
Agenda

SPARSE Rural and Rural Services Network Executive and Board of Directors of the Rural Services Partnership Ltd meeting

Incorporating SPARSE Rural members, Rural Assembly & Rural Services Partnership members.
All nominated members & officers of RSN are invited to attend this meeting.

Hosted: Online via Zoom

Date: Monday, 27th September 2021

Time: 11:15am – 2:30pm

We will circulate an email with Zoom joining instructions in advance.

- 1. Attendance & Apologies.**
- 2. Notes from the previous RSN Executive meeting.** (Attachment 1)
Held on 17th May 2021 to consider any relevant updates and approve the minutes.
- 3. Summary of Previous RSN Work and Meetings.** (Attachment 2)
Report from Kerry Booth, Assistant Chief Executive on attendance, key points, policy work since the last meeting.
- 4. Update on Work with Local Councils.** (Attachment 3)
Report from David Inman, Corporate Director with updates on Rural/Market Town Group & Rural Village Services Group.
English Charter Market Towns and Fayres. (Attachment 3A)
- 5. National Rural Conference 2021.**
Verbal report from Kerry Booth, Assistant Chief Executive.
- 6. Uniting Rural Communities to Tackle Climate Change Event - 12th October 2021.**
- 7. RSN Meetings & Events Calendar 2022.** (Attachment 4)
- 8. 2021 LGA Annual Report Rural Services Network.** (Attachment 5)
For information completed report submitted to the LGA by Kerry Booth, Assistant Chief Executive.
- 9. Comprehensive Spending Review 2020 and 2021.** (Attachment 6 & 6A)
A submission to H.M. Treasury by the Rural Services Network.
- 10. Levelling Up/UK Shared Prosperity Fund.** (Attachment 7)
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Rural Services Network

Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0BZ

Tel: 01822 851370

www.rsnonline.org.uk email: admin@sparse.gov.uk twitter: [@rsnonline](https://twitter.com/rsnonline)

Report from Graham Biggs MBE, Chief Executive on RSN's Policy Position.

10. **Budget Report.** (Attachment 8)
With actual to 4th September 2020.
11. **The Rural Services Partnership Ltd Full Accounts 31.03.2021.** (Attachment 9)
Item for formal attention of RSP Directors only.
RSP Directors to consider approving the 2020/21 Accounts and the re-appointment of TaxAssist Ludlow as the Company's Tax Accountants.
12. **Any Other Business.**
The next RSN Executive meeting will take place Monday, 10th January 2022.
13. **Joint Confidential Report of the Chief Executive and Corporate Director: The RSN's Future Year's Budgets in the light of recent Unitary Re-Organisation announcements.** (Attachment 10)
NB This report will be sent to RSN Executive Members Direct by the Chief Executive Graham Biggs MBE.

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Minutes

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Hosted: Online via Zoom

Date: Monday, 17th May 2021

Time: 11:15am – 2:30pm

1. Attendance & Apologies.

Attendance:

Cllr Cecilia Motley (Chair)	Shropshire Council / Rural Services Network
Graham Biggs MBE	Rural Services Network
John Birtwistle	FirstGroup plc UK Bus Division
Cllr Peter Stevens	West Suffolk Council
Kerry Booth	Rural Services Network
Martin Collett	English Rural Housing Association
Cllr Robert Heseltine	North Yorkshire County Council
David Inman	Rural Services Network
Cllr Jeremy Savage	South Norfolk Council

Apologies:

Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
Nik Harwood	Young Somerset
Cllr Mary Robinson	Eden District Council
Cllr Sue Sanderson	Cumbria County Council
Cllr Peter Thornton	South Lakeland District Council

2. Notes from the previous RSN Executive meeting. (Attachment 1)

Held on 15th March 2021, these minutes were noted as a record of the meeting.

3. Summary of Previous RSN Meetings. (Attachment 2)

Report from Kerry Booth, Assistant Chief Executive on attendance, key points, policy work. The Report was noted. There was some discussion around the possible future return to face-to-face meetings. There are benefits in relation to networking by holding face to face, but online meetings enable more Officers and Members to attend and reduced budgets will also impact local authorities and organisations not having the resources to send people physically to meetings. A decision had been taken previously to hold all meetings in 2021 online.

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Action: Meetings for 2022 and beyond will be considered at the September meeting of the Executive along with the four-year budget.

4. Update on Work with Local Councils. (Attachment 3)

Report from David Inman, Corporate Director with updates on Rural/Market Town Group & Rural Village Services Group.

David Inman, Corporate Director updated the meeting on the Rural Market Town Group and the plans for the Rural Village Services Group.

He highlighted the plans to approach smaller Parish Councils to join the Rural Village Services Group.

Action: The meeting agreed that the lower level of population could be set as 1500 for this group.

5. National Rural Conference 2021.

Verbal report from Kerry Booth, Assistant Chief Executive.

Kerry updated the Executive about initial plans for the Conference 2021, focusing on 5 days, **13th-17th September 2021**. There will be one event per day focusing on the topics of Rural Economy, Rural Health and Care, Rural Housing, Rural Transport and Decarbonisation and Rural Digital Connectivity. There will also be a specific session on Young People with a panel discussion.

Martin Collett suggested preparing a brief for member organisations of key messages/social media etc for them to share during the week.

Action: Kerry to implement the briefing pack to assist with sharing messages during the conference.

6. Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision.

Update on the campaign.

- [Please click here to access campaign papers¹](#)
- [Revitalising Rural – Press Release²](#)

Graham Biggs updated the Executive about the overall campaign and progress made to date. The documents are currently being updated following the Queens Speech and other key changes to Government policy that have been announced in recent months.

¹ <https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/revitalising-rural>

² <https://rsnonline.org.uk/government-urged-to-give-people-in-villages-the-same-opportunity-as-those-living-in-bigger-towns-and-cities>



Work is being done to consider the campaign from the perspective of young people and we will look to add depth to these with case studies.

7. Budget Reports. (Attachments 4 & 5)

Attachment 5 shows some of the variances in the budget.

Councillor Heseltine wanted to note his thanks to Graham, David and the team for all of their work this year, to keep services running while everyone is working online.

8. Rural Lens Review of National Bus Strategy & Build Back Better Strategy.

[Bus Back Better - Rural Lens](https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/bus-back-better-rural-lens)³

These Rural Lens documents enable us to highlight some of the key issues for rural areas that there may be from Government documents but its when we can see the details of policies that we can really see the practical implications for rural communities.

John Birtwistle provided more detail to the Executive about Bus Back Better.

Stage 1 – Local Transport Authorities declare by end of June 2021 which route they want to take:

- Enhanced Partnership Plan Option
- In House Partnership moving onto Franchise
- No action (but then no access to discretionary funding from the Government)

Stage 2 – By end of October 2021, Local Transport Authorities will need to publish a Local Bus Service Improvement Plan.

Stage 3 – From April 2022, Local Transport Authorities will need to have an Enhanced Partnership in place or be following the statutory process to decide whether to implement a franchising scheme to access the new discretionary streams of bus funding.

Key message is that there will be no funding formula. Money will be allocated from Government based on Quality and Ambition, so you need to be able to argue the case for particular options. There also need to be plans for future sustainability, for example of asking for funding to subsidise bus routes, need to have a plan for the future on what happens next with that.

Rural Lens review of Build Back Better will be published by the RSN tomorrow in the Rural Bulletin. This doesn't set out the future of LEPs or Local Industrial Strategies so we need to watch out for updates on this.

9. Rural Coalition Response to the Government's Rural Proofing Report. (Attachment 6)

The Executive noted the report from the Rural Coalition, of which the RSN is a member.

³ <https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/bus-back-better-rural-lens>



Defra has a new Lord Minister, Lord Benyon who has replaced Lord Gardiner.

Cllr Stevens is part of a Conservative Group and will share with them the key points of the RSN overall campaign and concerns for rural areas.

10. Work by Pragmatix - Reviewing Various Recent New Funding Streams.

Verbal progress report from Graham Biggs MBE, Chief Executive.

Work aims to consider the funding streams ahead of the Shared Prosperity Fund. This work is due to be published June 2021.

11. Commissioned work from Pixel on Remoteness and Fire Funding Formula.

Verbal progress reports from Graham Biggs MBE, Chief Executive.

