

Note of last SPARSE Rural Special Interest Group meeting

Title: Rural Services Network Special Interest Group

AGM Meetings:

- SPARSE Rural Sub SIG
- Rural Services Partnership Limited
- Rural Services Network

Date: Monday 20 November 2017

Venue: The Westminster Archives, London

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note.

Item	Decisions and actions
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1 Apologies for absence

The Chair, Cllr Cecilia Motley welcomed members and noted apologies.

2 Minutes of the Previous meeting

The minutes from the last RSN AGM held on 21st November, 2016 were received and approved.

3 Appointment of Chairman for the ensuing year (to also be the Chair of the SPARSE-Rural sub-sig) [Present Chair Councillor Cecilia Motley]

Nominations for the existing Chair to continue in her position were accepted.

4 Appointment of Vice Chairmen for the ensuing year (to also be the Vice-Chairmen of the SPARSE-Rural sub-sig).

Nominations for the current, First Vice-Chair and all other Vice-Chairs to continue in position were supported. Members expressed their gratitude for all his work having noted that Cllr Strange had recently stood down from the Group. One vacancy was reported for a unitary council vice chair representative and Cllr Rob Waltham, North Lincolnshire volunteered for the position. This was agreed by members.

5 IF DEEMED NECESSARY AND BENEFICIAL. To appoint a Chair and Vice Chair(s) of the RURAL ASSEMBLY SUB-SIG

It was agreed that both would remain the same.

6 Next Meeting

Members noted the date for the next RSN AGM being 12th November, 2018.

7 Minutes of the last full meeting – 10th April 2017S

The Minutes of the last full meeting of the group were received and approved.

8 Minutes of the last Executive meeting – 25th September 2017

Members noted the minutes and the attached reports on (a) future fees levels (b) the Forward Budget and (c) Regional Meetings and Seminars.

Action:

The minutes and the recommendations in those Minutes and the reports referred to be approved.

The Chairman invited any members who had any concerns or issues to raise in respect of any of these matters to forward them to David Inman for consideration by the Executive at its January meeting.

9 Membership (Constitutional Requirement)

Members noted the membership report from David Inman.

He outlined difficulties in retention and recruitment saying that membership was falling. Referring members to the benefits of being part of the Group, he stated that without its existence, rural matters would be very exposed and under-discussed. It was vital in taking forward important rural issues and the group agreed to encourage others to join and stick together.

Members noted details of the constitutional notice (being the same as required by the LGA) – but they expressed their worries that authorities see it as a discretionary service and might therefore withdraw their membership. This of course would impact themselves and their residents and therefore it was vital to hold the SIG together.

Action:

Members spread benefits of membership to peer councils as they see fit.

10 Budget 2017/18 and 2018/19 (Constitutional Requirement)

Members noted the current budget report which showed a positive balance being carried forward, despite some subscriptions still outstanding. Estimates will be taken to the January meeting for the Executive to agree and to determine the budget for following year.

11 Brexit Rural Roundtable: Outcome from Meeting 2

Graham Biggs outlined short-term priorities as agreed by participants at the recent Brexit Rural Roundtable discussion. It was intended that a discussion would take place with the LGA and members noted that work around the review of the previous Rural White Paper had already been commissioned. Once priorities for discussion had been set, another meeting of the roundtable will be called.

12 RSN “So What Survey” agreed at the last meeting - Analysis Note

Members received a presentation from Brian Wilson on the Survey of RSN local authorities to test findings in the State of Rural Services 2016 report.

He outlined the work which covered nine different service areas. (Full info and the report are available on RSN's website). LAs had been asked to respond to the findings and he summarised the results of this consultation on the report. Overall, the general agreement was to headline key findings.

Members noted the conclusions of the survey. It was clear that the impact was the greatest concern for certain groups and they agreed that local community action needed support to enable and sustain it either via grants or direct funding.

