

Notice of Meeting

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the membership of THE RURAL SERVICES NETWORK is to be held on MONDAY 20th NOVEMBER, 2017 at approximately 1.00 p.m. to 3.15 p.m. at City of Westminster Archives Centre, 10 St Ann's Street, London SW1P 2DE when the business set out below is to be transacted.

Dated: the 24th October 2017

Graham Biggs MBE,

Chief Executive- Rural Services Network

PART 1: AGM SPECIFIC ISSUES

1. **Apologies for absence**
2. **Minutes:** To consider the Minutes of the last RSN AGM held on 21st November, 2016 (Attachment 1)
3. **Appointment of Chairman for the ensuing year (to also be the Chair of the SPARSE-Rural sub-sig) [Present Chair Councillor Cecilia Motley]**
4. **Appointment of Vice Chairmen for the ensuing year (to also be the Vice-Chairmen of the SPARSE-Rural sub-sig).**

Current Vice Chairs are:- Cllr Robert Heseltine First Vice Chair (Yorkshire), Cllr Philip Sanders Vice Chair (County 1), Cllr Gill Heath Vice Chair (County 2), Cllr Roger Phillips Vice Chair (West Midlands), Cllr Kevin Beaty Vice Chair (North), Cllr Adam Painter Vice Chair (South West), Cllr Sue Sanderson Vice Chair (Without Portfolio), Cllr Peter Stevens Vice Chair (East), Cllr Derrick Haley Vice Chair (Without Portfolio), Cllr Peter Thornton Vice Chair (Without Portfolio), Cllr Janet Duncton Vice Chair (South East).

Present Vacancy for Vice Chair – Unitary Councils

5. **IF DEEMED NECESSARY AND BENEFICIAL.** To appoint a Chair and Vice Chair(s) of the RURAL ASSEMBLY SUB-SIG
6. **NEXT MEETING:** Next RSN AGM to be held on Monday 12th of November 2018

PART 2: RURAL ASSEMBLY SUB-SIG ISSUES

7. **Minutes of the last full meeting – 10th April 2017**
To approve the Minutes of the last Meeting (Attachment 2)
8. **Minutes of the last Executive meeting – 25th September 2017**
(Attachment 3). Arising out of these Minutes to consider:-
 - The Report considered by the Executive on future Fee levels (Attachment 4)
 - The Report considered by the Executive on the Forward Budget (Attachment 5, (a) & (b))
 - The Report of the Executive on Further Engagement with members:-
 - Regional Meetings and Seminars (Attachment 6)
9. **Membership (Constitutional Requirement)**
To consider the annual report on membership (verbal report)
10. **Budget 2017/18 and 2018/19 (Constitutional Requirement)**
Budget report for 2017/18 (Actual to end October 2017 & Revised)
(Attachment 7)
11. **Brexit Rural Roundtable: Outcome from Meeting 2**
(Attachment 8)
12. **RSN “So What Survey” agreed at the last meeting - Analysis Note**
Presentation by Brian Wilson (Attachment 9)

- 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**
- 14. Urban and Rural Dementia Challenges and Solutions**
Presentation by Ian Sherriff M.A.D.M.S C.Q.S.W Dip Cll Plymouth University (Attachment 10)
- 15. Rural Conference 2017**
To receive a report from Kerry Booth
- 16. Sounding Board Survey**
To receive an update on the survey from Kerry Booth
- 17. Meeting Dates for 2018** (Attachment 11)
- 18. Any Other Business**

Notes of RSP Ltd and RSN AGM Meetings 21 November 2016

Title:	RSP Ltd and RSN AGM
Date:	21 November 2016
Venue:	City of Westminster Archives Centre, London

Attendance

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

AGM membership of the Rural Services Network and Rural Assembly SubSIG issues

1. Apologies for absence

Members noted apologies. Graham thanked attendees and welcomed speakers.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were noted and approved.