Adrian Jenkins has been in contact with Chief Fire Officer and has developed a discussion document about providing the service in a rural context about areas not recognised in funding formula. Adrian will attend a meeting of our Fire and Rescue group along with their Heads of Finance to share his findings and see how we could use the information.

Adrian will also be attending the SPARSE meeting in June to present some work on Remoteness to member authorities.

12. Any Other Business.

Social Care Funding Arrangements – Councillor Motley raised this item as a concern. Graham indicated that there are elements in some of the Rural Lens review for example around workforce plans for social care.

Action: Graham will contact the CCN to see if there are any joint areas, we could work on to raise awareness together for this issue.

The next RSN Executive & RSP Directors' meeting date is Monday, 27th September 2021.

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www.rsonline.org.uk email: admin@sparse.gov.uk twitter: [@rsnonline](https://twitter.com/rsnonline)

RSN Work May – September 2021

Report to the RSN Executive (Monday, 27th September 2021)
from Kerry Booth, Assistant Chief Executive

Aim

To provide the Executive with an update on meetings hosted and supported by the RSN since the last Executive meeting along with key campaigns and work carried out.

To Date in 2021 We Have Hosted the Following Meetings

Event	Who can attend	Date	Attendees			
			LA	RSP	RMTG	TOTAL
RSN Seminar: Rural Health & Social Care	Sparse/Rural Assembly/RSP/RHCA/RMTG	26.05.2021	13	21	16	50
SPARSE Rural meeting	Sparse members	21.06.2021	27	N/A	N/A	27
Rural Economy Sub Group meeting	Sparse/Rural Assembly/RSP	21.06.2021	41	9	N/A	50
RSN Seminar: Rural Housing	Sparse/Rural Assembly/RSP/RHCA/RMTG	30.06.2021	50	16	19	85
RSN Seminar: Enabling Rural Business	Sparse/Rural Assembly/RSP/RHCA/RMTG	28.07.2021	33	6	17	56

**Not including RSN Staff or Speakers*

Event	Who can attend	Date	Attendees
			TOTAL
Rural Vulnerability Day	RE Directors, Stakeholders & Supporters plus invited guests	24.06.2021	63
APPG for Rural Services meeting	APPG Members & Obs, Corporate Obs, HoFL Panel & invited guests	07.07.2021	15
Joint APPG Meeting	Joint meeting of County Council APPG and Rural Services APPG to explore Social Care	15.09.21	tbc

Key Points to Note

- RSN Seminars continue to be well attended, with particularly high figures for the rural affordable housing seminar.
- RMTG continue to attend seminars and are keen to contribute to discussions.

Wider Campaigns and Work

- Published:
 - [Rural Lens Review of Build Back Better – A Government Plan for Growth](#)
 - [Rural Lens Review of the Queens Speech](#)
 - [Rural Lens Review on Health White Paper](#)
 - [Rural Lens Review of Tourism Recovery Plan](#)
 - [Rural Lens Review of Build Back Better High Streets](#)

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- Research commissioned by RSN with Pragmatix Advisory – [Towards the UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#) – Developing a prioritisation framework to support the levelling up of rural communities.
- [Cultivating Rural Growth](#) – Recognising and addressing the post-pandemic rural productivity challenge. Summarises emerging key themes and recommendations from all three studies commissioned by Pragmatix Advisory.
- The National Rural Conference will have taken place by the date of this meeting and takes place over the course of a week, 13-17th September focusing on [Levelling Up to Revitalise Rural](#).
- Due to be published in Autumn, work has been taking place with Young Somerset to explore the challenges facing young people in rural areas.

Consultations

- RSN has contributed to the Labour Party Rural Policy Review, with Kerry, Nadine and Brian attending a range of subject specific roundtable discussions to share the relevant asks of the RSN.
- An RSN response was also submitted to the following consultations, after consultation with our member organisations:
 - Warm Home Discount Scheme Consultation - <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/warm-home-discount-scheme-2021-to-2022>
 - Consultation on Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England - <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/consistency-in-household-and-business-recycling/>
 - APPG for Rural Business and the Rural Powerhouse – Inquiry into Rural Productivity

Networking and Influence

- Graham Biggs has attended fortnightly DEFRA Rural Impact Stakeholder Forum meetings.
- Kerry Booth has started attending a stakeholder engagement sub group meeting of the DEFRA Rural Impact Stakeholder Forum meetings.
- Graham Biggs has attended meetings on access to cash in rural areas.
- The RSN has developed closer working relations with the NFU, as part of the Revitalising Rural campaign to see where there are shared aims with the levelling up agenda.

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Update on Work with Local Councils

Report to the RSN Executive (Monday, 27th September 2021)
from David Inman, Corporate Director

Introduction

I have indicated previously that I will give to the RSN Executive updates on the current position in relation to these Local Council initiatives at their meetings. Here is the report for the September 2021 meeting. Clearly approaching organisations to join a new grouping at this particularly difficult time is very difficult, however we need to keep pressing with these initiatives. Our targets are eventual groups of 400 members each for both the Rural/Market Towns and the Rural Villages Group. The subscription bandings are at £110 to £150 for the RMTG and £70 to £90 for the Villages Group (dependent on populations).

Update Rural/Market Town Group (RMTG)

It has been a relatively quiet period in terms of recruitment since the last report in the summer. This has largely been occasioned by the government decision to discourage local councils from employing virtual meetings. This has resulted in two things in relation to many local councils

1. Councils not running their usual schedule of meetings because of some nervousness about having indoor meetings.
2. Those meetings that are taking place having full agendas.

Current Offers

Members will recall that because of the pandemic and the resulting budgetary situation for some local councils it has been agreed that we would offer a period of initial free membership in relation to these Groups. We are approaching local councils in batches to be able to manage the workload of this process. Although the figure may prove to be artificial, we currently have 235 members.

At this time, we are looking at batch 3 and we are/will be offering free membership until 31st March 2022 here. Councils at that stage must decide whether to take up subscription-based membership or not.

Batch one related to 70+ local councils who having had initial free membership were subscription payers last year (20-21) and have now been invoiced for this year (21-22). There have been approximately ten withdrawals and we are working hard, where practicable, to try to persuade these councils they should remain.

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Batch Two, is one of approximately 151 councils, have enjoyed free membership and need to tell RSN of their intentions by the end of September. If they wish to remain with us, they will be invoiced in October for the half year Oct 21 to March 22.

Batch three currently of 13 Councils have until the 31st of March to try out the service and let us know what they wish to do. We are awaiting decisions from c Towns and Parishes here. We will be approaching a further c150 or so Towns and Parishes on this one by the end of September in Wiltshire, Buckinghamshire, and North Yorkshire over the coming month so that figure will rise reasonably significantly if say one in 3 of those (roughly the take up rate up to now) take up the free membership for c 6 months offer. We are hopeful therefore we may get a further 5 'free' members by doing this. (Should we have capacity we may also try to approach all towns commencing with the letter 'A' or 'B' so that we have both County based and more random but national sampling in a similar time frame.)

It anticipated that by the time of the Winter and Spring Executive meetings we will be in a stronger position in forecasting how true' recruitment is actually proceeding. As we go along, we need to identify any shortages in our service that members tempted to leave, or decline are expressing.

As said, it is not the best of times to be undertaking any recruitment-based exercise.

Update on Rural Village Services Group (RVSG)

We have made a start with recruitment, again through initial free membership, in relation to this group. The start has been occasioned by parishes approached at some stage about the Towns group, feeling they have greater empathy with a Village Group and being prepared to test that out.

Those parishes are Acle (Norfolk), Barton under Needwood (Staffordshire), East Budleigh with Bicton (Devon), Middleton in Teesdale and Newbiggin (North Yorks) Woodborough (Notts) and Sapcote (Leicestershire). As said with the Towns we will approach Parishes with over 1500 population in Bucks, North Yorks and Wiltshire to see what initial grouping we can bring together. Once again if we have capacity, we will extend the Town exercise with parishes commencing with the letter 'A' or 'B'. Clearly there will be no income through these links in this financial year. Villages (Parishes) are initially being brought together to test the service before we seek to cross any financial bridge.

Some of the approaches in the c '150 or so further approaches' in September will be approached solely for the Parish service as they do not show sufficient Rural Town characteristic.

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Work with Local Councils
English Charter Market Towns and Fayres
Report to the RSN Executive (Monday, 27th September 2021)
from David Inman, Corporate Director

Introduction

The summer months when Council were not sitting has given the opportunity to do research into the roots of the market town system and its historical evolution during across the centuries. It does have relevance to our efforts particularly in relation to the Rural/Market Town Group and we would welcome this opportunity to detail this background but pertinent documentation here.

