per pupil | 2016/17 | Higher | 51.1000 | 46.8835 | 46.6481 | 46.2706 |
| GCSE & equivalent achievements of pupils at the end of KS4 Average Progress 8 Score | 2016/17 | Higher | 0.3100 | -0.0398 | -0.0800 | -0.0286 |
| Estimated % of pupils receiving Free School Meals at age 15 who entered Higher Education | 2014/2015 | Higher | Devon Figure – 13% | 15% | 16% | 25% |
| English Indicators of Deprivation Crime (average score) | 2015 | Lower | -0.75 | -0.53 | -0.29 | 0.13 |
| Life Expectancy at Birth Male | 2014-16 | Higher | 84.7 | 84.0 | 83.6 | 83.0 |
| Life Expectancy at Birth Female | 2014-16 | Higher | 81.7 | 80.6 | 80.2 | 79.2 |

The colouring shows the performance of the local authority area (where available) compared to its own classification, in this instance Predominantly Rural.

2016 Population Estimates Total: 84,300

| | 0-19 years old | 20-29 years old | 30-64 years old | 65+ years old | 85+ years old |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| South Hams | 20.0% | 8.1% | 44.5% | 27.5% | 3.5% |
| Predominantly Rural | 21.9% | 10.0% | 45.0% | 23.1% | 3.1% |
| Urban with Significant Rural | 22.9% | 10.9% | 45.3% | 20.9% | 2.8% |
| Predominantly Urban | 24.4% | 14.9% | 45.1% | 15.7% | 2.1% |

Question 1): What are your views on the Government's proposals to simplify the relative needs assessment by focussing on the most important cost drivers and reducing the number of formulas involved?

On the whole we SUPPORT the Government's proposals to simplify the relative needs assessment by focussing on the most important cost drivers and reducing the number of formulas.

However, we note that this consultation does not touch on either the resources block or the central allocation block. We have long expressed the view that the outcomes of the existing formula model are unfair on rural areas and whilst we agree with the simplification of the existing mechanism, we await consultation on the resources block in order to assess the overall impact of the fair funding review.

Of particular concern is that there is no mention of the central allocation block. As this formerly distributed funding on a per capita basis, it seems clear that if this was to be removed with all funding being made via needs and resources (and damping) then the current needs formulae would result in significant redistribution from rural areas, a move which we would clearly not support.

We seek clarification, therefore, as to the plans for the central allocation block. We also call for greater clarity on the Government's plans for setting the relative weights between the blocks.

Question 2): Do you agree that the Government should use official population projections in order to reflect changing population size and structure in areas when assessing the relative needs of local authorities?

We SUPPORT the use of official population projections and would support any mechanism which is capable of fairly reflecting underlying changes in population so that they are recognised as soon as practicably possible in funding allocations.

We feel that the lack of dynamism in the current system combined with historic low funding of rural areas has contributed increasing financial fragility of local authorities in rural areas.

Question 3): Do you agree that these population projections should not be updated until the relative needs assessment is refreshed?

We would SUPPORT any move that provided reliable and updated population figures to be included in the 2020/21 Settlement.

Question 4):Do you agree that rurality should be included in the relative needs assessment as a common cost driver?

We STRONGLY SUPPORT the inclusion of rurality as a common cost driver.

We agree with the assertion in the consultation document that the alterations in weightings for sparsity for 2013/14 'may have only partially reflected the challenges faced in delivering some services in rural areas'.

Question 5): How do you think we should measure the impact of rurality on local authorities' 'need to spend'? Should the relative needs assessment continue to use a measure of sparsity or are there alternative approaches that should be considered?

We recognise past difficulties in finding a measure which adequately reflects rurality. However we do feel that the existing sparsity measure provides a good proxy for rurality particularly in terms of measuring potential time loss through travel.

That is not to say that there may not be further potential measures for rurality. We have undertaken reviews in the past which have shown significant cost penalties for provision of services in rural areas associated with 'lost' travel time but these have been deemed too limited to meet MHCLG statistical criteria.

We feel that this is an important cost driver, deserving of further work to establish the additional cost of delivering services to rural areas and if this can not be undertaken then an increase to the weight of the sparsity indicator should be used.

Question 6): Do you agree that deprivation should be included in the relative needs assessment as a common cost driver?

We agree that deprivation should be included in the relative needs assessment as a common cost driver. However, in terms of a foundation formula we would make the following points:

- We feel that only some of the services, such as housing and homelessness, intended for inclusion in the foundation formula correlate to deprivation. We do not feel that many foundation formula services correlate to deprivation and we would want to ensure that deprivation is not overstated in the foundation formula
- We agree that deprivation measure are currently too narrowly focussed around benefits take-up and would STRONGLY SUPPORT a wider definition of deprivation as proposed with IMD. We would also make the point that low

wages rarely feature as a measure of deprivation and many rural areas suffer from low wages and high living costs which are not factored into needs formulae.

Question 7): How do you think we should measure the impact of deprivation on 'need to spend'? Should the relative needs assessment use the Index of Multiple Deprivation or are there alternative measures that should be considered?