3. Appointment of Chair for the forthcoming year

Members agreed that the Chairman, Cllr Cecilia Motley, should continue for the forthcoming year.

4. Vice Chair for ensuing year

Members noted the list of current vice-Chairs, and agreed that those currently in the roles should continue.

5. Election of First vice-Chair

Members agreed that Cllr Robert Heseltine should continue in his current role.

6. Rural Assembly Sub SIG

Members agreed that the SubSIG chairmanship should remain as it is currently with the Chairman leading both groups.

7. Future Directions

Members noted the report of the RSN executive which gave an overview of challenges over the next 5 years, looking at issues around representing rural areas and sustaining the organisation. Members discussed current contributions, the cycle of meetings and future services which would be most useful to members.

The group discussed possible outcomes further to Brexit and agreed that rural areas would need to be joined up in their thinking and it would be important to find a formula which would allow the RSN to remain as a representative of rural areas, as well as to progress and keep the rural voice heard. They agreed that the current situation and the work involved was not sustainable and an appropriate level of contribution should be considered in order to be regarded as an equitable investment.

Members agreed the recommendations which included a proposal to increase the subscription and thus increase investment. The group noted that a breakdown of current figures would be distributed to all members and membership (of RSP) would also be considered to include more national parks.

Members discussed other issues including the range of services provided and agreed that representation and relationships with parliamentarians was vital to progress. They noted imminent meetings between MPs and David Inman and Graham Biggs, and agreed to put forward suggestions of names in order to compile a core list of rural peers. Mr Biggs said that ideas would be developed and put back to the Group.

Members referred to their own portfolios and spoke about vulnerable areas – in particular issues around budgets - and ways in which joint working with others in a good lobbying position would help. It was agreed that RSN would compile a survey for members to submit information regarding Broadband accessibility and anything else which leaves the community in vulnerable positions, including concessionary fares and deprivation in rural areas.

Members noted recommendations to develop a position statement to fulfil full economic and social expectations for all rural areas, particularly after Brexit. They confirmed the need to engage with CCN and DCN and agreed the importance to have shire elected representation working on the same page and to avoid fragmentation in taking forward issues of rural areas. It was suggested a group be created to gather all info and statistics on the amount of issues faced by those living in rural areas.

Members noted and agreed to all further recommendations within the report. The Chair thanked them for their valuable contributions to the discussed and to David Inman for all his input and hard work.

8. Next meeting

Members noted the date of the next meeting of the AGM - 20 November 2017.

9. Rural Services Network Statement about the Modern Slavery Act

Members noted the report.

10. Minutes of the last Executive Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

11. Membership

The annual report on membership was noted. There were some queries regarding subscriptions and it was agreed that information would be sent to members in due course to include a comprehensive package of what the RSN does for members.

12. Budget

Members noted the budget report as it stood. The figures for 17/18 needed amending to include the increased contributions just agreed a communication strategy and this would be revisited at the next meeting.

13. RSN Submission to HM Treasury

Members noted that there had been no formal consultation in respect of the Autumn Statement so comments had been sent in directly. The LGA's First magazine will have an article on implications on rural areas by RSN.

14. State of the Rural Services Report

Brian Wilson had sent apologies. The launch was delayed until January 2017 and the group noted a summary of current findings on a presentation from Rural England. Brian would attend the next meeting with information in more detail. Members agreed that the headlines were useful and looked forward to receiving more information at the next meeting.

15. Update on the Health Scrutiny Project

Members noted the presentation from Kerry Booth and discussed key issues, including transport, access to health specialists, recruitment and other limitations in rural areas. The Chair thanked the speaker for her work and noted that LG First Magazine had shown interest in an article about this subject for the Spring edition. Members discussed their own experiences.

16. Rural Conference 2016

Members received a presentation about this year's conference and discussed the outcome, agreeing that it was a great platform for networking and sharing information.