Definition

Market towns are defined in dictionary terms in various ways. Below are some of them:

- A market town is a European settlement that obtained by custom or royal charter, in the Middle Ages, a market right, which allowed it to host a regular market; this distinguished it from a village or city. (Wiki)
- A small town in the countryside, especially in Europe, that has a regular market and acts as a business centre for surrounding farms and villages. (Cambridge Dictionary)
- A market town is a town, especially in a country area, that has or used to have a market in it. (Collins Dictionary)
- A town where a regularly scheduled market is held. (Dictionary.com)
- A usually small town that has the privilege of holding a public market at stated times. (Miriam Webster Dictionary)
- A town where a regular market is or was held. (Oxford Dictionary)

As always there are variations but reasonably common:

- Is or has been a physical market operating.
- A rural or country area.

Research

Research, as always deepens the situation.

The concept of a market town is a European one which came into our language not with the Norman Conquest but earlier when there were Saxon invasions in and around 500 A.D. The French etc originating word for market town seems to have in those times 'port' which found its way into a few English place names as they became defined settlements became established e.g., Gosport, Bridport.

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Early Events

The Saxon invasions and first subsequent settlements were most frequently found originally in the South and South- East of England. The first market town is said to be Abingdon 675 A.D. As commonly occurred, it grew up initially outside the gates of the Abbey.

There is evidence of market charters being given by the 'reigning monarch' to knights and abbeys in settlements mainly in or around Wessex from that time forward (to the Norman conquest). The markets were often at or near the Abbeys and Castles because those were the (small centres of the settlements and the most secure perhaps.

There is some documentary evidence from two sources (Alsford and Haslam) that 8 places in Wiltshire had royal charters for markets and fayres prior to 1066. (ca. 880: Malmesbury, c890 Wilton, Cricklade c930, Great Between c950, Warminster c980, Bradford on Avon c1000, Tilshead c, Marlborough, 1000. Often these were accompanied with a charter authorising the minting of coins. They tended to be in favour of individuals Knights or Bishops. In the Welsh Marshes it is claimed there were charters authoring individuals for markets and fayres c760 in Hereford and c900 in Shrewsbury.

Population

It is important to appreciate that England was from a population perspective a much less populated country during this period of market and fayre charters which would gradually lead to the establishment of market towns.

It's not always possible to separate England out from Great Britain's figures but in Roman times Great Britain had an estimated population of 4 million, say 3+ million for England. By the time of the Domesday Book 1086 however because of plague this had fallen to an English figure of c 2million and the figure for England was an estimated 2.5 million at 1400 following the Black Death. In 1530 it stood at c 3 million and further plague restricted that to 5 million in 1660. By 1801 however it had reached 9 million for England and 41 million by 1901.

Medieval Markets and Fayres

By 1066, the right to establish a market and/or fayre was clearly considered to be a royal franchise. Most activity was in the period between 1200 and 1400. However, it is not until the thirteenth century that there is systematic evidence that the king enforced his right to licence all markets and fayres. From 1199 onwards, royal grants were recorded on the charter rolls. These royal grants are detailed and specific, naming the grantee, the day of the week for the market, or the feast-day and duration of the fayre. The location of the market or fayre was noted, usually at a manor belonging to the grantee; occasionally, its exact site was specified. A typical charter granted a market and a fayre at the same place.

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From at least the reign of John onwards, the king also insisted on his right to approve any alterations to the timing, duration or location of existing markets and fayres. For example, anyone wishing to change the day of his market was obliged to secure a grant recording this royal licence.

The emergence of Markets was of course key in later Anglo Saxon and Norman times because apart from home produce, they were the only way of legally obtaining food.

Very often the request for a market was accompanied by a request for a Fayre. Such fayres were held far more spasmodically throughout the year than the usually weekly market. The fayre often orientated around a Feast and Saints Day. Sometimes they occurred on just the one occasion a year particularly in rural areas, but they could run for up to a week.

In England, markets and fayres began to develop in the early Norman period, reaching their heyday in the 13th century. During the 12th century, many English towns acquired the right from the Crown to hold an annual fayre, usually serving a regional or local customer base.

By the end of that century, however, international trade with Europe in wool and cloth was increasing; London merchants were attempting to exert control over this process, acting as middlemen, but many of the English producers and ports especially on the east coast attempted to use the chartered fayre system to circumnavigate them. Simultaneously, wealthy consumers in England began to use the fayres as a way to buy goods like spices and wax, preserved fish and cloth in bulk from the international merchants at the fayres, again, bypassing the usual London merchants. Local nobles and churchmen could draw a considerable profit from hosting these events, and in turn the crown benefited from the payments given for the charter and any changes made to it. Over 2,200 charters were issued to markets and fayres by English kings between 1200 and 1270 alone.

Between the 12th and 15th centuries, the number of markets and fairs across England burgeoned. Although the terms "fayre" and "market" were often used synonymously, as said key differences distinguished them. Markets began to be held daily in the more populous towns and cities or weekly in rural districts, and sold fresh produce and necessities, while fairs operated on a periodic cycle, and were almost always associated with the religious festival. Fayres were associated with high value goods and non-perishables such as farm tools, homewares, furniture, rugs, and ceramics. Although a fair's primary purpose was trade, it typically included some elements of entertainment, such as dance, music, or tournaments. Both fairs and markets were important centres of social life in medieval society.

Requests of the Monarch many from Norman knights had multiplied considerably. Most market towns were chartered in the **in this period**, and typically developed on top of 13th-century villages that had preceded them. A boom at the time in the raising of livestock may have been a trigger for the upsurge in the number of market towns during this period.

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The markets mainly sold both animals, food, and locally caught fish. They were very crowded and the centre of social life in communities.

To date we have mentioned Markets through Charter by consent of the King or Queen. Other markets existed and operated (at risk) and gradually what became recognised as prescriptive rights were acquired for these. However it is estimated that the vast majority of these were incrementally formalised over time and probably by 1500 only a relatively low percentage of these were held based on prescriptive rights.

There was some form of rule of thumb about distance between markets and fayres. They were normally over six miles apart. Charters were capable of withdrawal if new charters could be proved to be detrimental to existing ones.

This was an age when documentation and retention of documents were not always common or thorough. Claims about Markets would sometimes be made from memory as opposed to history. Some of the records were admitted having been lost for all time. However gradually a more uniform system became established at around the time of King John 1201 and by the early sixteenth century formal documentation existed as to what had happened. This was put in the form of a Gazetteer of Charter Market Town and Fayres in 1516 (by this time Queen Mary the 1st was on the throne), and it produced the historical record of what had occurred in relation to all markets and fayres where details had been presented and were known. By 1516, England had some 2,464 charter markets and 2,767 charter fairs while Wales had 138 markets and 166 fairs.

This Gazetteer is still updated from time to time (lastly in 2003) but only in relation to the supporting material etc in relation to the entry. The Gazetteer does not itself show whether the market etc was or was considered active or successful at any time unless it is relevant to the entry. From the Elizabethan period the requirement for specific consent from the monarch for a market and a fayre ceased and the courts became more involved with the role. Additionally, there had in some places also been the start of what would eventually become a democratic system with some input from Mayors, Aldermen and Burgesses.

Several things had occurred during the Medieval/ early Tudor intervening period:

- A.** there had been a move away from markets being tied to individual locations in towns. Previously it was the norm for castles, manor houses, abbeys, and other religious locations to be named for the Market but in some entries, there was reference to Boroughs as these had started to exist.
- B.** Towards 1500 the number of applications for a Charter was decreasing as slowly alternatives for the selling of goods were emerging.
- C.** Some of the Markets and Fayres which had been consented to had proved to be commercially unviable and some of the locations over optimistic, so they were no longer held.

By **c1600** a Professor Everitt was able to produce a record showing **of the recorded markets which were seemingly taking place**. At that stage it seems that the term **Market Town** began to

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be used indicating a general charter/approval for the town or village as opposed to individuals or institutions in the town or village. **This did not invalidate the charter entries which remain of course as a matter of record and history.**

Many of these continue today. The totals were as follows:

Southeast 177

Southwest 139

East Anglia 69

Midland 175

North 115

In comparison with the 1512 exercise these were a fraction of the '1201 based' position.

