

‘Time for a rural strategy’

Upcoming RSN publication



What we are calling for:

- ✓ **Ambitious** – setting ten year objectives for rural economies and communities
- ✓ **Comprehensive** – addressing key issues which affect rural prosperity, wellbeing and quality of life
- ✓ **Current** – linking with Government strategies e.g. industrial, digital (FTIR), social care
- ✓ **Resourced** – having realistic funding to achieve its objectives, taking account of sparsity costs
- ✓ **Supported** – commanding wide support across government and beyond (not least locally)

Why we are calling for it now:

- The last **Rural White Paper** was produced 18 years ago
- Need to **replace EU** policies and programmes with UK/England ones e.g. LEADER, EAFRD
- **Funding cuts** (and adult social care demand) have left rural public services near the brink
- Upcoming **Spending Review** round to define Governments priorities
- A chance to influence the **House of Lords** Select Committee on the Rural Economy

Document has seven topic chapters

- 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**

Some of the bigger asks

- **Give rural proofing a strong legal basis – with a duty to have regard to rural needs on public bodies**
- **Design a substantive, dedicated and locally delivered rural development fund (to replace EU programmes)**
- **Improve digital connectivity, raising the planned USO level and starting investment in rural full fibre ASAP**
- **Target the need for affordable housing, with a specific Homes England rural grants programme**
- **Search for new rural transport proposals.**
- **Bring about a fair allocation of resources for the NHS, public health and social care (and LG more generally)**
- **Ensure adequate and sustained grant funding and support packages to boost local community action**

A significant input from SPARSE-rural and RSP membership

Comments were sought on draft chapters.

Responses were received from:

18 local authorities (SPARSE-Rural)

8 other members (RSP)

Thank you!

What happens next?