17. Rural Conference 2017

Members were encouraged to attend and agreed the benefits. They noted difficulties in getting Ministerial attendance due to the time of year – however, they would attempt to get someone to attend a future Rural Assembly meeting.

18. Meeting dates for 2017

Members noted the list of meeting dates for the forthcoming year. The Conference would be held in Cheltenham again.

19. Any other business

Graham Biggs notified members that the Rural Health Conference would be held on 28 February in London.

Members noted outcomes of recent consultations and agreed the need to ensure that common messages are consistent between DCN, CCN and LGA.

There was no other business and the meeting was closed.

Note: All presentations are available on the RSN website.

Attendees

Cecilia Motley	Chair, RSN	
Graham Biggs	Chief Executive, RSN	
David Inman	Corporate Director, RSN	
Kerry Booth	Assistant Chief Executive, RSN	
Cllr Philip Sanders	West Devon BC	
Cllr Owen Bierley	West Lindsey DC	
Cllr Janet Duncton	West Sussex CC	
Cllr Cameron Clark	Sevenoaks DC	
Paul Masters	Cornwall Council	
Ian Knowles	West Lindsey DC	
Cllr Ian Threlfall	Richmondshire DC	
Cllr David Ireton	Craven DC	
Cllr Rupert Reichhold	East Northamptonshire Council	
Cllr Gwilyn Butler	Shropshire Council	
Cllr Michael Hicks	South Hams DC	
Leigh Higgins	Melton BC	
Cllr Glynn Gilfoyle	Nottinghamshire Council	
Cllr Robert Heseltine	East Northamptonshire Council	
Keriesha Williams	UK Youth	
Milly Price	UK Youth	
Cllr Gordon Nicolson	Eden DC	
Cllr Peter Stevens		
Cllr Lindsey Cawson		
Dan Reynolds	RSN	
Martin Reohorn	Hereford & Worcester FA	
Malcolm Leeding	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils	
W J Clarke	GBC	
Cllr Neil Butters	Bath & NE Somerset	
Fatima de Abreu	Local Government Association	

Notes of the last RURAL ASSEMBLY Sub SIG (incorporating SPARSE Rural Members, Rural Assembly Members and the Rural Services Partnership Meeting)

Title:	RURAL ASSEMBLY Sub SIG (incorporating SPARSE Rural Members, Rural Assembly Members and the Rural Services Partnership Meeting)
Date:	Monday 10 April 2017
Venue:	City of Westminster Archives Centre, 10 St Ann's Street, London SW1P 2DE

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 Chairman, Cllr Cecilia Motley, RSN was unable to attend the meeting. Cllr Peter Stephens (one of the RSN Vice Chairs) took the chair for the meeting.

Members noted the full list of apologies would be included with the minutes.

2 Minutes of the last Rural Assembly meeting - 21 November 2016

The minutes from the last meeting held on 21 November were approved. Members noted that apologies from Cllr Jane Mortimer and Richard Kirlew had not been recorded in those minutes.

3 Minutes of the last Executive meeting - 13 March 2017

The minutes from the meeting held on 13 March were accepted. Reference to West Lindsey's proposed motion to campaign on issues of GPs in rural areas had been omitted from the note of the meeting but members were informed that work was in progress and that a note had recently been sent to local authorities.

4 The State of Rural Services Report (SORS) 2016

Members received a presentation from Brian Wilson (Brian Wilson Associates) whilst Graham Biggs (RSN) provided some background on the RSN's priorities in respect of the issues covered in the report.

In the past, The Rural Services Network had produced a series of narrower based reports in the past. With the establishment of Rural England C I C and many more stakeholders now on board the range and depth of the SORS report had been

increased significantly

The launch of the Report in the House of Commons had been very successful and lots of excellent media coverage secured.

Members heard about recent statistics and trends with the aim of bringing together existing sources of evidence. The aim would be to produce an updated report every 2-3 years with updated information (and possibly some new services) in order to inform rural debate and provide independent research advice.

