
Minutes RSN Executive Meeting

**Venue: English Rural Housing Association,
7A Strutton Ground, Westminster, London, SW1P 2HY**
Date: Monday, 13th of January 2020
Time: 11.15 am – 2.30 pm

[Please follow this link for the map of the venue.](#)

1. Attendance & Apologies

Attendance

ClIr Cecilia Motley	RSN & Shropshire Council
ClIr Peter Stevens	West Suffolk Council
ClIr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
John Birtwistle	First Group
Martin Collett	English Rural Housing Association
ClIr Robert Heseltine	North Yorkshire County Council
David Inman	RSN
Graham Biggs	RSN
ClIr Jeremy Savage	South Norfolk District Council
ClIr Peter Thornton	South Lakeland District Council
ClIr Sue Sanderson	Cumbria County Council
ClIr Mary Robinson	Eden District Council

Apologies

Nik Harwood	Young Somerset
ClIr Rob Waltham MBE	North Lincolnshire Council

2. Minutes of the last RSN Executive meeting that took place on the 30th of September 2019. (Attachment 1)

Agreed as a correct record.

Arising out of Minute 11 (Benefits of SPARSE Membership) the Chief Executive that this would be reported to the next meeting as the work had been unable to be finished in time for this one

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Arising out on Minute No 12 (Fairer Funding Review “Measuring Success” the Chief Executive said that all SPARSE members which responded were supportive.

3. Minutes of the last Rural Social Care & Health Sub-Group meeting that took place on the 2nd of December 2019. (Attachment 2)

Agreed as a correct record.

4. Minutes of the last RSN AGM & Rural Assembly meetings that took place on the 2nd of December 2019. (Attachment 3 & 4)

Agreed as a correct record.

5. RSN Budget Report. (Attachment 5)

Provided all outstanding subscriptions were received (£16K was still outstanding although several payments were being processed) there would be a balance of circa £12k to carry forward and there would be a balance of circa £13k at the end of 20/21.

Members considered the report from the Chief Executive. Position agreed.

6. Settlement proposals

Information from Pixel was still awaited on identification of the gap between rural and urban (in terms of Government Funded Spending Power and Council Tax per head) based on this Provisional Settlement. If the gap was closing it would be for technical reasons associated with population data and structural changes as opposed to beneficial changes government policy, which was obviously continuing previous patterns. The position with the explanation would be outlined to the main SPARSE meeting in two weeks' time.

7. Fair Funding Review Update. (Attachment 6)

The current situation was discussed. It was expected that MHCLG would issue exemplified consultation papers in the spring or early summer, with a view that the usual “Settlement” consultation proposals at the end of 2020 will be based on the new needs formula and 75% retention of Business Rates. Now that a new Government has been elected, it is vital that the MP Rural Fair Share Group was reconvened. The position would be discussed with the APPG and the Fair Share Chairs later that week.

8. To discuss the survey report on “Impact of National Policy for Affordable Housing Thresholds on the Delivery of Rural Affordable Housing”. (Attachment 7)

The following points were made by members:

- Frozen villages resulting from planning policies were not desirable. Some planned growth was necessary to allow settlements to remain sustainable.

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- The historic reasons against growth were gradually crumbling. The old arguments around fuel use, accidents, lack of facilities, were gradually changing as technologies change.
- A different world is emerging, and this needed to be reflected in communities no longer being forbidden any growth at all by planning regulations and Local Plans.

Report accepted.

9. Rural Strategy Campaign - report from the Chief Executive. (Attachment 8 + A)

The Executive felt that any new Secretary of State should be re-approached on the stance taken by the Government until now. If the Government position failed to change, the following was recommended and approved. These new steps would be themed “Reinvigorating Rural: Realising the Vision”.

10. 2019 General Election. (Attachment 9 + A, A1, B, C, D)

The tabled report was noted.

11. National Rural Conference 2020.

Report from Kerry Booth was considered. (Attachment 10)

After further discussion it was agreed to change the dates for this event to Tuesday 8th and Wednesday 9th of September 2020 at Gloucestershire University, to avoid conflict with the August Bank Holiday.

12. Update on the Rural Market/Towns Campaign. (Attachment 11)

The Corporate Director, David Inman outlined the position reached. At the time of the meeting – 56 local councils had agreed to join. He hoped the final figure from the 200 invites might achieve 80 authorities of those initially asked to join. He hoped a figure in excess of 100 council's might be achieved by the end of 2020.

13. Utilities Against Scams.

David Inman gave a verbal report. The Utility Companies had come together to form a Campaign against this growing problem. There was a Supporters Group for non-Utility Companies. It was suggested RSN join this Supporters Group, which was agreed.

14. Update on the Membership Development and Support Officer role.

Nadine Trout, a current employee of South Hams and West Devon Councils, had been appointed to the role. She will commence work with RSN at the start of February 2020.

15. Rural Fire Group meeting.

LGA Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition is taking place in Blackpool on the 10 & 11 of March 2020.

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It was agreed that the Rural Fire Group meeting will be held on the 11th of March, after the LGA Fire Conference at Blackpool. The Executive appointed Councillor Roger Phillips as the Chair of the Fire Group for the 20/21 year.

16. Proposal for change of dates for the RSP meetings.

Changes to RSP meeting dates below has been agreed.

Event	Current Date	Agreed Change of Date
Rural Services Vulnerability Group meeting	07.04.2020	20.04.2020
Rural Services Partner Group meeting	07.04.2020	20.04.2020
RSP Ltd meeting	16.11.2020	23.11.2020
Rural Services Vulnerability Group meeting	17.11.2020	23.11.2020
Rural Services Partner Group meeting	17.11.2020	23.11.2020

17. Regional Seminars 2020 update.

Date	Region	Venue	Topic
15.01.2020	Yorkshire & the Humber * Event from 2019, postponed due to the General Election	North Yorkshire County Council	Barriers to Access – Connectivity & Rural Transport
24.02.2020	West Midlands	Stafford Borough Council	Rural Health & Wellbeing
09.03.2020	South East	Chichester District Council	Rural Economy
23.03.2020	South West	To be confirmed	Time for a Rural Strategy
11.05.2020	North East	Durham County Council	Barriers to Access – Connectivity & Rural Transport
27.07.2020	East Midlands	East Suffolk Council	Rural Skills & Education
05.10.2020	North West	Chorley Council	Rural Vulnerability
02.11.2020	Yorkshire & the Humber	To be confirmed	Rural Housing

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18. Any Other Business.

There was no other business.

The next RSN Executive meeting is scheduled for the 16th of March 2020.

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