

DRAFT RESPONSE SERVICE

As part of the Rural Opportunities Bulletin, RSN will regularly provide concise potential responses to key current consultations. These are not intended to be definitive or to reflect the views of RSN and may include potentially opposing responses to reflect different views designed to assist individual organisations in compiling their own response. We do however recognise the pressure members are under and we hope this service will assist.

Big Lottery Fund Draft Directions – Cabinet Office & Big Lottery Fund consultation

The Big Lottery Fund receives 40% of all the good causes money generated through the National Lottery each year. This amounts to around £700m being distributed annually to tackle disadvantage and improve lives throughout the United Kingdom.

Ministers issue all lottery distributors with policy directions, setting out the priorities they must take into account when distributing this money.

The Cabinet Office are requesting views on proposed new policy directions for Big Lottery Fund in relation to its England and UK-wide funding programmes.

This consultation closes on 12 August 2016.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/big-lottery-fund-draft-directions-england-isle-of-man-uk-wide>

Question 1: Is there anything set out in these directions that the Big Lottery Fund should not be doing? If your answer is yes, please tell us what it is and why they should not be doing it.

Draft response: No. In particular, reference in section D4 to “urban and rural areas” is very welcome. When focusing on social and economic issues, programmes all too often inadvertently ignore rural communities. Needs in rural areas are often far less visible and not reflected in standard deprivation and other data sets. It is critical that Big Lottery and other funders recognise the need to rural proof their activities and programmes to ensure that rural communities are not excluded from this important national funding source. Small amounts of money can often make a big difference in rural communities and the tradition of self sustainability is frequently strong, meaning that investments in the short term reap long term benefits.

As stated in the government’s Rural Productivity Plan from 2015, “We want to harness the enormous economic potential England’s rural areas have to offer, both for the prosperity of those living in rural areas and for the benefit of the UK economy overall.” The Big Lottery Fund should work to ensure that it plays its part in meeting the needs of rural communities and helping them to reach their social and economic potential.

Question 2: Is there anything else the Big Lottery Fund should be doing, not covered by these directions? If your answer is yes, please tell us what else they should be doing and why.

Draft response: Severe isolation, ever declining access to services, an increasingly top-heavy age profile, significant low pay and limited employment opportunities present massive issues for many people living in rural communities. The superficial gloss of affluence masks the reality of rural life for significant numbers of people in need. The Big Lottery Fund should ensure that it has a robust approach to recognising these needs and responding to them in its allocation of funds.

Question 3: What is your view of the Fund's international work? Are you content with the policy direction (2.E) covering this work – is there anything more you would expect to see or are there any limits or conditions you would expect the Fund to apply to this work, which should be included in the final policy directions?

Draft response: The over-riding priority for the Fund should be the UK communities from which the funds are derived. International work should, as stated, focus on the exchange and interchange of innovation and best practice.