Members noted common issues – in particular the fact that nearly all services in rural areas are experiencing cutbacks with third sector service provision expanding. There were major concerns about lack of rural bus services and closing bank branches and the pressure on the demand for services by the ageing rural population, such as Adult Social Care. The Group heard about possible implications for access and choice and noted the lack of recorded data around certain issues.

Members raised various points:

- Community shops are an asset in rural areas – particularly in bringing the community together with enterprises such as coffee shops, although recruiting volunteers was difficult in some case.
- A member questioned accuracy of figures showing the rural population and felt that these were greater than shown as there were rural areas located within metropolitan and urban areas. It was agreed that it was not an easy task to identify a definite number because of National definitions and the geographical level at which national data was available. The SORS used the lowest geographical level available
- Engagement of parish/town councils and religious institutions were vital and should be brought into community considerations more than is currently the case in some areas.
- Isolation is a major issue particularly around mental ill health which often go undiagnosed in rural areas. Members agreed that they would like to see a Minister appointed with responsibilities including rural isolation and vulnerability
- They discussed community led housing schemes and difficulties in recruiting volunteers / teams, particularly those with the correct expertise.

Members agreed that it was a good evidence based report and an excellent resource of information, but noted cuts to local authority research departments would be mean it may not be used as much as it should be.

Mr Biggs agreed many issues were due to lack of funding and the importance of finding solutions from local people. The RSN would advise on existing barriers and this kind of report would provide an opportunity to lobby for funding to be directed towards rural services. He referred to the Green paper on Social Care and the need to make sure that the rural element is included.

Action – An RSN report be brought to the next meeting “reading across” the various sections of the SORS report and seeking to answer the “So What?” questions. The next Rural Sounding Board Survey would be designed around getting information and case studies to support the production of this report:
ACTION RSN OFFICERS

5 Brexit

Brexit – Mr Biggs provided a brief update on current discussions with other stakeholders and outlined agreed objectives. Members noted that a round table discussion was planned for June to see if sectorial interests have enough in common to take forward and build a national consensus on the work needed. There were concerns regarding regulations and quotas – particularly in the farming industry and difficulties in predetermining how money will be distributed. Members discussed current bureaucracy and concerns about more vulnerable areas where funding may be cut.

Results of the discussions will be on the next agenda.

6 Rural Vulnerability

David Inman (RSN) discussed problems of isolation and the importance of providing firm directions for dealing with these issues. Rural social care, health and vulnerability were key areas of concern and it was felt that this subject should be a constant item on future agendas.

Members noted the report and agreed the recommendation to create a vulnerability issues list which would feed into and link common issues with relevant bodies. It was agreed that the 2018 conference (at a special session before the Conference proper) should be used to bring together organisations such as citizens-advice, age uk etc. in order to discuss rural considerations and work together. Members also heard of plans to get a rural vulnerability day once a year in Westminster, engaging with Lords and MPs – starting in autumn this year. They agreed the importance of supporting other related schemes and noted that although there are lots of services available, there are issues around knowledge and accessibility.

Members noted the report.

7 A Rural Panel and the Rural Sounding Boards

Rural Panel and Rural Sounding Board – Members received the report from the Corporate Director which outlined aims for setting up a Board for dialogue and consultation within various sectors.

Members agreed to disseminate information in order to recruit interested parties. They noted Rural England have already approached University of Gloucestershire to try to enlist input from lay persons to federations of small businesses.

Action – RSN to circulate information leaflet to members in due course for distribution in order to enlist uptake.

8 RSN Communication Strategy

Members noted the Lexington PLC Toolkit, attached to this item, which stated that in future, press releases should include a list of authorities in membership. The Executive had recently accepted the toolkit and had agreed to review future strategies and outcomes in a year's time.