South-East 25% of the previous

South-West 38% of the previous

East Anglia only 22% of the previous*

Midlands 33% of the previous

North 37% of the previous

*It was believed this was down to an outbreak of plague in that region and the impact of the proximity of alternative continental markets.

In relation to Fayres a Mr W Stow undertook similar work and arrived at similar overall conclusions.

Surveys of arrangements in built up areas and then rural areas in 1751 by Stephen Whately seem to suggest at that stage the number of markets had further reduced by then but by that time the fulcrum role that markets had once played had diminished somewhat with a wider variety of shops and alternative commercial outlets particularly in urban areas. The phraseology used by Whately about Cities and Market Towns is particularly definite in its categorisation and it is clear that the phrase 'market town' was established firmly by that time.

The urban and rural areas covered by this study have no doubt changed very materially since that time, but the categorisation employed is it is felt useful for our argument in relation to rural areas and Market Towns.

More Recent Developments

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

Rural Services Network
David Inman, Corporate Director
Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0BZ
Tel: 01822 851370

www.rsnonline.org.uk email: david.inman@sparse.gov.uk twitter: [@rsnonline](https://twitter.com/rsnonline)

Whilst the alternatives to market shopping have widened very considerably the population has of course increased massively since those days. So has the number not only of locals, but also day trippers and tourists. The necessity of shopping in the market itself and in a market town may not be as the absolute necessity that it was it was centuries ago, but the 'ambiance' created through doing so is absolutely the key factor to the local economy and to the local council. The phrase 'market town' probably does more in capturing the public imagination in terms of visits to and stays in a town centre than any - and it is vital that is conveyed and sold as widely as is possible. It is encouraging that in public association it clearly relates more and more with rural areas as England becomes increasingly urban as a country.

The definition of market towns given at the beginning of this report are key.

The advent over the past twenty years of Farmers Markets has reinforced this. Undoubtedly, they have proved to be most successful in the market town environs.

In terms of Charter Fayres only relatively few have survived in their original form, but they have over the last century been reintroduced many in a cultural basis. The community value of charter 'status' is still therefore a valid consideration both from a historical and for some a continuum basis.

It is suggested that in going forward with the Group as well as undertaking the work programme previously identified we should consider this area.

Considerations

The various definitions of Market Towns vary and accordingly I would be confident in saying that practically all our RMTG members meet one or other of them of those we have detailed in this report. When I tried 'Rural Market Town' as a phrase requiring definition on Wikipedia, I am pleased to say it linked to our own website definition!

Probably nine of out of ten of our RMTG membership are operating markets or have markets operating in their area.

One of weaknesses with our current membership service is that the service we offer tends to surround national representation. As we move our offer as an organisation to more local councils, so we asked more and more how does the town immediately benefit.? Anything we can do that chime with the direct 'immediate' benefit to local people clearly helps with retention and recruitment at this level. I do believe that the ability to use the description 'market town' and even more so 'rural market town' does have an economic multiplier in relation to visitors, tourism, and other economic factors and it is an important issue to show work on. To be able to go to a place and maybe shop in a way that people have done over centuries does have appeal.

In terms of the Village Group, I do think if we can show interconnection the same applies. There is some interconnection here because of the system that evolved over the centuries. A percentage of

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Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0BZ
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villages will be running a Market or Fayre that arose with a Charter or through recognised prescriptive rights. A percentage of villages will have been given a charter in relation to an activity that subsequently lapsed or failed. However, where activities no longer take place the system that was applied in England still provides history and as we know history sells. Further-more there can still in some cases be architectural representation of the role once undertaken in the form sometimes of crosses and market squares or places. There is often something to illustrate the previous role.

Recommendations

We make some recommendations coming out of this research area.

- A.** In terms of towns, we try to present and promote the Rural Market Town profile to the English Tourist Board. It is felt there may be mutual advantage here. It is suggested this aspect is added to the prospectus offered to the RMTG members.
- B.** in terms of the Rural Villages Group we do similarly. However, unlike the Market Towns Group clearly not every parish in membership would benefit. It is necessary here to look to establish a group within a group to do this. We suggest we use the term Rural Village Charter Market/ Fayre group in this connection.
- C.** There is a decision to make in relation the breadth of approach here. Currently the parishes approached have a population of 1500 or above. It is appreciated that not all parishes that have had charters will have that population. We welcome the Executive's views on this question.

If it is considered, we should approach these smaller additional parishes who have had charters, it is suggested we do so when we are approaching re villages above 1500 population in their County. To even out workload we are incrementally approaching three counties at a time in that connection. Shortly we will be approaching in Buckinghamshire, North Yorkshire, and Wiltshire as we commence the Rural Village Services Group to commence the village group recruitment process.

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RSN & RSP Meetings and Events Calendar 2022

Report to the RSN Executive (Monday, 27th September 2021)

from David Inman, Corporate Director

Meetings and Events

Proposed Date	Time	Type of meeting
Monday, 10 th January 2022	11:15am - 2:30pm	RSN Executive meeting
Monday, 24 th January 2022	11am - 12:30pm	SPARSE Rural meeting
Monday, 24 th January 2022	1pm - 3pm	Rural Economy Sub Group meeting
Friday, 18 th February 2022	tbc	RMTG Officer Steering Group meeting
Friday, 18 th March 2022	tbc	RMTG Clerks Advisory Panel meeting
Monday, 21 st March 2022	11:15am - 2:30pm	RSN Executive meeting
Monday, 28 th March 2022	tbc	RMTG meeting
Monday, 11 th April 2022	11am-12:30	Rural Assembly meeting
Wednesday, 13 th April 2022	11am - 12:30pm	Rural Social Care & Health Sub Group meeting
Monday, 25 th April 2022	11am-12noon	RSP Vulnerability Group
Monday, 25 th April 2022	2:00pm-3:30pm	RSP Partner Group meeting
Monday, 23 rd May 2022	11:15am - 2:30pm	RSN Executive meeting
Monday, 20 th June 2022	11am - 12:30pm	SPARSE Rural meeting (Fair Funding)
Wednesday, 22 nd June 2022	1pm - 3pm	Rural Economy Sub Group meeting
Monday, 19 th – Friday, 23 rd September	tbc	National Rural Conference 2022
Thursday, 29 th September 2022	tbc	RMTG Officer Steering Group meeting
Monday, 3 rd October 2022	11:15am - 2:30pm	RSN Executive & RSP Directors' meeting
Tuesday, 11 th October 2022	tbc	RMTG meeting
Monday, 14 th November 2022	1pm - 3:30pm	RSN AGM & Rural Assembly meeting
Wednesday, 16 th November 2022	11am - 12:30pm	Rural Social Care & Health Sub Group meeting
Wednesday, 23 rd November 2022	11am-12 noon	RSP Vulnerability Panel
Wednesday, 23 rd November 2022	2:00pm - 3:30pm	RSP Ltd (AGM)
Wednesday, 23 rd November 2022	2pm - 3:30pm	RSP Partner Group meeting

Seminars

Proposed Date	Time	Type of meeting
Wednesday, 26 th January 2022	11am - 1pm	RSN Seminar: Managing an Older Population
Wednesday, 23 rd February 2022	11am - 1pm	RSN Seminar: Young People in Rural Areas
Wednesday, 30 th March 2022	11am - 1pm	RSN Seminar: Rural Digital Connectivity
Wednesday, 27 th April 2022	11am - 1pm	RSN Seminar: Rural Decarbonisation
Wednesday, 25 th May 2022	11am - 1pm	RSN Seminar: Rural Health & Social Care
Wednesday, 29 th June 2022	11am - 1pm	RSN Seminar: Rural Affordable Housing
Wednesday, 27 th July 2022	11am - 1pm	RSN Seminar: Rural Planning
Wednesday, 26 th October 2022	11am - 1pm	RSN Seminar: Rural Town Centres, High Streets & Village Hubs
Wednesday, 30 th November 2022	11am - 1pm	RSN Seminar: Rural Economies

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www.rsnonline.org.uk email: david.inman@sparse.gov.uk twitter: [@rsnonline](https://twitter.com/rsnonline)

LGA Special Interest Group Annual Report to LGA Board

SIG Name:	Rural Services Network
Lead Member:	Councillor Cecilia Motley (Shropshire Council)
Lead Officer:	Graham Biggs

Email:	admin@sparse.gov.uk
Address:	RSN c/o West Devon Borough Council, Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, PL19 0BZ
Telephone:	01822 851370
Website:	www.rsnonline.org.uk

Membership

The RSN has 2 main subsidiary SIG's. **Sparse-Rural** which has 100 members which deals with our financial representational (distributional) work and the **Rural Assembly** (with 115 Members, including the SPARSE members) which deals with all the non-financial distribution issues and rural policy generally. These both meet twice a year when all members are entitled to be represented. All Sparse-Rural members are members of the recently created Rural Health & Care Alliance – a Partnership between the RSN and the National Centre for Rural Health and Care.

