



Rural Services Network

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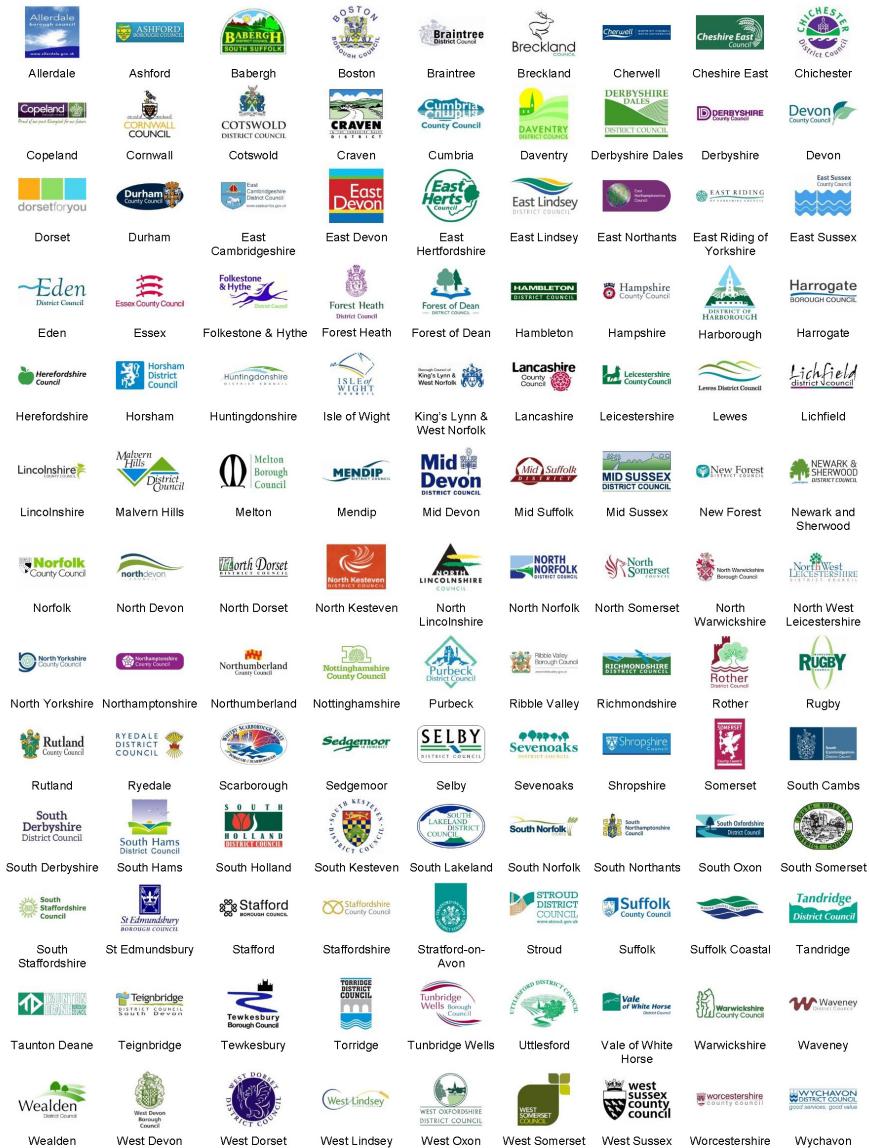
Rural Services Network

The Rural Services Network is 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.

Thank you to all the organisations who have supported us this year

Sparse and Rural Assembly members:



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Assembly members:



Rural Services Partnership Members:



Our priorities

- Public Sector Funding
 - Barriers to Access
 - Future of Rural Areas
 - Health and Wellbeing
-
- Rural Vulnerability is also recognised as a cross cutting theme

Details of the seven regional seminars are listed below:

REGION - West Midlands
DATE - 18/02/19
SUBJECT - Rural Economy
VENUE - Stafford Borough Council

REGION - South West
DATE - 21/03/19
SUBJECT - Rural Housing
VENUE - East Devon

REGION - South East
DATE - 29/04/19
SUBJECT - Rural Vulnerability
VENUE - Sevenoaks District Council

REGION - North East
DATE - May 2019
SUBJECT - Sustainable Rural Communities
VENUE - TBC

REGION - East Midlands
DATE - 08/07/19
SUBJECT - Rural Health and Wellbeing
VENUE - West Suffolk

REGION - North West
DATE - 07/10/19
SUBJECT - Delivering local Services differently
VENUE - Lancaster

REGION - Yorkshire & the Humber
DATE - 9/12/19
SUBJECT - Barriers to access – connectivity and rural transport
VENUE - Hambleton

RURAL SERVICES NETWORK

- We provide Local Authorities and Rural Service Providers with wide range of services which depending on type of membership can include:

Fairer Funding Campaign Work	Weekly Rural Bulletin Newsletter	Spotlight newsletters on Health, Older People, Young People
Individual Financial Analysis for Local Authorities	Funding Digest newsletter highlighting funding opportunities	Rural Housing Alliance and joint rural housing work
Performance Analysis for Local Authorities	Free Regional Seminar/Meeting programme at venues around the country	Rural Best Practice Library
Neighbourhood Planning Evidence Base	Discounted Annual Rural Conference	Rural Observatory

RECENT INITIATIVES

- Rural Health and Care Alliance
- ‘It’s Time for a Rural Strategy’ Campaign

Time for a Rural Strategy

“Rural Communities are frequently overlooked in a policy environment dominated by urban thinking and policy concerns. This often means communities either miss out on the benefits or experience unintended consequences from policies which are poorly thought-through from a rural perspective.”