Member comments included the following:

- Some problems are being created by not supporting current services and there needs to be alternative ways of accessing these – there is too much reliance on the same volunteers;
- Young adults and transport – does it include the fact that grants for disenfranchised young people had been taken away – subsidies have also been removed;
- If there are alternatives such as online banking – we should leave these out as it is vital to prioritise the work of RSN and instead, look at situations where there is no alternative available at all.
- Provision for 6th form students in rural areas is lacking - there is not enough demand to warrant 6th forms in many areas and so those that need it are having to travel much further.

Members noted the presentation and the Chairman thanked Mr Wilson for details of his study.

Action:

Presentation to be made available on RSN's website.

13 Presentation by Neil Parish MP, Chair of the EFRA Select Committee and Member of Parliament for Tiverton and Honiton on the work of the EFRA Select Committee

The Chair welcomed Neil Parish MP, Chair of EFRA Select Committee and MP for Tiverton and Honiton.

Mr Parish outlined the work of the Select Committee, including looking at issues around Europe and putting various scenarios together to try and predict what may happen post Brexit. He acknowledged differences between figures around urban and rural areas and in particular being conscious of different needs such as farming. Members were invited to provide input for him to take forward.

Comments included:

- Had the issue of rural-proofing and rural weighting been recognised – Mr Parish MP agreed that to look into what has happened to it.
- Were any thoughts being given to overseeing environment improvement and development? The Minister acknowledged the importance of encouraging engagement with farmers and he hoped that the 25 year environment plan would work alongside farming and food.
- It was important to keep RDPE Programme type activity continuing, although Members realised that its benefits must be justified in order for this to be assured. Mr Parish stated that nothing should be taken for granted but that he

would endeavour to ensure this;

- Many market towns are struggling and for a lot of rural areas their existence is very important. Members asked whether something might be done at a national level to help them survive. Mr Parish said that he would try and incorporate this into the Select Committee's activity;
- The group mentioned that they would like to see a wider agenda to include better planning on sustainability and ways of enlisting farmers to get involved. Certainty was needed in terms of agricultural payment bills and was affecting confidence to invest;
- Difficult issues around planning permission needs addressing as current rulings interfere with developments. Mr Parish responded that strict control of the number of sites must be met to allow building with restrictions.

Cllr Motley thanked him for his time and an interesting discussion.

Action:

Chair to write to Neil Parish MP asking him to look into the issues raised.

14 Urban and Rural Dementia Challenges and Solutions

Members then moved onto the affairs of the Rural Assembly beginning with item 14 and the Chair introduced Ian Sherriff, Academic Partnership Lead for Dementia Primary Care Group.

Members received a presentation which explored problems around dementia, noting current statistics.

Key points in the presentation included:

- Challenges around funding and increase in elderly population;
- Prevalent figures around abuse and neglect;
- Numbers of unpaid and under supported carers whose needs are not being met;
- Worrying evidence that diagnosis is occurring at a younger age;
- Research shows dementia is most severe in rural areas and that social isolation and loneliness can lead to the illness;
- Caring is key and involvement of the public.

Mr Sherriff outlined possible solutions, including the importance of integration. Members heard about how the Group collaborates with key organisations to encourage this and they noted existing systems which assist, for example using GPs and monitoring systems to ensure peoples safety.

Action:

Details of data and presentation are available on the RSN website.

15 Rural Conference 2017

Apologies were received from Kerry Booth.

Members noted the presentation which headlined the following information:

- 71 % of attendees were from member authorities – the rest from other organisations.

- 8% of attendees were from government departments.
- Feedback included support of the location, more informal networking and interaction opportunities and more workshops; less political content as it came across as having political agendas.

Mr Biggs agreed that these comments would be addressed in order to work out the format for the next conference. Members noted that the date would follow in due course.

Action:

Slides to be made available on RSN's website.

16 Sounding Board Survey

Mr Biggs stated that the next Sounding Board Survey would be in respect of Affordable Housing issues.