The other LGA recognised sub group includes the **Rural Fire and Rescue Services Group** which has 10 members and seeks to present arguments common to County and Combined Services operating in areas that have significant rural areas.

The Rural Services Network is however much more widespread than these Special Interest Groups and further information can be found at <http://www.rsnonline.org.uk/page/how-we-work>. This includes information about the Rural Services Partnership, a membership organisation for non local authorities such as rural Housing Associations, Health Trusts, charities and national organisations delivering services in rural areas. The Rural Market Town Group has been established in recent years which has over 200 Town or larger Parish Councils in membership.

Aim *[brief overview of SIG's main aim]*

Our main aim is to act as the national champion for rural services, ensuring that people in rural areas have a strong voice. We are fighting for a fair deal for rural communities to maintain their social and economic viability for the benefit of the nation as a whole

Our campaign, Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision, www.rsnonline.org.uk/revitalising-rural sets out 14 policy areas important to rural areas with a number of asks of Government. These policy areas include rural affordable housing, the rural economy, transport, connectivity and access to health and care services.

For Sparse Rural our main priority is the funding formula and working to ensure that rural areas receive fair funding to enable them to deliver their services, taking into account the additional costs of service delivery in rural areas.



For the Rural Assembly, our main priority will be to seek to influence Government and policy makers across a whole range of issues facing rural service providers and communities in line with the priority areas set out in Revitalising Rural.

Key Activities / Outcomes of work undertaken

The major outcome from our work this year was the increase in Rural Services Delivery Grant to £85 million, an increase of £4million, the highest ever amount.

We recognise however that this is a temporary solution and more importantly have been working hard to press Government to implement the findings of the Fair Funding Review. During the pandemic, we moved our meetings online to enable local authorities to come together.

In the year 2020-2021 the SPARSE-Rural and Rural Assembly collective debated:

- Local Government Finance and the impact of Covid
- Provisional Finance Settlement for 2021-22
- Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision Campaign
- APPG on Rural Services

In addition, thematic groups further explored the specific challenges facing the Economy in rural areas. This led to discussions about The Rural Opportunities Toolkit, the planned Economic Recovery in Cornwall, Rural Apprenticeships, Social Value Engine, Treasury's Green Book Process and the economic impact of lockdown on rural economy. In addition specific challenges in relation to Rural Health and Care led to discussions about High Street Health Hubs and Nuffield Trust Research.

The RSN hosted a very successful conference week online in Sept 2020 which focused on our campaign Revitalising Rural. The focus throughout the week was on Rural Economies, Rural Affordable Housing, Connectivity, Rural Health Services and the Environment. Almost 400 delegates attended sessions throughout the week. This enabled the member authorities to attend and hear from expert speakers and debate key issues for rural.

We hosted seven free seminars/networking meetings for member authorities to attend online throughout the year, each featuring 3 expert speakers offering the opportunity for further explore and discuss the following topics, rural transport, rural education training and apprenticeships, rural housing, rural vulnerability, rural health and wellbeing, rural connectivity and rural skills and education.

We provide the Secretariat to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Rural Services which has met to discuss Rural Connectivity, and Transport, the Comprehensive Spending Review and Digital Connectivity.

This year we have submitted a wide range of evidence to Parliamentary Inquiries and consultations to ensure that a rural view is represented. More information about these is available [on this flyer which highlights our 2020 achievements](#).

The RSN however is not just about meetings and we provide a wide range of services to our member authorities which include:

- E-bulletins featuring rural news stories, commentary and analysis
- Rural Observatory providing a statistical view of rural life



- Neighbourhood Planning Evidence Base for Parishes of Member Authorities
- Bulletin of Funding opportunities
-

Further information about our work and services can be found at our comprehensive website on www.rsnonline.org.uk

Please return to: marion.stribling@local.gov.uk

RSN Executive meeting 27th September 2021 Report on Spending Review 2021

Introduction

It is anticipated that in the next few weeks the Treasury will announce the start of the 2021 Spending Review process and invite submissions from interested people and organisations.

The purpose of this report is to gain general agreement from the Executive of the issues the RSN should include in its submission.

It is assumed at this stage that it will in fact be a Comprehensive Spending Review covering multiple years to the end of the current parliament. A single year 'roll-over' review, however, cannot be ruled out.

RSN Submission for the 2020 Single Year Review

Attached to this report is a copy of the RSN's basic submission to the 2020 review (Attachment 6A). I have not included all of the detailed asks – which were, of course, taken from the Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision campaign document as they stood at that time - [click here to view the full 2020 submission](#).¹

Proposals for 2021

We would propose a very similar submission for 2021 to that of 2020.

Until the Treasury start the process, we will not know the HM Treasury Priorities. We will need to frame our submission in a way which aligns to those of the Treasury.

As last year we suggest limiting the RSN submission to about 5 Strategic Asks.

Clearly the first ask should remain the Support for Essential Public Services in Rural Areas (Fair Funding).

We feel we should use the recent Pragmatix Reports on [Towards the UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#)² and a [Towards a Greener Green Book Process](#)³ to major on Levelling Up and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund as a second priority – combined with the more general Support to Rural Economic and Infrastructure Investment.

¹ <https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/rsn-comprehensive-spending-review-2020.pdf>

² <https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/publications/towards-the-uk-shared-prosperity-fund.pdf>

³ <https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/publications/towards-a-greener-green-book.pdf>

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Graham Biggs MBE, Chief Executive
Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0BZ
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Again, we now have the Pragmatix Report to strengthen the [Affordable Rural Housing Asks](#).⁴

We feel we should continue to refer to Broadband/Mobile Phone Connectivity – but not in great detail as there have been significant changes from 2020 (but there are still issues which we should flag up).

Given the recent Bus Strategy and the promised rural bus strategy it may be that we should make just passing reference to Rural Transport and Access to Services.

Perhaps we should introduce Health and Social Care as a main theme?

The views of the Executive are sought. Perhaps we should conduct a short membership survey?

A draft of the suggested final submission will be sent to the Executive in due course for sign off by email as the Treasury timescale is assumed to be quite short.

Graham Biggs
Chief Executive
September, 2021

⁴ <https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/revitalising-rural/availability-rural-housing.pdf>

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Comprehensive Spending Review 2020

A submission to H.M. Treasury

By the Rural Services Network



Contents

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1. Preface

The Rural Services Network is the national champion for rural services representing over 100 rural local authorities, and over 200 rural private and voluntary sector organisations.

In this submission to H M Treasury we demonstrate the case for support and investment into the rural areas of England to strengthen the UK's economic recovery from COVID-19 and level-up economic opportunity across England. Each of the asks in our submissions need urgent attention in the rural context - front-end loaded - in the period covered by the 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review.

At the heart of our submission is the case for improving outcomes in public services in rural areas which are, and have been for decades, woefully under-resourced by central government in comparison to urban areas of the country. Good quality, accessible and affordable public services are a cornerstone of economic (and social) opportunity, recovery, growth and sustainability. Without them the potential benefits from major

infrastructure investments will simply not be realised – rural areas will fall further and further behind and levelling-up will have failed.

More people live in rural areas than live in the whole of Greater London. But the distribution of resources to those different parts of England to fund essential services goes nowhere near being fair or equitable –despite Government's acceptance that it costs more to deliver services in rural areas. **The central hub of our submissions is for rural areas to receive a fair share of the resources made available nationally to support investment and services.**

We recognise the financial challenges facing the Government and stress that we are, in the main (Social care is an obvious exception – but that is a national issue – albeit with very significant rural aspects to consider), **seeking a fairer distribution of national resources to rural areas and more nuanced policy to reflect the rural context – not huge amounts of more money per se.**

The formulae for the distribution of all national resources must fully reflect the additional costs faced by rural services providers in rural areas to achieve outcomes similar of those in urban areas. Those additional costs are far more than just travel related. Our case is for equitable treatment for rural areas, communities and businesses.