1st March – RSN call on Government to develop a Rural Strategy

What do we want?

*“If rural communities are to be sustainable, the Government must seize this opportunity to work with communities to produce **a long-term, funded rural strategy** which recognises the contribution rural areas make and have the potential to make to the wellbeing and prosperity of the nation as a whole.”*

Why do we need a Rural Strategy



Could add

- High average household incomes
- Low Incomes earned in the rural economy
- Numbers of SME's and Self Employed
- Low Expectations?
- Outflow of young people
- Resilience and strength of Community Support
- Volunteer overload

Nationally seven key topic areas

1. A thriving rural economy
2. A digitally connected countryside
3. A place everyone can get around
4. An affordable place to live
5. A fair deal on health and social care
6. A settlement to support local action
7. A rural-proofed policy framework

A thriving rural economy

The rural challenge

- Reducing the productivity gap;
- Helping rural businesses (especially SMEs) to grow locally;
- Supporting further diversification, especially into high value-added sectors;
- Sustaining high streets and their businesses in rural towns; and
- Creating better paid and more secure jobs.

A digitally connected countryside

The rural challenge

- Extending broadband networks to those premises still missing out;
- Future proofing broadband policy, so rural areas do not fall behind again
- Capitalising on the benefits from the roll out of superfast networks;
- Addressing issues with mobile network coverage (including 4G).

A place everyone can get around

The rural challenge

- Reversing the widespread decline in rural bus service provision;
- Making bus services a more attractive option for rural travellers;
- Providing sustained support for complementary community transport schemes;
- Ensuring future transport innovations will benefit rural communities.

An affordable place to live

The rural challenge

- Bringing forward development sites at a price suited to affordable housing;
- Making sure such homes are and remain genuinely affordable;
- Planning new housing in ways which attract community support;
- Ensuring the funding model for affordable house building adds up.

A place to learn and grow

The rural challenge

- Sustaining schools with small (or fluctuating) pupil numbers;
- Managing school budgets when operating costs are high;
- Recruiting and retaining teaching and support staff;
- Finding appropriate models for school collaboration.

A settlement to support local action

The rural challenge

- Ensuring that local authorities retain the capacity to serve their rural communities;
- Boosting the capacity of parish and town councils to bring about local solutions;
- Recruiting and retaining volunteers with sufficient time and the right skills;
- Providing the support infrastructure to facilitate community action in more areas.

A fair deal on health and social care

Rural communities, like communities everywhere, need access to high quality healthcare and some require extra support from social care services.

By 2039, nearly half of all households in rural areas will contain people aged 65 or over.

In 17/18 rural residents funded 76% of the cost of adult social care through Council Tax compared to 53% in urban

A fair deal on health and social care

The rural challenge

- Ensuring that patients can get to secondary and tertiary health services;
- Delivering quality primary health care locally within rural settings;
- Making sure social care reaches those who need it in remote locations;
- Benefitting rural clients through improved health and social care integration.
- Staff recruitment and retention in rural areas

A fair deal on health and social care

-what would make a difference?

- A fair allocation of funding to rural areas
- A rural proofed model for health care delivery
- A stronger focus on filling vacancies
- A joined up approach to health and social care
- A housing policy ready for an ageing population



House of Lords Select Committee on Rural Economy

- Chaired by Lord Foster of Bath
- Report published 27 April 19 with a large number of recommendations for Government
- Received evidence from number of key rural organisations – including the RSN - Parliamentarians and communities
- Government has now published its response

Lord Foster of Bath:

"Rural communities and the economies in them have been ignored and underrated for too long. We must act now to reverse this trend, but we can no longer allow the clear inequalities between the urban and rural to continue unchecked. A rural strategy would address challenges and realise potential in struggling and under-performing areas, and allow vibrant and thriving areas to develop further. **Doing nothing is not an option.**"

What was the Government's response?

- Some positive elements:
- *"Over the coming months, the government will expand on its strategic vision and set out how, working across departments and working with stakeholders, it is putting in place a range of measures to ensure that rural areas continue to thrive.*
- The Government will work to improve rural proofing and DEFRA will publish an annual report on rural proofing
- The Government is reviewing Local Authority funding and has proposed including an Area Cost Adjustment to capture sparsity costs.

Government response to House of Lords Report

BUT....

- The Government believes that rather than a distinct Rural Strategy, it is best to 'embed an appreciation of rural issues at all levels of delivery'- rather than "risk rural areas being placed in a silo through having a single rural strategy"
- It mentions that the 'UK Shared Prosperity Fund will allocate funding to those places with the greatest need'...will rural areas with their scattered geography fit into these categories?
- Government doesn't want to 'interfere' in other agencies or organisations responsibilities to force them to be proactive about rural areas and issues

Government response to House of Lords Report

- Defra will establish a Rural Affairs Board to support and steer work on rural proofing
- 'Final decisions are due to be made following the Spending Review – appears numerous times!!!

Thank you for listening

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