We STRONGLY SUPPORT a greater focus on Index of Multiple Deprivation measures in terms of giving a less one dimensional view of deprivation as is the case with existing formulae.

Question 8): Do you have views on other common cost drivers the Government should consider? What are the most suitable data sources to measure these cost drivers?

We feel that the Fixed Cost sum currently included in the Mixed Costs RNF but not mentioned in the consultation should form part of the Foundation Formula. Although not significant in terms of the whole formula, these amounts are significant for the smallest local authorities, many of which are in rural areas.

Otherwise, we do not feel that there are other common cost drivers though we point to our response to question 10 in respect of some services such as drainage board levies which are specific to a small number of authorities.

Question 9):

Do you have views on the approach the Government should take to Area Cost Adjustments?

Generally, we understand the concept of Area Cost Adjustments. However, we would make the following points:

- We feel that there is no reflection for the additional costs which are sometimes prevalent in rural areas associated with imperfect market conditions where labour costs might be inflated due to low supply
- We feel that some of the indicators in the present formula overstate the needs in urban areas and as ACA is multiplicative in nature these overstatements are further increased when ACA is applied.

Question 10a): Do you have views on the approach that the Government should take when considering areas which represent a small amount of expenditure overall for local government, but which are significant for a small number of authorities?

Question 10b): Which services do you think are most significant here?

We support the concept of identifying specific expenditures which are limited to a small number of authorities.

We feel that Drainage Board Levies fall into this category.

Question 11a): Do you agree the cost drivers set out above are the key cost drivers affecting adult social care services?

Question 11b): Do you have views on what the most suitable data sets are to measure these or other key cost drivers affecting adult social care services?

We SUPPORT the Government's thinking set out in the consultation paper, particularly in respect of the focus on means testing and higher levels of impairment. We feel that the existing proxies for deprivation are too narrowly focussed around income deprivation, particularly benefits rates.

We particularly SUPPORT sparsity as a key cost driver but feel that the existing weighting understates the costs of providing adult social care services in rural areas.

Question 12a): Do you agree that these are the key cost drivers affecting children's services?

Question 12b): Do you have views on what the most suitable data sets are to measure these or other key cost drivers affecting children's services?

We SUPPORT the Governments thinking set out in the consultation paper and note the additional work to be undertaken on Children's Services.

We feel that the existing indicators for deprivation are too narrowly focussed around income deprivation, particularly benefit rates, and would welcome investigation of other cost drivers for Children's Services

We feel that the sparsity indicator should be considered for Children's Social Care as home to establishment transport costs more in rural areas.

Question 13a): Do you agree that these are the key cost drivers affecting routine highways maintenance and concessionary travel services?

Question 13b): Do you have views on what the most suitable data sets are to measure these or other key cost drivers affecting routine highways maintenance or concessionary travel services?

We agree with the highways maintenance cost drivers.

We do not feel that the concessionary travel services cost driver is appropriate. When LGF undertook their work on sparsity and rurality, concessionary travel had the strongest negative correlation between sparsity and expenditure. We believe that this is a prime example of 'unmet need' – bus boardings in rural areas are so low because there simply aren't many busses to board! This is due to historic low levels of funding resulting in low or no support resulting in low or no bus service provision. We therefore STRONGLY DISAGREE with the existing formula.

We would propose that the Access to Services index from the Indices of Multiple Deprivation be used to measure need for concessionary travel and for bus support. (Question 14).

Question 14a): Do you have views on what the most suitable cost drivers for local bus support are?

Question 14b): Do you have views on what the most suitable data sets are to measure the cost drivers for local bus support?

We would propose that the Access to Services index from the Indices of Multiple Deprivation be used to measure need for concessionary travel and for bus support.

Question 15a): Do you agree that these are the key cost drivers affecting waste collection and disposal services?

Question 15b): Do you have views on what the most suitable data sets are to measure these or other key cost drivers affecting waste collection and disposal services?

We DO NOT SUPPORT the proposal that deprivation is a key cost driver for waste collection and disposal services. We would be interested to see the empirical evidence for the link between deprivation and lower likelihood to recycle. In any case, we believe that recycling and waste collection/disposal should be considered together and that seeking only cost drivers for waste collection and disposal may create a perverse incentive against recycling which is at odds with the Government's environmental agenda.

We struggle to understand a correlation between deprivation and dog fouling.

We do feel that travel times, types of property and number of households are all key cost drivers.

Question 16a): Do you agree these remain the key drivers affecting the cost of delivering fire and rescue services?

Question 16b): Do you have views on which other data sets might be more suitable to measure the cost drivers for fire and rescue services?

Whilst we feel that the cost drivers are correct, we are of the view that the sparsity indicator is significantly under-weighted. The reductions to fire funding in rural areas have had a profound impact on service where reliance on retained staff is so important. Without an improved recognition of sparsity, we feel that fire and rescue provision and response to the most rural areas of England will be drastically reduced.