Short-term limit interventions are not good enough. We call for sustained levels of investment to achieve the necessary sustainable outcomes. The RSN would urge you to ensure that the CSR and the proposals from other Government Departments which it supports takes full account of the needs of rural areas, their economies and their communities and that the impacts of any measures flowing from it are both proportionate to rural areas and properly rural proofed.

There is a wider context in which we make this submission. As well as the urgent need to recover from the current economic downturn and support communities, rural areas must benefit from the important commitments the Government has made to level-up so that nowhere is left behind and for the UK to become net zero for greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Added to which is the existing Government commitment, from 2019, to develop its vision

for rural England. That vision needs to set out the desired outcomes, policy rationale, costs benefits and deliverability (including timescales).

Impacts of the pandemic and restrictions have brought into focus and exacerbated a number of rural vulnerabilities, whilst at the same time highlighting some notable strengths and opportunities. The national response needs to support rural areas to ensure, not only that the recovery is equitable, but that it revitalises rural and unlocks its potential to contribute fully to national growth and to grow back better.

“This government is committed to levelling up all parts of the United Kingdom, not just investing in our great towns and cities, but also our rural and coastal areas.”

Farming for the Future: progress Report DEFRA February 2020

The RSN calls for action now from HM Treasury to start delivering on this commitment.

2. Executive Summary

The Rural Services Network is making 5 strategic Asks of HM Treasury each of which align to one or more of HM Treasury's Priorities. See table below:

The Rural Service Network's "Asks" <i>Revitalising Rural, Realising the Vision</i>	HM Treasury Priorities					
	Strengthening the UK's economic recovery from COVID	Levelling up economic opportunity by investing in infrastructure	Improving outcomes in public services	Making the UK a scientific superpower	Strengthening the UK's place in the world	Improving the management and delivery of commitments, ensuring all departments have structures in place
1. Support for Essential Public Services in Rural Areas			✓			✓
2. Support to Rural Economies and Infrastructure Investment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Broadband and Mobile Phone Connectivity	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
4. Affordable Rural Housing	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
5. Rural Transport and Access to Services	✓	✓	✓			✓

There are several sub themes related to some of the Rural Services Network's Asks of HM Treasury they are as follows:

1. SUPPORT FOR ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS

Sub themes

Funding Local Government Services
Health and Wellbeing Services
Rural Schools

2. SUPPORT TO RURAL ECONOMIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Sub themes

Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Industrial Strategies
UK Shared Prosperity Fund
Energy Infrastructure and Renewables
Further Education, Training and Apprenticeships
Business Advice and Guidance
Rural Town Centres and High Streets
Sustainable Farming and Land Management

3. BROADBAND AND MOBILE PHONE CONNECTIVITY

4. AFFORDABLE RURAL HOUSING

5. RURAL TRANSPORT AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

Policy rationale, key facts and social and economic factors associated to each of these Asks can be found in a **separate Supporting Information Appendix document**.

Report on Levelling Up/UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Graham Biggs MBE, Chief Executive report to the
RSN Executive meeting – 27th September 2021

Levelling up is designed to address the longstanding problem of the UK's regional economic disparities - the 2020 Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) Green Budget included a chapter on levelling up, which identified the following characteristics of areas most in need of levelling up:

A 'left-behind' area, in need of 'levelling up', is characterised by broad economic underperformance, which manifests itself in low pay and employment, leading to lower living standards in that area. Behind these factors lie other considerations such as poor productivity, which in turn may be associated with a low skill base. The health of the population may also be relatively poor: in some cases, this could be a legacy of de-industrialisation or long-term unemployment, as well as deep-rooted socio-economic issues.

1.0 Purpose of this Document

- 1.1 A Levelling Up and Devolution White Paper is expected from Government before the end of 2021.
- 1.2 This report sets out, for consideration by the Executive, the RSN's present headline general position (a live position- subject to change as issues arise – at least until the White Paper is published) in relation to Levelling Up to aid immediate responses to be made to the media etc.
- 1.3 Whilst separate the proposed UK Shared Prosperity Fund due to start 1st April 2022 is also detailed in some of the comments made by the RSN as there may be some overlap.
- 1.4 Alongside this report there is a more detailed internal document which has been prepared to bring together in one place relevant detailed position statements made to date by the RSN. On Levelling Up and the Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 1.5 It is worth noting that permission has been granted for a High Court challenge to the present Levelling Up scheme by the Good Law Project which argues that the Government is using the scheme for political purpose by channelling money into regions of political benefit to the Conservative Party.
- 1.6 Also of note is a recent report by The Salvation Army which has said coastal and rural areas with high levels of deprivation would be overlooked for investment under the levelling up programme because ministers were ignoring key indicators.

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www.rsonline.org.uk email: graham.biggs@sparse.gov.uk twitter: [@rsnonline](https://twitter.com/rsnonline)

2.0 What Might We Expect the Levelling Up White Paper to Concentrate On?

- 2.1 From the Conservative Party 2019 Election Manifesto The overall theme is likely to be along the lines of “to use our post-Brexit freedoms to build prosperity and strengthen and level up every part of the country”, through specific measures such as:
- Investing in towns, cities, **and rural** (our use of bold) and coastal areas
 - Giving those areas more control of how investment is made
 - Levelling up skills using apprenticeships and a £3bn National Skills Fund
- 2.2 In our view, the policy areas most likely to be mentioned by Government are:
- Productivity (and or Regional Economic Disparity)
 - Employment/Unemployment (Supporting People into Employment)
 - Workforce Skills (including Apprenticeships)
 - Investing in Local Businesses
 - Educational Attainment
 - Child Poverty
 - Living Standards/Cost of Living
 - Past spend by Government in Infrastructure/Investing in Communities and Place
 - Net Zero is likely to be a cross cutting theme
- 2.3 Much of the further detail of many of the policy areas referred to in paragraph 2.2 above has been set out in recently published White Papers or Strategies which the RSN has already considered ‘Through a Rural Lens’ and detailed in the more detailed document referred to in paragraph 1.4 above. Of course, the issues are also reflected in the Revitalising Rural Campaign document and its policy asks. and the recent reports commissioned from Pragmatix Advisory. At present we do not have meaningful data on Child Poverty or Past Infrastructure Spend.
- 2.4 There is nothing to intimate what metrics the government will use to determine which geographical areas it will focus levelling up funding/activity on or, indeed, if there will be different geographical areas focussed on for specific measures.

3.0 The General Headline RSN’s Position in Relation to Levelling Up/Shared Prosperity Fund

General

In the rural context Levelling -up must start with Fair Funding for Local Government Services (Including Social Care and Public Health) Fire & Rescue and Police, NHS Services

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(including mental health). Without such action the government's principles underpinning levelling up cannot hope to be met across rural areas.

Funding allocations must fully reflect the costs of delivering services in a rural context.

Only local delivery can fully understand and respond to the local context, barriers, and opportunities.

Government must:

- **Acknowledge that it needs to spend more to achieve the same outcomes in many rural locations than in urban ones.**
- **Apply to England the same principles as are explicitly acknowledged in the United Kingdom government's funding settlement for the devolved administration in Wales (namely that there are higher costs and greater need in rural areas).**
- **Endorse the principle that Levelling Up must relate to revenue spending core allocations and not just to capital spend if its objectives are to be met.**
- **Endorse the principle that policies do not need to deliver an equal level of resources for rural areas and urban areas but should be fair and equitable and demonstrate proportionality to rural areas.**

The challenge of levelling up disadvantaged communities is one which is as much, if not more, about differences within regions as between regions. The gaps between rural and urban can be more acute than those between north and south. Local delivery of actions – tailored to meet local circumstances and priorities. Local Industrial Strategies and the Levelling up Fund must all be based on 'place' with fair allocations of attention and resources given to rural areas.

55% of towns in Rural Travel to Work Areas had negative employment growth between 2009-2019. 12% of towns in Rural Travel to Work Areas have low job density and high-income deprivation.

Considering Productivity, Standards of Living, Housing and Funding, we see:

Productivity

Industry mix in rural areas is constrained by limits of geography and scale Rural jobs are less productive, even in key sectors like manufacturing and tourism.

Standards of Living

Lower wages and higher living costs squeeze rural living standards
Official statistics fail to capture rural poverty and low earners.