17 Meeting Dates for 2018

Members noted meeting dates for 2018 and were informed that most of these would take place back at the LGA, 18 Smith Square. The next meeting on 29 January however will take place at Westminster Archive, Centre.

The full list of dates and venues for 2018 is as follows:-

Schedule of RSN Executive Meeting Dates and Venues 2018

Date	Meeting	Venue
Monday 15th January	RSN Executive	Eaton Room, LGA, Smith Square, London
Monday 5th March	RSN Executive	Smith Square 1, LGA, Smith Square, London
Monday 11th June	RSN Executive	Eaton Room, LGA, Smith Square, London
Monday 24th September	RSN Executive (also RSP Ltd Board of Directors)	City of Westminster Archives Centre, London

Schedule of Main Meeting Dates and Venues 2018

Date	Meeting	Venue
Monday 29th January	SPARSE Rural Sub SIG	City of Westminster Archives Centre, London
Monday 9th April	Rural Social Care & Health Group & Rural Assembly Sub SIG	Smith Square 1 & 2, LGA, Smith Square, London
Monday 25th June	SPARSE Rural Sub SIG	Smith Square 1 & 2, LGA, Smith Square, London
Monday 12th November	AGM meetings	City of Westminster Archives Centre, London

18 Any Other Business

A member suggestion that the radio programme – the Archers - be approached to include reference to rural issues as a key platform attracting many listeners.

There was no other business.

Attendance:

Cecilia Motley – Chair RSN
Graham Biggs – Chief Executive, RSN
David Inman – Corporate Director, RSN
Andy Dean - RSN
Cllr Les Kew – Bath & NE Somerset Council
Cllr Peter Wilding – Chichester DC
Paul Over – Chichester DC
Cllr Paul Diviani – East Devon DC
Cllr Craig Leyland – East Lindsey DC
Cllr Wendy Bowkett – East Lindsey DC
Pam Howard – Housing Services, English Rural Housing
Cllr Rob Waltham – North Lincolnshire Council
Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick – North Norfolk DC
Cllr Robert Heseltine – North Yorkshire CC
Cllr Yvonne Peacock – Richmondshire DC
Jeremy Savage – South Norfolk DC
Cllr Peter Stevens – St Edmundsbury BC
Cllr Cameron Clark – Sevenoaks DC
Cllr Michael Hicks – South Hams DC
Cllr Gwilym Butler – Shropshire Council
Frances Bedding – Head of External Funding, Suffolk CC
Cllr Philip Sanders – West Devon BC
Cllr Owen Brierley – West Lindsey DC
Cllr Mrs Sheila Bibb – West Lindsey DC
Ian Knowles – West Lindsey DC
Ian Sherriff – Plymouth
Lee Chapman – Shropshire Council
Revd. Richard Kirlew – Chair RSP
Cllr Rupert Reichhold – ENDC
Peter Thornton – South Lakeland / Cumbria CC
Sue Sanderson – Cumbria CC
Malcolm Leading – Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils
Cllr Jane Mortimer – Scarborough BC
Cllr Lindsey Cawren – North Kesteven DC
Cllr Derrick Haley – Mid Suffolk DC