Question 17a): Do you agree these are the key cost drivers affecting the cost of legacy capital financing?

Question 17b): Do you have views on what the most suitable data sets are to measure these or other key cost drivers affecting legacy capital financing?

We do not have any views on this question.

Question 18a): Are there other service areas you think require a more specific funding formula?

Question 18b): Do you have views on what the key cost drivers are for these areas, and what the most suitable data sets are to measure these cost drivers?

We do not feel that there are any other services which require a more specific funding formula.

Question 19): How do you think the Government should decide on the weights of different funding formulas?

Question 20): Do you have views about which statistical techniques the Government should consider when deciding how to weight individual cost drivers?

We are pleased that the Government has recognised some of the limitations with multiple regression modelling, particularly the circular 'baking in' of past funding patterns. Whilst we accept that regression modelling is a necessary part of the system, we feel that the Government should be prepared to use other statistical techniques as appropriate and also be prepared to use 'informed expert judgement' as proposed by the Society of County Treasurers at the January 2018 Technical Working Group.

Question 21): Do you have any comments at this stage on the potential impact of the options outlined in this consultation document on persons who share a protected characteristic? Please provide evidence to support your comments.

We have no comments in respect of this question.

Rural Conference 2018

Tuesday 5th September 2018

| Time | Duration | What | Who to organize? |
|---------------|----------|---|------------------|
| 11.30 – 11.50 | 20 mins | Arrival & Registration | - |
| 11.50-12.00 | 10 mins | Welcome & Introduction | Graham |
| 12.00-13.00 | 60 mins | Panel Discussion | Ivan |
| 13.00-14.00 | 60 Mins | Lunch | - |
| 14.00 – 14.45 | 45 mins | Lord Gardiner | Kerry |
| 14.45-15.20 | 35 mins | Workshop 1 | Kerry |
| 15.20-15.55 | 35 mins | Workshop 2 | Kerry |
| 15.55-16.30 | 35 mins | Facilitated discussion with plenary about points learned from the day and what they hope to cover in day 2. | Ivan |

Wednesday 6th September 2019

| Time | Duration | What | Who to organize? |
|---------------|----------|---|------------------|
| 9.30 – 9.50 | 20 Mins | Arrival & Registration | - |
| 9.50-10.00 | 10 Mins | Welcome & Introduction | Graham |
| 10.00 – 11.00 | 60 Mins | Plenary – Tony Travers | Ivan |
| 11.00– 11.30 | 35 Mins | Speaker | Ivan |
| 11.30-11.45 | 15 Mins | Tea & Coffee | - |
| 11.45-12.20 | 35 Mins | Workshop 3 | Kerry |
| 12.20-12.55 | 35 Mins | Workshop 4 | Kerry |
| 12.55-13.50 | 55 mins | Lunch | - |
| 13.50 –14.30 | 40 Mins | Speaker | Ivan |
| 14.30-15.00 | 30 Mins | Speaker | Ivan |
| 15.00-15.30 | 30 Mins | Speaker | Ivan |
| 15.30-15.50 | 20 Mins | Summing up of Conference and Key Themes | Ivan |
| 15.50-16.00 | 10 Mins | Closing | Graham |

Rural Conference 2018

DRAFT Workshop ideas

Tuesday 5th September

3 workshops to be repeated once

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 14.45-15.20 | 35 mins | Workshop 1 | Kerry |
| 15.20-15.55 | 35 mins | Workshop 2 | Kerry |

Workshop ideas:

Local Government Finance – Dan Bates

Have a session that delegates have to book on and limit to 15 (?) delegates so that he can tailor his presentation and figures to those authorities.

Setting up Community run services - Plunkett

(Jane mentioned seeing a presentation they did about how to support people to set up a community shop which could include other services like a post office etc. Could be a good option to have as a workshop about wider service delivery and not just local authority based)

Delivering services with a new model - West Devon & South Hams Council

(they have got rid of departments and work is sent to customer services or 'specialist' teams)

Wednesday 6th September

3 workshops to be repeated once

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 11.45-12.20 | 35 Mins | Workshop 3 | Kerry |
| 12.20-12.55 | 35 Mins | Workshop 4 | Kerry |

Merging 2 districts – Suffolk Coastal & Waveney

Given that Sajid Javid has approved this merger, could we ask them to do something on their lessons learned so far?

<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/yourcouncil/new-single-council/>

Rural Housing – does Andy have a contact we could use for this?

Housing is such a key issue in rural areas it seems logical that we would have a session on this, could be around delivery of exception sites?

Scrutiny of Rural Health – North Yorkshire?