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www.rsonline.org.uk email: graham.biggs@spars.gov.uk twitter: [@rsnonline](https://twitter.com/rsnonline)

Housing

Beyond London, problems of affordability are most acute in rural areas, with key workers priced out of their communities. Building new affordable rural homes is essential to meet growing demand – and will help to boost public finances.

Funding

Rural areas are in receipt of proportionally less government funding. Appraisal mechanisms and priority frameworks favour urban locations. Focusing on real incomes should determine areas in need of 'levelling up'.

We (Pragmatix Report) recommend prioritisation based on assessing the standards of living achievable in different locations given local labour market conditions.

Rather than considering a mix of causes and effects, it would be more appropriate for funds that are a part of the levelling up agenda to assess the standards of living achievable in different locations given local labour market conditions.

How much money a household has left over to spend once all its bills have been paid is a straightforward way to identify poverty.

Per person, average expenditure is £239 a week in urban areas and £277 in rural, equating to an additional spend of around £2,000 annually per person.

It is estimated that it will not be until circa 2028/29 that many rural areas will be able to access gigabit broadband capability.

Needs more nuanced policies if rural areas are to benefit proportionately to urban.

Rural Towns serving their rural hinterlands must be included. Government says:

"Some towns face specific disadvantages that reduce growth and productivity. This can be a mix of economic deprivation, characterised by high concentrations of low-skilled workers, social deprivation, poor employment, and low health outcomes. This can be exacerbated by poor transport and digital connectivity. Places that face these challenges need targeted support to help boost their local economies, support local leadership and maximise their potential."

Many rural towns face this disadvantage.

Dedicated rural funding: Government should create a dedicated rural funding stream of a proportionate size with resources which are ring-fenced for use on rural support... The lesson from the past is that without a dedicated rural funding stream larger urban projects are likely to scoop the pot.

Targeting: Funding must take account of the scattered nature of rural needs and should avoid applying urban spatial targeting approaches (such as the Index of Multiple Deprivation).

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Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0BZ

Tel: 01822 851370

www.rsonline.org.uk email: graham.biggs@sparse.gov.uk twitter: [@rsnonline](https://twitter.com/rsnonline)

Programme design: a dedicated rural funding stream should retain the better features of the LEADER approach, which used a locally led 'bottom-up' economic development approach to ensure that local priorities are addressed, and suitable projects are brought forward.

Unless the Infrastructure Challenges across rural areas are urgently addressed firms will not choose to locate there and grow.

Population construct affects workforce. Over 65s accounted for 23.7% of the Predominantly Rural population (15.9% for urban). Over 85s accounted for 3.1% of the Predominantly Rural population (2.1% for urban).

Population is projected to be in 2041 - over 65s projected to account for 31.6% of the Predominantly Rural population (21.1% for urban). Over 85s projected to account for 6.2% of the Predominantly Rural population (3.7% for urban).

The number of over 85s between 2018 and 2041 in Predominantly Rural local authorities is projected to increase by 117.9% (92.7% for urban).

In 2018 the average age in rural areas was 44.7 years – 5.6 years older than in urban areas.

Government should introduce at the short-list step of the Green Book appraisal process, a requirement that projects meet a threshold target rather than being prioritised. This would allow for policy makers to choose from a range of proposals which all meet cost benefit criteria, but which can then be judged on their ability to support other aims like the levelling up agenda.

New clear guidance, either within the Green Book or as separate documentation, should also be introduced on how different policy interventions should be considered together to form an effective and efficient portfolio that meets the needs of varied locations and communities.

Processes through which the criteria for the success of 'levelling up' must be specified in a way that makes visible and encourages progress in reducing rural disadvantage. In turn, these criteria need to be embodied in the broader Green Book appraisal process. [It remains unclear on what metrics the success of levelling up will be measured, although productivity, employment and educational attainment are mentioned in the Green Book review response. Whatever are chosen need to properly reflect the nature of rural disadvantage]

Economic and social capital are often interlinked. Investment in social infrastructure and its support mechanisms is important to levelling up

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

Rural Services Network
Graham Biggs MBE, Chief Executive
Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0BZ
Tel: 01822 851370

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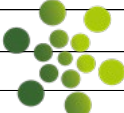
The RSN supports the key message from a new report from the House of Lords Public Services Committee which calls on the Government to adopt a “more holistic approach” to its levelling up agenda and specifically its conclusion that the Government needs to give local authorities and other local service providers more autonomy for levelling up to be successful and criticises current funding mechanisms for being overly centralised and hampering long-term planning. The pandemic has shown that with the right funding and freedoms councils can improve people’s lives. As the Committee said in its media response to the report, councils can help the government achieve levelling up ambitions with the right powers and sustainable funding as part of the forthcoming Levelling Up White Paper.

**Graham Biggs MBE, Chief Executive
Rural Services Network
September 2021**

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	 RURAL SERVICES NETWORK						
2							Attachment 8
3							
4			The Rural Services				
5			BUDGET REPORT				
6			April 2020 - March 2021				
7			AS AT 6TH SEPTEMBER, 2021				
8		Total					
9		2020/21 ACTUAL ACCRUAL BASIS	ORIGINAL BUDGET 2021/22	ACTUAL AS AT 4TH SEPTEMBER CASH BASIS	REVISED BUDGET 2021 /22	VARIATION FROM ORIGINAL BUDGET	NOTES RE 2021/22 BUDGET
10	INCOME	£	£	£	£	£	
11	Miscellaneous Income						
12	Coastal communities contract income	5,644.68	5758.00	2,319.50	5758.00		Includes £1360 Debtor
13	National rural conference	2,608.02	5000.00	800.00	3650.00	-1350.00	
14	RHCA Membership	19,279.04	23743.00	10,284.62	34176.00	10433.00	Includes £11142 Debtors
15	RSP Membership	19,272.08	20642.00	14,884.93	21409.00	767.00	
16	Rural England Annual Re CHARGES	7,706.00	6835.00	-4.80	6835.00		
17	Rural England project support	600.00	1800.00		1800.00		
18	Rural fire and rescue	3,917.00	3995.00	3,258.00	3999.00	4.00	
19	Rural housing group subscriptions	6,400.00	7318.00	6,235.00	6850.00	-468.00	
20	Rural housing group website	915.00					

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
21	Rural Strategy Income	11,847.92					
22	Rural Towns Group	10,160.00	11000.00	6,360.00	11000.00		Includes £150.00 Debtor
23	SPARSE - Rural general grant	309,918.00	300463.00	240,182.00	308022.00	7559.00	
24	Miscellaneous Income			62.50			
25	Strategic partnering arrangements	10,000.00	10000.00	10000.00	10000.00		
26	DEBTOR FROM 2020/21 VAT REFUND		3403.96		3403.96		
27	Total Income	408267.74	399957.96	294381.75	416902.96	16945.00	
28							
29	Cost of Sales						
30	GROSS SALARIES - PAYE	229,951.64	241421.00	73,966.72	167615.00		
31	SUB-CONTRACTORS			27,310.90	73806.00		
32	Total Cost of Sales	229,951.64	241421.00		241421.00		
33	Gross Profit	178316.10	158536.96		175481.96		
34	Expenses						
35	Accountancy	1763.00	1820.00	678.00	1820.00		
36	Bank charges	102.95	105.00	46.00	105.00		Includes £7.85 Creditor
37	Coastal communities contract	5,724.13	4000.00		4000.00		
38	Communications	29,169.50	36000.00	11475.00	34000.00	-2000.00	Includes Creditor of £3834 (Lexington)
39	Databases	6,221.40	6180.00	3130.53	6180.00		
40	EMPLOYER Pension contributions	5,195.42	4944.12	2064.63	4944.12		
41	Employer's NI contributions	10,238.18	11417.72		11417.72		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
42	Fair Funding Work external support	9,875.00	18000.00	10768.33	18000.00		
43	Insurance	1,485.78	780.00		780.00		
44	IT Support	328.77	700.00	68.00	700.00		
45	Legal and professional fees	1,090.42	13.00	13.00	13.00		
46	Meeting Room Hire		500.00		500.00		
47	Nat Centre RHC	7,631.00	7784.00		7784.00		
48	National rural conference expenses		1500.00			-1500.00	
49	Printing, postage stationery & phone	3,488.91	3750.00	1416.21	3750.00		Includes £69.00 Creditor
50	Professional subscriptions	482.00	550.00	182.00	550.00		
51	Rent and service charge	7,967.86	9986.00	4466.18	9986.00		
52	RSN ONLINE - Website	295.00		887.50	887.50	887.50	
53	Rural England Service	7,000.00	7000.00	7000.00	7000.00		
54	Rural housing group website expenses	167.88	175.00	76.67	175.00		
55	Rural Strategy/Rural Policy Expenses	28,613.17	18000.00	4200.00	18000.00		
56	Travel and subsistence	-85.58	5000.00	9.00	5000.00		
57	HOUSING	119.88	500.00		500.00		
58	Parliamentary		800.00		800.00		
59	TOTAL	126874.67	139504.84	46481.05	136892.34	-2000.00	
60	Corporation Tax		4500.00		8207.00	-3707.00	
61	Uncategorised Expenditure @ CONTRA	32.00		10729.17			
62	Uncategorised Expense @ RHCA	510.00					
63	CAPITAL ITEMS IT EQUIPMENT	2265.00					