Apologies for Discussion on Rural Social Care and Health Group

Kerry Booth – Assistant Chief Executive, RSN
Cllr Cameron Clark – Sevenoaks District Council
Cllr Adam Paynter – Cornwall Council
Cllr Colin Morgan – Daventry District Council
Cllr Roy Miller – Barnsley MBC
Tom Crowley, Chief Executive – Horsham District Council
Ian Richardson, Chief Executive – Shropshire Rural Housing Association Ltd
Cllr Samantha Dixon – Cheshire West and Cheshire Council
Cllr Mrs Geraldine Carter – Calderdale MBC
Cllr Louise Gittins – Cheshire West and Cheshire Council
Cllr Kevin Beaty, Leader – Eden District Council
Georgina Fung, Head of National Programmes – UK Youth
Cllr Ian Hudspeth – Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Julian German – Cornwall Council
Cllr Stephen Arnold – Ryedale District Council
Simon Riley, Head of Finance – Harborough District Council
Cllr Jean Wharmby, Cabinet Member for Adult Care – Derbyshire County Council
Cllr Carol Hart, Cabinet Member for Health & Communities – Derbyshire County Council
John Birtwistle – Head of Policy (UK Bus)
Cllr John Barrott – Warwick District Council
Cllr Sue Woolley, Executive Member NHS Liaison – Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Polly Andrews, Chairman of Adults & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee – Herefordshire Council
Cllr Adrian Davis, Lead Member for Adults – Council of Isles of Scilly
Cllr Adrian Hardman, Member for Adult Social Care – Worcestershire County Council
Cllr Sally Hawken, Portfolio Holder for Children & Wellbeing – Cornwall Council
Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE, Health & Wellbeing Board Chair – Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Ernie White, Lead Member for Health - Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Les Caborn, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care & Health – Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Dawn Payne, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Services – North Somerset Council
Cllr Sylvia Hughes, Cabinet Member for Public Health & Wellbeing – Northamptonshire County Council
Cllr Amanda Jupp, Cabinet Member for Adults & Health – West Sussex County Council
Cllr Shaun Turner, Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing – Lancashire County Council
Cllr Carol Hart, Cabinet Member for Health & Communities – Derbyshire County Council
Cllr Andrew Leadbetter, Cabinet Member Adult Social Care & Health Services – Devon County Council
Cllr Lawrie Stratford, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care – Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Paul Rone, Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing – Herefordshire Council
Cllr John Spence CBE, Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care – Essex County Council
Cllr Graham Gooch, Cabinet Member for Adult Services – Lancashire County Council
Cllr Liz Fairhurst, Health & Wellbeing Board Chair – Hampshire County Council
Elaine O’Leary, Chief Executive – Northamptonshire ACRE
Gary Powell, Community Projects Officer – Teignbridge District Council

Apologies for RSP AGM – 20th November 2017

Ian Richardson, Chief Executive – Shropshire Rural Housing Association Ltd
Georgina Fung, Head of National Programmes – UK Youth
Erin Mee, Policy & Research Officer – Age UK
Peter Shipp, Executive Chairman – EYMS Group Ltd
Helena Cox, Senior Advisor Democratic Services – West Sussex Fire & Rescue

Apologies List for RSN AGM – 20th November 2017

Kerry Booth – Assistant Chief Executive, RSN
Cllr Adam Paynter – Cornwall Council
Cllr Julian German – Cornwall Council
Cllr John Williams – Taunton Deane Borough Council
Cllr Dr Ken Pollock – Worcestershire County Council
Cllr Mrs Geraldine Carter – Calderdale MBC
Cllr Michael Cooper – Boston Borough Council
Cllr Colin Morgan – Daventry District Council
Cllr Roy Miller – Barnsley MBC
Tom Crowley, Chief Executive – Horsham District Council
Ian Richardson, Chief Executive – Shropshire Rural Housing Association Ltd
Cllr Samantha Dixon – Cheshire West and Cheshire Council
Cllr Louise Gittins – Cheshire West and Cheshire Council
Cllr Kevin Beaty, Leader – Eden District Council
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Cllr Ian Hudspeth – Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Julian German – Cornwall Council
Cllr Stephen Arnold – Ryedale District Council
Simon Riley, Head of Finance – Harborough District Council
Erin Mee, Policy & Research Officer – Age UK
Peter Shipp, Executive Chairman – EYMS Group Ltd
Cllr John Clarke – Gedling Borough Council
Cllr Gonzalez De Savage – Northamptonshire County Council
Cllr John Barrott – Warwick District Council
Cllr Tony Miller – Worcestershire County Council
Cllr Brian Long – Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Cllr Mark Whittington – Lincolnshire County Council
Helena Cox, Senior Advisor Democratic Services – West Sussex Fire & Rescue
Martin Flitcroft, Finance Manager – Teignbridge District Council
Cllr Leigh Higgins – Melton Borough Council