Whilst I appreciate we may not be their favourites at the moment, this is the council where I wrote the joint article with and they have done some scrutiny recently on workforce planning in health & social care. It may be something we could invite them to talk about? The contact is scrutiny often sends me information or updates on their work.

| | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 2 | RSN (INCOME & EXPENDITURE) 2017/18 AND | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | ACTUAL TO 27TH FEBRUARY 2018 AND | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | ESTIMATES FOR 2018/19 to 2019/20 | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | | ACTUAL | ESTIMATE | EST | EST |
| 6 | | | | | | | 27/02/2018 | 2017/18 | 18/19 | 19/20 |
| 7 | INCOME | | | | | | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| 8 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS BALANCE B/FWD | | | | | | | 8500 | | |
| 10 | DEBTORS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR (NET OF VAT) | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Rural Assembly held by NKDC at year end | | | | | | 2873 | 2873 | | |
| 12 | Rural Assembly Outstanding | | | | | | 745 | 745 | | |
| 13 | RSP Subscriptions | | | | | | 990 | 990 | | |
| 14 | Rural Crime Network | | | | | | 5918 | 5918 | | |
| 15 | Rural Health Conference | | | | | | 175 | 175 | | |
| 16 | Coastal Communities Alliance (Gross) | | | | | | | 1037 | | |
| 17 | Subscriptions | | | | | | 1037 | | | |
| 18 | SPARSE Rural/Rural Assembly | | | | | | 268679 | 279255 | 303730 | 315606 |
| 19 | Ditto Held by NKDC at Month End | | | | | | | | | |
| 20 | RSP | | | | | | 9679 | 10642 | 10483 | 10483 |
| 21 | Commercial Partner First Group Buses | | | | | | 10000 | 10000 | 10000 | 10000 |
| 22 | Subscriptions from Rural Health Group | | | | | | | | | |
| 23 | Income from Rural Housing Group | | | | | | 6645 | 6895 | 7390 | 7390 |
| 24 | Income from Fire & Rescue Group | | | | | | 1985 | 1985 | 2480 | 2380 |
| 25 | OTHER INCOME | | | | | | | | | |
| 26 | Conferences/Seminars | | | | | | 9427 | | | |
| 27 | Rural Conference Income | | | | | | | | | |
| 28 | Rural Conference Surplus | | | | | | | | 4000 | 4000 |
| 29 | Assumed additional Income Generated | | | | | | | | 3500 | 5000 |
| 30 | Service Level Agreements | | | | | | | | | |
| 31 | Recharges ro Rural Crime Network (5 months 17/18) | | | | | | 4063 | 4063 | | |

| | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 32 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 33 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 34 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 35 | Contras re RCN@ | | | | | | 1895 | | | |
| 36 | Recharges to Rural England Back Office Support £1200) | | | | | | 600 | 1200 | 1200 | 1200 |
| 37 | RE recharge re Amazon Contract | | | | | | 3500 | 3500 | | |
| 38 | RE recharge re Elec NW Commission | | | | | | 1375 | 1375 | 1000 | 2125 |
| 39 | Coastal Communities Alliance Gross) | | | | | | 3113 | 4149 | 4149 | 4149 |
| 40 | Contributions to RHA Website Development/Maintenance | | | | | | 3280 | 3580 | | |
| 41 | Miscellaneous | | | | | | | | | |
| 42 | Contras | | | | | | 14376 | | | |
| 43 | CCN Contrib to Brexit Costs | | | | | | | 2000 | | |
| 44 | VAT | | | | | | | | | |
| 45 | VAT Refund | | | | | | 10983 | | | |
| 46 | VAT Received | | | | | | 10506 | | | |
| 47 | TOTAL INCOME | | | | | | 371844 | 348882 | 347932 | 362333 |

| | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K |
|----|--|---|---|---|----------------------|---|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 48 | | | | | | | ACTUAL | ESTIMATE | EST | EST |
| 49 | | | | | | | 27/02/2018 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 19/20 |
| 50 | EXPENDITURE | | | | | | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| 51 | VAT Paid on Goods & Services | | | | | | 16773 | | | |
| 52 | General Provision for Inflation | | | | | | | | 1000 | 1100 |
| 53 | CONTRACTS FOR SERVICES | | | | | | | | | |
| 54 | Corporate Management | | | | DI,GB,AD 100% KB 40% | | 68571 | 74530 | 63114 | 63114 |
| 55 | Finance/Performance and Data Analysis | | | | , DW, 100%, KB 20% | | 27001 | 29457 | 30510 | 30510 |
| 56 | Communications (incl Seminars) | | | | RoseR,JT,,AD3 100% | | 5902 | 7529 | 7529 | 7529 |
| 57 | Additional Comms Activity by RuralCity Media | | | | | | 3362 | 5763 | 5763 | 5763 |
| 58 | Administrative and Technical Support | | | | RI, WI,WC,BA,MB 100% | | 46338 | 51500 | 50311 | 50311 |
| 59 | Research and Monitoring | | | | BW, JH, 100% | | 10130 | 10238 | 10238 | 10238 |
| 60 | Service Group Networking | | | | KB40% | | 7729 | 8432 | 8432 | 8432 |
| 61 | Economic Development Service | | | | AD5 100% | | 4675 | 5100 | 5100 | 5100 |
| 62 | Coastal Communities Contract | | | | | | 3650 | 3650 | 3650 | 3650 |
| 63 | Rural Communities Housing Group | | | | AD2 100% | | 6078 | 6630 | 6630 | 6630 |
| 64 | Rural Transport Group | | | | AD6 100% | | 1870 | 2040 | 2040 | 2040 |
| 65 | Provision for Inflation on Contracts (2% p.a.) | | | | | | | | 2100 | 2120 |
| 66 | OTHER EXPENDITURE | | | | | | | | | |
| 67 | Budget for Brexit Project | | | | | | 1401 | 7000 | | |
| 68 | Rural Fair Shares/Business Rates "Campaigns" | | | | | | | | | |
| 69 | Rural Fair Shares Campaign etc. | | | | | | 2000 | 12500 | 6500 | 6500 |
| 70 | Pixell Financial Service (core Annual Service) | | | | | | 5456 | 12500 | 10500 | 10500 |
| 71 | Fair Shares and Other Campaign Media Relations | | | | | | | 0 | 2500 | 2500 |
| 72 | SPEND FROM VOLCONTRIBS (BUSINESS RATES) | | | | | | 3690 | 8500 | | |
| 73 | Conferences/Seminars | | | | | | | | | |
| 74 | Rural Conference 2017 | | | | | | 8990 | | | |
| 75 | Rural Conference Drinks Reception | | | | | | 1300 | 1300 | 1000 | 1000 |
| 76 | Seminar Costs | | | | | | 972 | 1000 | 700 | 700 |

| | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| 77 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 78 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 79 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 80 | Service Level Agreements | | | | | | | | | | |
| 81 | RCN -CONTRAS @ | | | | | | 1425 | | | | |
| 82 | Rural Housing Group (RHG) | | | | | | 955 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | |
| 83 | RHG Website Maint | | | | | | 345 | 645 | | 1200 | |
| 84 | Rural England CIC to re-charge) | | | | | | 786 | | | | |
| 85 | Rural Inland CIC transfer of part of First Group Support | | | | | | | 7000 | 7000 | 7000 | 7000 |
| 86 | APPG/Rural Issues Group Costs | | | | | | 487 | 700 | 500 | 500 | |
| 87 | Parlia Rural Vulnerability Group | | | | | | 199 | 200 | 500 | 500 | |
| 88 | Rural England/Vulnerability Service Contrib | | | | | | 3000 | 3000 | 3000 | 3000 | |
| 89 | Business Expenses | | | | | | | | | | |
| 90 | RSN Online etc. | | | | | | 10554 | 18092 | 18239 | 18239 | |
| 91 | Database Update (media contrctcs) | | | | | | | | | 900 | |
| 92 | Website Upgrade | | | | | | 4750 | 5350 | | | |
| 93 | Ongoing Website Updates | | | | | | | | | | |
| 94 | Travel and Subsistence | | | | | | 18271 | 20800 | 17500 | 17500 | |
| 95 | Print, Stat,e mail, phone & Broadband@ | | | | | | 5012 | 5500 | 4000 | 4000 | |
| 96 | Meeting Room Hire | | | | | | 3083 | 3100 | 1000 | 1000 | |
| 97 | Website and Data Base software etc | | | | | | 3150 | 4000 | 4000 | 4000 | |
| 98 | Rent of Devon Office & Associated Costs | | | | | | 5119 | 8800 | 8800 | 8800 | |
| 99 | Accountancy Fees | | | | | | 681 | 740 | 800 | 800 | |
| 100 | NKDC Services | | | | | | | 2145 | 2525 | 2762 | |
| 101 | Companies House Fees | | | | | | 13 | 13 | 13 | 13 | |
| 102 | Bank Charges | | | | | | 71 | 90 | 90 | 90 | |
| 103 | IT Equipment &Support & Other Capital | | | | | | 1384 | 1400 | 1000 | 600 | |
| 104 | Insurance | | | | | | 216 | 600 | 650 | 650 | |
| 105 | Corporation Tax | | | | | | | | | 300 | |

| | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 106 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 107 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 108 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 109 | Membership of Rural Coalition | | | | | | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 |
| 110 | Refunds of Overpayments/ Contras@ | | | | | | 13693 | | | |
| 111 | ARREARS - PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR | | | | | | | | | |
| 112 | Rural Housing Alliance | | | | | | 792 | 792 | 1200 | 1200 |
| 113 | Contract for Service (ADMIN) | | | | | | 1775 | 1775 | 1390 | 1390 |
| 114 | Contracts for Service (CORP MAN) | | | | | | 1100 | 1100 | | |
| 115 | Communications | | | | | | 500 | 500 | | |
| 116 | Rose Regeneration | | | | | | 333 | 333 | | |
| 117 | Seminar Costs | | | | | | 71 | 71 | | |
| 118 | PIXELL | | | | | | 5203 | 5202 | | |
| 119 | B Wilson Arrears | | | | | | 3525 | 3525 | 3525 | 3525 |
| 120 | RSN Online arrears | | | | | | 9874 | 9874 | | |
| 121 | Travel and Subsistence arrears | | | | | | 1281 | 720 | 700 | 700 |
| 122 | Printing, Phone and Stationery (arrears) | | | | | | | | | |
| 123 | Office Costs | | | | | | 3750 | 5000 | | |
| 124 | Data base etc (arrears) | | | | | | 1130 | 1129 | | |
| 125 | Bank Charges | | | | | | | 8 | 9 | 9 |
| 126 | Rural England | | | | | | 8 | | | |
| 127 | TOTAL EXPENDITURE | | | | | | 335674 | 361123 | 295308 | 297665 |
| 128 | ADD FOR NEW APPOINTEE RECRUITMENT/RETENTION | | | | | | | | 46000 | 46000 |
| 129 | ADD FOR EMPLOYERS NI | | | | | | | | 8000 | 8000 |
| 130 | TOTAL REVISED EXPENDITURE | | | | | | | 361123 | 349308 | 351665 |
| 131 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 132 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 133 | TOTAL INCOME | | | | | | | 348882 | 347932 | 362333 |
| 134 | LESS TOTAL EXP | | | | | | | -361123 | -349308 | -351665 |

| | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| 135 | DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IN YEAR INC & EXP | | | | | | | -12241 | -1376 | 10668 |
| 136 | ADD BALANCES BROUGHT FORWARD | | | | | | | 13755 | 1514 | 138 |
| 137 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 138 | BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD | | | | | | | 1514 | 138 | 10806 |
| 139 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 140 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 141 | | | | | | | | | | |

Rural Brexit Roundtable – Note of meeting

Tuesday 20 February 2018

Venue: CLA offices, 16 Belgrave Square, London, SW1X 8PQ

Present: Margaret Clark, Rural Coalition
Simon Edwards, CCN
Richard Quallington, ACRE
Cllr Liz Harvey, LGA
Charles Trotman, CLA
Andy Dean (RSN)

Apologies: David Emerson (ACRE), Mark Shucksmith (Newcastle University), Tom Keen (NFU), Ian Miller & Matthew Hamilton (DCN), Joe Ling (LGA), Graham Biggs (RSN)

Notes

Andy Dean chaired the meeting and opened by summarising the **original purposes** of the Roundtable as follows:

1. To provide a platform for sharing information and activities relating to Brexit and rural areas across participating organisations.
2. To explore opportunities for potential joint case making and lobbying in relation to the future of rural areas in the context of Brexit.

Each representative outlined **current relevant work** including:

- Recent success in achieving increased funding allocations to rural local authorities in relation to Adult Social Care and the Rural Services Delivery Grant (RSDG). This represented clear acknowledgement from government of the needs of rural areas and close working with rural MPs.
- Direct contact with ministers reflecting the need for detailed evidence in relation to the increased costs associated with service delivery in rural areas.
- The LGA Brexit officer working group.
- Quarterly activity reports which ACRE produce for Defra including information from across all 38 Rural Community Councils covering rural England.
- A government-led review of LEPs which is underway.
- Research currently being commissioned by Defra into:
 - The dynamics of the rural economy (due for publication in September)
 - The impact of ERDF and ESF in rural areas (due for publication in October)

- Defra have also established an Academics Panel to advise on specific issues in relation to rural research and evidence.
- Research commissioned from SRUC by the Prince's Countryside Fund to investigate how remote rural communities can become sustainable, due for publication in July.
- CLA work in response to the Industrial Strategy which is seeking institutional change reflecting the need for high level cross-departmental leadership in relation to rural affairs, triple devolution and ring-fenced rural resources through the Shared Prosperity Fund. This includes a call for a Rural Industrial Strategy.

A review of the 2000 **Rural White Paper** had been commissioned by RSN and circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed that this was a very useful working document which it would be useful to be able to share. It was agreed that RSN would produce a slightly amended version for partners to be able to share on a confidential working basis as part of individual organisations' Brexit related work. Andy Dean agreed to seek RSN approval for this approach prior to circulating the amended document.

The draft **Rural Strategy** template, circulated prior to the meeting, was discussed. It was agreed that a strategy would not be produced but the group would seek to agree a series of principles in relation to outcomes sought from the Brexit process and the way we will seek to work alongside each other.

Conclusions and Next Steps

1. It was agreed that there is great value in sharing work in relation to Brexit through the Roundtable group. Any organisation wishing to share information, evidence or research should forward this to Andy Dean for onward distribution to the Roundtable partners.
2. The group would organise meetings as and when useful in the future.
3. RSN would circulate an amended version of the Rural White Paper analysis document for use by partners.
4. A short list of principles would be agreed across the Roundtable partners focussing on both collective 'key messages' to government and agreed ways of operating together. Through discussion at the meeting this would include:

Key messages:

- A Rural Industrial Strategy is created for England.
- Government sets out its policy in relation to the future of rural areas, their communities and businesses.
- High level cross-department leadership is provided to the Rural Affairs agenda by government.

Operations:

- Share relevant information, evidence and research across Roundtable partners.
- Deploy resources effectively with individual organisations taking a lead on key issues where they have agreed core expertise.