9 Total involvement of all rural areas in England in the work of the Network

Members noted the importance of getting all rural areas to work with the Rural Services Network in order to raise the budget required to be able to do more work. They noted challenges in recruiting and discussed opportunities for enlisting associate members. Members agreed to promote the Network as much as possible.

10 Budget Report

Members noted current budget figures and its entire dependence on payment of subscriptions. This does not allow a lot for contingency funding and so gaining popularity for the rural conference was important in order to encourage a bigger membership and therefore a bigger budget for RSN work.

11 Sounding Board Reports and Future Meetings

Mr Wilson and Mr Biggs agreed to take forward and develop comments to be included in questions for a Sounding Board exercise this summer with the member and parish councils together with suggested case studies. would report further at the next meeting.

Members briefly discussed the feasibility of inviting relevant Ministers to future planned meetings but understood there were issues around timing, availability and location. Colleagues from RSN agreed to feature this in planning dates within the 2018/19 programme, but asked that the group note cases were being put forward to Ministers regardless of their attendance.

12 Rural Weighting allowance for GPs

Cllr Owen Bierley, West Lindsey BC summarised the background to the initiative which addressed the importance of continuity of care in rural communities and availability of access no longer adequate for needs of patients. Recruiting and retaining GPs was difficult and the Government needed to address this. The obvious way forward would be to have a rural weighting allowance and he asked that members support the motion. The meeting was in unanimous support.

Mr Biggs confirmed that the RSN is supporting this campaign and recently contacted members regarding this issue and were hoping for positive responses.

13 Rural Services Network Events

Graham Biggs outlined future Rural Services Network Events. He asked colleagues to note that the theme for the Rural Conference, being held on 5/6 September in Cheltenham, had been changed to Rural Economy due to an event re Rural Health being held by LGA and Public Health England the week following the conference. Members noted the revised proposed agenda.

Feedback from the recent Rural Health Conference had been good with another hoped for next year. Although there had been a small loss after overheads it had been a good opportunity for networking.

Members noted arrangements for the Rural Housing Conference organised by the National Housing Federation to be held on 7 July in St Martin in the Fields, London. More details to follow in due course

14 Report on the RSP Service Groups

The Group received verbal updates and discussed relevant issues around the various RSP Service Groups.- Housing-Transport-Crime- Fire- Health.

15 Any other Business

Any other Business – There was no other business and the meeting was closed.

The next meeting (SPARSE Rural) will be held on Monday 10 July – City of Westminster Archives Centre, London. It was hoped it would largely be in the form of a Seminar.

Appendix A

In attendance

Name	Name
Graham Biggs	RSN
David Inman	RSN
Andy Dean	RSN
Chris Cowcher	ACRE
Jennifer Shaw, Housing Strategy Manager	Ashford Borough Council
Cllr Neil Butters	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Brian Wilson	Brian Wilson Associates
Dan Reynolds, Director South East	British Association for Shooting & Conservation
Cllr Geraldine Carter	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Paul Diviani	East Devon District Council
Steve Blatch, Corporate Director	North Norfolk District Council
Cllr Malcolm Leeding MBE	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils
Cllr Yvonne Peacock	Richmondshire District Council
Ian Hunter	Rural Cultural Forum

Cllr Cameron Clark	Sevenoaks District Council
Cllr Michael Hicks	South Hams District Council
Cllr Jeremy Savage	South Norfolk Council
Cllr Peter Stevens	St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Cllr Jane March	Tunbridge Wells District Council
Cllr Owen Bierley	West Lindsey District Council
Ian Knowles, Director of Resources	West Lindsey District Council