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
64	TOTAL EXPENSES	129681.67	144004.84	57210.22	145100.00		
65	Net Operating Income	48634.43	14532.12		30382.00		
66	Sundry income RHCA Overpayment @	510.00					
67	Sundry Income Insurance Refund @	467.89					
68	Sundry Income @ CONTRA			11207.00			
69							
70							
71							
72	Net Income	49612.32	14532.12		30382.00		
73	GENERAL FUND BALANCE B/FWD	18901.37	51833.57		42653.94		
74	FAIR FUNDING RESERVE B/FWD		17625.00		17625.00		
75	RURAL POLICY RESERVE B/FWD		8234.75		8234.75		
76	BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD	68513.69	92225.44		98895.69		
77	TFR TO FAIR FUNDING RESERVE	-17625.00					
78	TFR TO RURAL POLICY RESERVE	-8234.75					
79	GENERAL FUND CARRIED FWD	42653.94					
80							
81	RURAL POLICY RESERVE ANALYSIS						
82	2020/21 BUDGET PROVISION	25000.00					

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
83	ADD INCOME IN YEAR	11847.92					
84	LESS EXPENDITURE IN YEAR	-28613.17					
85							
86	BALANCE C/FORWARD TO 2021/22	8234.75					
87							
88							
89	RE ANNUAL CHARGES INCOME BREAKDOWN						
90							
91	Back Office		1485.00				
92	Staff Costs (Incl Vuln Panels)		3000.00				
93	Website		2350.00				
94							
95	TOTAL		6835.00				
96							
97	RE PROJECT INCOME BREAKDOWN						
98	Toolkit						
99	Utility Vulnerability Panel		800.00				
100	SORS		300.00				
101	Unspecified		700.00				
102							
103	TOTAL		1800.00				
104							

**THE RURAL SERVICES PARTNERSHIP LIMITED
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

Contents

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Accountant's Report	2
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Balance Sheet	4
The following pages do not form part of the statutory accounts:	
Detailed Income and Expenditure Report	5—6

Directors

Mr Graham Biggs
Mr John Birtwistle
Mr David Horne (resigned 19th January 2021)
Mr David Inman
Mrs Cecilia Motley
Mrs Anna Price
Mr Martin Collett
Mr Nicholas Harwood

Secretary

Mr Graham Biggs

Company Number

06960646

Registered Office

1 Aldon View
Craven Arms
Shropshire
SY7 9EQ

Accountants

TaxAssist Accountants
114b Corve Street
Ludlow
SY8 1DJ

In accordance with the engagement letter dated 27 September 2018, and in order to assist you to fulfil your duties under the Companies Act 2006, we have compiled the financial statements of the company from the accounting records and information and explanations you have given to us.

This report is made to the directors in accordance with the terms of our engagement. Our work has been undertaken to prepare for approval by the directors the financial statements that we have been engaged to compile, to report to the directors that we have done so, and to state those matters that we have agreed to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Company and the Company's directors for our work or for this report.

You have acknowledged on the balance sheet as at year ended 31 March 2021 your duty to ensure that the company has kept proper accounting records and to prepare financial statements that give a true and fair view under the Companies Act 2006. You consider that the company is exempt from the statutory requirement for an audit for the year.

We have not been instructed to carry out an audit of the financial statements. For this reason, we have not verified the accuracy or completeness of the accounting records or information and explanations you have given to us and we do not, therefore, express any opinion on the financial statements.

Date
TaxAssist Accountants
114b Corve Street
Ludlow
SY8 1DJ

**The Rural Services Partnership Limited
Statement of Income and Expenditure
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021**

Attachment 9

	2021	2020
	£	£
TURNOVER	395,151	432,343
Other income	-	276
Staff costs	(243,762)	(182,170)
Depreciation and other amounts written off assets	(1,638)	(1,361)
Other charges	(101,557)	(237,721)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
SURPLUS BEFORE TAXATION	48,194	11,367
Tax	(8,207)	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
NET TRADING SURPLUS	39,987	11,367
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The Rural Services Partnership Limited
Balance Sheet
As at 31 March 2021

Attachment 9

	2021	2020
	£	£
Fixed assets	4,914	4,084
Current assets	77,201	29,590
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year	(33,380)	(23,073)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	43,821	6,517
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	48,735	10,601
Accruals and deferred income	(603)	(2,456)
NET ASSETS	48,132	8,145
CAPITAL AND RESERVES	48,132	8,145

Notes

1. Average Number of Employees

Average number of employees, including directors, during the year was as follows: 15 (2020: 14)

2. General Information

The Rural Services Partnership Limited is a private company, limited by shares, incorporated in England & Wales, registered number 06960646 . The registered office is 1 Aldon View, Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 9EQ.
For the year ending 31 March 2021 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.
- These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the micro-entity provisions.

On behalf of the board

Mr Graham Biggs
Director
Date

	2021		2020	
	£	£	£	£
TURNOVER				
Membership subscriptions	19,272		19,418	
SPARSE - Rural general grant	309,918		308,690	
Coastal communities contract income	5,645		3,333	
Strategic partnering arrangements	10,000		10,000	
Rural housing group website	915		1,777	
Rural market town group membership	10,160		-	
Rural housing group subscriptions	6,400		7,540	
Rural fire and rescue	3,917		3,839	
Rural England re-charges	5,106		13,494	
Business rates reserve research	-		7,000	
National rural conference	2,608		20,071	
Rural England project support	600		1,500	
Rural HCA subscriptions	8,762		25,509	
Advertising income	-		5,000	
Rural strategy	11,848		5,172	
		395,151		432,343
OTHER INCOME				
Other operating income		-		276
		395,151		432,619
STAFF COSTS				
Wages and salaries	157,669		148,587	
Employers NI	10,238		10,093	
Employers pensions - defined contributions scheme	4,383		4,174	
Subcontractor costs	71,438		-	
Travel and subsistence	34		19,316	
		(243,762)		(182,170)
DEPRECIATION AND OTHER AMOUNTS WRITTEN OFF ASSETS				
Depreciation	1,137		693	
Amortisation	501		668	
		(1,638)		(1,361)
OTHER CHARGES				
Premises expenses:				
Rent and service charge	7,968		6,395	
Rural conference	-		8,002	
	7,968		14,397	
General administration costs:				
Finance and performance monitoring	-		8,000	
Corporate management	-		91,733	
Admin and tech support	-		1,382	
Coastal communities contract	3,854		3,741	
Databases	6,322		5,062	

...CONTINUED

The Rural Services Partnership Limited
Detailed Income and Expenditure Report (continued)
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

Attachment 9

Rural England service	7,000	9,169	
Rural communities housing group	-	6,896	
Rural housing group website costs	463	300	
Business rates lobbying consultancy fees	-	6,230	
Insurance	1,018	440	
Rural strategy costs	28,613	14,707	
Printing, postage and stationery	3,489	5,027	
Fairer funding costs	9,875	20,310	
Research and communications	29,170	37,227	
IT support	329	409	
APPG & Seminar fees	-	4,800	
Accountancy fees	804	780	
Professional fees	2,067	1,039	
Economic development service	-	5,224	
Subscriptions	482	753	
Bank charges	103	92	
Sundry expenses	-	3	
	93,589	223,324	
		(101,557)	(237,721)
SURPLUS BEFORE TAXATION		48,194	11,367
Tax on Surplus			
Corporation tax charge	8,207	-	
		(8,207)	-
NET TRADING SURPLUS		39,987	11,367