All Roundtable partners were requested to consider this list and suggest additional potential core principles.

Post-Brexit England Commission – Call for Evidence

On 29 March 2019, in just over a year's time, the United Kingdom is scheduled to withdraw from the European Union. While the terms of Britain's departure and indeed its future relationship with the remaining EU27 continue to be subject to detailed negotiations, it is clear that preparations for Brexit and its implications are likely to dominate the legislative and political agenda for much of the next decade.

However, while Brexit will present a range of risks and opportunities, it is crucial to recognise that, whatever the shape of the final deal, the country will face a number of significant long-standing challenges such as flat-lining productivity, rising intergenerational inequality and unevenly distributed demographic change. And because the combination of these challenges will impact each part of the country differently, it is clear that national top-down solutions will not work; they can only be effectively addressed at the local level.

Non-Metropolitan England¹ makes up 62 per cent of England's population, provides 56 per cent of England's Gross Value Added and between 2010 and 2015 increased its GVA per head by 13 per cent, double the rate of growth of London.² Yet despite being the economic backbone of the country, thus far the Government has proved unwilling to devolve significant power beyond a select number of city-regions.

The Local Government Association's People and Places Board, the body responsible for representing non-metropolitan councils in England, believes that the time is now right to reassert the case for devolution to non-metropolitan England and to consider in detail what local powers and resources will be required if we are to achieve the best possible outcomes for communities and businesses across the country.

Set out below are some of the key areas the Post-Brexit England Commission will explore, with examples of where the LGA believe local councils in non-metropolitan areas can make a real difference in helping to deliver:

- improved productivity and increased inclusive growth;
- a better skilled workforce;
- more effective employment services;
- better transport and digital infrastructure;
- more and better housing;
- increased exports and foreign direct investment; and,
- tailored public services that meet the specific needs of deeply rural areas.

This call for evidence seeks views on the proposals outlined below and welcomes suggestions for new ideas from all those with an interest in post-Brexit England. The resulting evidence will be used to broaden our understanding of the issues and opportunities facing non-metropolitan areas, test the proposals that are set out and feed into the Commission's interim report, due to be launched at the [Local Government Association's Annual Conference](#) in early July.

We look forward to hearing from you.

¹ Defined as those local authorities outside the six metropolitan counties and London (284 councils including counties and districts in two tier areas)

² [Devolution to Non-Metropolitan England: Seven Steps To Growth And Prosperity \(2015\)](#) and analysis of the ONS Regional Gross Value Added (Income Approach) by Local Authority in the UK statistical release 2016

Improving productivity and increasing inclusive growth;

The Government's recently launched industrial strategy provides a critical opportunity to drive the creation of a successful, world-leading economy. By recognising place as a crucial component of sustainable growth, local industrial strategies provide a fresh opportunity for the Government, business leaders, universities and local councils to forge new, powerful relationships with each other, for the benefit of local residents, as well as underlining the need for new devolution deals across the country.

The LGA has issued a [joint commitment](#) with the Local Enterprise Partnership Network to work together on the creation of ambitious local industrial strategies fit to drive a thriving economy in the decades ahead. We would like to hear your thoughts on how these proposals might be developed post-Brexit and, in particular, your views on the following questions:

How can local government and local enterprise partnerships best balance the need to deliver increased productivity with the need to drive inclusive growth in order to make a success of post-Brexit England?

What are the key determinants of economic success in more rural areas, how well are they accommodated by national priorities and what are the opportunities for addressing these through local industrial strategies?

Training a better skilled workforce

The UK is currently in the grip of a skills crisis. Forecasts produced for the Local Government Association by the Learning and Work Institute predict that by 2024 a growing skills gap will result in a shortage of 4.2 million skilled people to meet the demand for high skilled jobs and a surplus of more than 6 million people with low skills. Failure to address this challenge puts at risk up to 4 per cent of future economic growth – a loss of £90 billion economic output, with the average worker £1,176 a year worse off.³ Brexit has the potential to change the balance of higher and lower skilled jobseekers across the country.

[Work Local](#) is the LGA's vision for an integrated and devolved employment and skills service – bringing together information, advice and guidance alongside the delivery of employment, skills, apprenticeships and wider support for individuals and employers.

We would like to hear your thoughts on how these proposals might be developed post-Brexit and, in particular, your views on the following questions:

Are there particular sectors within non-metropolitan areas likely to require additional support post-Brexit?

What are the particular skills challenges faced by non-metropolitan and more rural economies, how might these be best addressed post-Brexit?

Providing more effective employment services

England has one of the most centralised employment and skills systems in the developed world. Different central government departments and their agencies are directly responsible

³ [Work Local - Our vision for Employment and Skills](#)

for employment and skills policy, design, funding and oversight. Local areas have little ability to influence priorities, funding or delivery.

As set out above [Work Local](#) is the LGA's vision for an integrated and devolved employment and skills service – bringing together information, advice and guidance alongside the delivery of employment, skills, apprenticeships and support for individuals and employers.