Apologies received

Name	Organisation
Cllr Cecilia Motley	RSN
Cllr Robert Heseltine	RSN
Cllr Derek Haley	RSN
Kerry Booth, Assistant Chief Executive	RSN
Karen Henriksen CPFA	Derbyshire Dales District Council
Cllr Eddie Tomlinson	Durham County Council
Cllr Mrs I Seccombe	Warwickshire County Council
Phil Kirby, Chief Executive	Broadland Council
Lesley Tucker	Teignbridge District Council
Terry Collins, Chief Executive	Durham County Council
Cllr Roy Miller	Barnsley Council
Cllr Adam Paynter	Cornwall Council
Cllr Martin Gannon	Gateshead Council
Peter Shipp	EYMS Group Ltd
Cllr Dr Ken Pollock	Worcestershire County Council
John Birtwistle, Head of Policy	UK Bus
Cllr Brian Long	Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Judith Weaver	Stroud District Council
Cllr Bob Adams	South Kesteven District Council
Cllr Lewis Strange	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Mrs Diana Holl-Allen	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Suzanne Clear	National Farmers Union
Cllr Michael Rickman	Harborough District Council
Cllr Andre Gonzalez De Savage	Northamptonshire County Council
Kate Cross	Citizens Advice
Cllr Richard Sherras	Ribble Valley Borough Council
Cllr Gary Sumner	Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Samantha Dixon	Cheshire West & Chester Council

Neil Duncan-Jordan	National Pensioners Convention
Cllr David Ireton	Craven District Council
Cllr Louise Gittins	Cheshire West & Chester Council
Cllr Peter Thornton	South Lakeland District Council
Cllr Glynn Gilfoyle	Nottinghamshire County Council
Jenny Poole	Cotswold District Council
Cllr Les Kew	Bath & North East Somerset Council
David Henley, Principal	Easton & Otley College
Lianna Etkind	Campaign for Better Transport
Angela Kitching	Age UK
Hannah Pearce	Age UK
Stewart Horne	Business Information Point
Jill Penn, Head of Finance	Broadland District Council
Debbie Lindon, Divisional Coordinator	Age UK
Cllr Baroness Redfern	North Lincolnshire Council
Claire Walters, Chief Executive	Bus Users UK
Nic Millington FRSA, Chief Executive	Rural Media
Jo Lancaster , Chief Executive	Huntingdonshire Council
Cllr Simon Edwards	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Paul Fitzgerald	South Somerset District Council
Cllr Kevin Barker	Wakefield Council
Katherine Steel, Assistant Director	Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils
Cllr Hugh McCarthy	Wycombe District Council
William Benson, Chief Executive	Tunbridge Wells Council
Matt Prosser, Chief Executive	North Dorset District Council
Cllr Adrian Hardman	Worcestershire Council
Cllr Margaret Squires	Mid Devon District Council
Cllr Sue Sanderson	Cumbria County Council
Cllr Gordon Nicolson OBE	Eden District Council
Cllr John Clarke	Gedling Borough Council

Cllr Gwilym Butler	Shropshire Council
Duncan Ellis, Head of Finance	North Norfolk District Council
Cllr Elizabeth Sneath	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Neil Butters	Bath & North East Somerset Council

MINUTES OF THE SPARSE RURAL AND RURAL SERVICES NETWORK EXECUTIVE AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE RURAL SERVICES PARTNERSHIP LTD MEETING, MONDAY 25th SEPTEMBER 2017 HELD AT CITY OF WESTMINSTER ARCHIVES CENTRE, 10 ST ANN'S STREET, LONDON

Present: - Cllr Cecilia Motley (Chair), Revd Richard Kirlaw (RSP Chair - Community), Cllr Robert Heseltine (First Vice Chair), Cllr Peter Stevens (Vice Chair – East) Cllr Philip Sanders (Vice Chair – County 2), Cllr Janet Duncton (Vice Chair – South East)

Officers: - Graham Biggs MBE (Chief Executive), David Inman (Director) Andy Dean (Assistant Director)