We would like to hear your thoughts on how these proposals might be developed post-Brexit and, in particular, your views on the following questions:

How effective is your Jobcentre Plus and Work and Health Programme provider in supporting people into work in your area, how likely are they to be able to respond effectively to changes in local need?

What opportunities do you see for collaboration between councils, local enterprise partnerships and others to improve the provision of employment support services in non-metropolitan areas?

Providing better transport and digital infrastructure;

Access to fast and reliable digital connectivity is a vital component for supporting economic growth and a key enabler of public sector digital transformation. The proposed Universal Service Obligation is a step in the right direction, but on its current trajectory will leave approximately 60,000 premises unserved – the majority in deeply rural areas. This has the potential to leave large parts of the countryside at risk of an increasing digital divide, falling behind the pace set by global competitors and the ambitions of businesses looking to locate in these areas and those looking for a place to live in them.

The LGA's [Up to Speed](#) campaign aims to ensure every resident and business has access to faster broadband. We would like to hear your thoughts on how these proposals might be developed post-Brexit and, in particular, your views on the following question:

What opportunities does Britain's departure from the European Union offer to increase broadband and mobile connectivity in non-metropolitan and deeply rural areas?

People's transport needs are complex and diverse. 277 billion vehicle miles were travelled on England's roads last year, two-thirds of which were on local roads run by councils.⁴ As overall traffic levels have continued to increase, so has congestion. If left unchecked, such increases would result in our towns and cities being gridlocked and significant increase of traffic on rural roads, which have already seen increases in heavy goods and light goods vehicle traffic.

The LGA's recent publication [A country in a jam: tackling congestion in our towns and cities](#) sets out how councils are dealing with congestion and how they could do more. We would like to hear your thoughts on how these proposals might be developed post-Brexit and, in particular, your views on the following question:

To what extent do you anticipate changes in demand for transport infrastructure and service provision in non-metropolitan and more rural areas, post-Brexit, and what are the opportunities and limits of public intervention to manage these?

⁴ Provisional road traffic estimates, Great Britain, DfT, 2017

Building more and better housing

Local government shares the collective national ambition to build new homes that are affordable and good quality, and well supported by local services and infrastructure. This will only be achieved with strong national and local leadership. Latest house building figures are encouraging, but there is a long way to go to deliver the homes our communities desperately need.

The final report of the Local Government Association's Housing Commission '[Building our Homes, Communities and Future](#)' contains more than thirty proposals to build homes that meet the diverse needs of people, partners and places.

We would like to hear your thoughts on how these proposals might be developed post-Brexit and, in particular, your views on the following questions:

How do you envisage Brexit might impact on different housing markets in non-metropolitan areas and the capacity of services to meet the housing needs of businesses, public services, and families within the local community?

Are current housing delivery models equipped to address the impacts raised in answer to the previous question, and are they creating communities capable of thriving through changes to rural demography and economic geography, post-Brexit?

Increasing exports and attracting more foreign direct investment

The current institutional landscape for supporting trade and investment in the UK is needlessly complex and crowded, with research for the Local Government Association highlighting over 80 programmes and projects designed to promote trade and investment at multiple spatial levels. And despite positive relationships between national and local agencies, strategic planning and delivery lacks consistency and clarity as well as the flexibility to be appropriately tailored to local needs. This is confusing for businesses, investors and delivery agencies.

While the shape of Britain's future trading relationship is still emerging, we believe sub-national trade and investment policy requires a much stronger, more streamlined approach. We would like to hear your thoughts on how these proposals might be developed post-Brexit and, in particular, your views on the following questions:

How well do existing public support arrangements provide a clear path for non-metropolitan businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises looking to export?

To what extent do current trade visits led at national level make best use of local links and relationship with partners in other countries?

Meeting the public service challenge in more rural areas

Each of the issues identified above is likely to be all the more complex in areas of deep rurality, where national approaches to infrastructure delivery and policy support will demand greater local control if they are to meet the distinct needs of rural businesses and communities facing population sparsity, ageing infrastructure networks and the more severe pressures of an aging demographic.

We are keen to capture those views with a specifically deeply rural perspective on the subjects above as well as the following:

What are the specific health and growth challenges facing deeply rural areas and how might Britain's departure from the EU impact on the ability of local leaders to meet these?

Responding to the Call

The Post-Brexit England Commission is keen to hear from anyone with an interest in the future challenges and opportunities facing non-metropolitan England including businesses and communities, the voluntary sector, experts and academics, politicians and the wider public sector.

The resulting evidence will be used to broaden our understanding of the issues non-metropolitan areas, including those which are deeply rural, are facing and test the proposals set out above, as well as feeding into the Commission's interim report, due to be launched at the [Local Government Association's Annual Conference](#) in early July.

You can submit your evidence either via the Commission's webpage (to be launched 28th February 2018) or by email - pbecommission@local.gov.uk - **providing responses to any or all of the questions suggested above by Friday 30 March 2018.**

We look forward to hearing from you.