1. **Apologies:-** Georgina Fung (UK Youth), Stewart Horne (Federation of Small Businesses), John Birtwistle (First Group), Cllr Peter Thornton (Vice Chair – Without Portfolio), Cllr Kevin Beaty (Vice Chair – North), Cllr Adam Paynter (Vice Chair – South West), Cllr Derrick Haley (Vice Chair – Without Portfolio) Cllr Sue Sanderson (Vice Chair – Without Portfolio), Cllr Roger Phillips – Vice Chair Without Portfolio)
2. **Notes of Previous Executive Meeting – 12th June 2017**
Agreed as a correct record.
3. **Notes of Last Main SPARSE Meeting – 27th June 2017**
Agreed as a correct record with Cllr Sander's name corrected.
4. **Constitution of RSN Executive**

It was reported that both Cllrs Beaty and Phillips had accepted the invitation to be members of the Executive.

It was agreed Cllr Gill Heath (Staffordshire) would be invited to become a Vice Chair representing Counties)

In the light of the above it was decided the Chair would in future be 'without area or authority type' as the Chair. Cllr Roger Phillips (Herefordshire) would come on to the Executive to represent the West Midlands as the area Vice Chair and Cllr Gill Heath (Staffordshire) would be come on to be County (2) Chair.

5. Rural Conference

Numbers attending had been down this year but a financial break even, or very small surplus, was anticipated. Feedback had come from 11 people to date with a 70% 'Fairly' or 'Totally' Satisfied return. There was, however, an overall feeling that more learning could be incorporated and that the Conference content had not totally married with economic development titling.

It was felt that, to promote the RSN's 'ownership' of the Conference, RSN Officers should be more involved in the day with Ivan Annibal perhaps just invited to deal with the Panel discussion item.

The need to avoid politics being overlaid in presentations in items was noted.

The separate reception event should it was felt should be continued either at the Queens Hotel or elsewhere in central Cheltenham.

It was decided that a programme for 2018 would be looked at by the Executive in January.

The Director said that, as a number of members had suggested, an approach had been made to The Big Lottery offering RSN's assistance as an organisation 'gateway' in helping the Lottery show their new innovative approach at a grass roots level. It was agreed dialogue should continue with the BIG Lottery on that basis.

6. Rural Fair Share Group and the Needs Formula Review

Graham Biggs detailed the position. Steve Double was the new Chair, taking over from James Heapey who was now a P.P.S. Conservative MPs had been asked by Steve Double to write to Conservative Leaders in their constituencies with a questionnaire on the impact of cuts in government grant. This had gone out on the 18th August. RSN had recently chased this up with the Authorities involved and hoped to also be able to compile the information fed back. Steve Double was pressing Ministers for the Transitional Relief to be extended

The Fair Share Group agreed the Needs Formula Review which was on-going was extremely important and had asked to be kept informed.

Graham circulated and commented on a work which had been commissioned from Pixel – utilising the remainder of the voluntary contributions income gained last year.

7. National Rural Crime Network

The Network had decided to take in house the administrative work the RSN had previously been undertaking under a Service Level Agreement. RSN had bid for a Publicity and PR Brief which NRCN had advertised but had not been successful on this occasion. There had been previous talk of Graham being offered a position on the NRCN Executive. If the offer came, the Executive were happy for Graham, as Chief Executive, to accept this role and RSN would meet his travelling costs involved.

8. Report on Membership

Membership was currently at 148 members but for the first time there had been a range of members wishing to leave to save money in their budgets. David Inman outlined the position:

- (a) Two Counties had withdrawn their decision to leave and the position across Shire Counties was now actually quite strong.
- (b) All other Authorities which had been looking to withdraw had now been contacted, asking for detailed discussions. The position was most difficult with regard to Rural Assembly Authorities and the Executive acknowledged, that this as the newest service was the one requiring the most work.

The Executive then considered three reports on suggested changes prepared by the Director which it was hoped may assist demonstrate the RSN's value to its members:-

After detailed discussion it was decided that as a means of greater involvement by the RSN membership to recommend to the A.G.M.

(1) Regional Seminars/Meetings

- (a) The current seminar system would be replaced with six 'regional' Meeting/seminar sessions across all regions (SW,W Midlands, E Midlands, Yorkshire, North East and North West. There would however not be one in the South East as London was more accessible to events there.
- (b) Specific invites would go out to the member authorities in the area being:-
- (1) Nominated representatives on RSN (Member and Officer),
 - (2) Members representing rural wards; and
 - (3) The appropriate Portfolio Holder (dependent on discussion topic) of member Authorities in that region.
- (c) This proposal would be worked up as a detailed report to the AGM and sent by e mail to the Executive for approval

(2) Cabinet Portfolio Holders/Lead Members

The Community, the Health and the Economic Development Port Folio Holders (or their representative) would each be invited to attend two specific meetings per year. The Community and the Health Portfolio Holders would be invited to the Social Care and Health Group which included Rural Vulnerability considerations and the Economic Development Port Folio Holders would be invited to a new Economic Development Sub Group. Both of these meetings would be before the Rural Assembly meeting and the Sparse Rural Meeting respectively.

This it was hoped would enable better understanding and responsiveness of the RSN to these key issues in both its Representational Role and in the sharing of Best Practice

(3) Specific Member Support

- All Authorities would in future all be asked to appoint nominated Councillors for RSN meetings, Sounding Boards and hopefully the virtual Rural Parliament work as it was established.
- The 'Rural' Councillors would be identified in each member Authority and they would be invited to the Regional Meeting/Seminars and invited to be involved in one Sounding Board exercises each year.
- There would be a special briefing paper three times a year for all of the nominated Councillors.

(4) Fact Sheet for any Relevant Rural/Scrutiny member Authority meeting.

In case Member Authorities want to have specific focused meetings on their rural problems, it was suggested a fact sheet for each individual member be prepared and sent out to each Member Authority once a year. An example of such a sheet would be prepared for the next Executive meeting in January to consider and if felt satisfied ratify.

9. Report on Subscriptions

The principle (agreed in 2016) that member subscriptions should tally to enable the maintenance of the current intended viable operational budget produced a

membership sheet for 2018/19 with individual authority breakdowns. This was circulated and agreed in principle by the meeting. The position changed week by week however and an up to date version would be prepared for the Annual Meeting and passed over the Executive by email ahead of agenda circulation.

10. Budget

The current budget paper was circulated and agreed including some changes in operational practice set out in the report.

11. Brexit Update

Graham Biggs and Andy Dean updated the Executive both verbally and through a written paper. The BREXIT Rural Roundtable, initiated by the RSN, was meeting the following Friday

12. A schedule of foreseen meeting dates was circulated. It was decided to bring the 2018 AGM forward to the 12th of November to avoid clashing with the CCN Conference.

13. Work with TRIG

It was decided to work with this group on BREXIT and other broader matters (but not on their 'day to day' work which was considered to be specialist) where appropriate to marry well with the RSN overall agenda.

14. Parliamentary Groups

The Director detailed the initiative to establish Rural Action across Parliament. The Commons Rural Fair Share Group (about Rural 40 MPs) had been re-established and it was hoped to establish a similarly sized Rural Vulnerability Matters Group shortly in the New Year. A cross party Rural House of Lords Group had just been established with all 12 Lords invited accepting and this group would meet for the first time in December.

RURAL SERVICES NETWORK

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE 25TH SEPTEMBER, 2017

LEVEL OF MEMBER CONTRIBUTION 2018/19 TO 2021/22

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 This time last year the Executive at a “Blue Skies Meeting” considered at length a report on the Future Direction of the RSN.

1.2 Part of that consideration was the level of member contribution, or charge, needed to be made from 2017/18 to 2021/22 to sustain the organisation and to ensure that, in its member’s interest, it had the capacity to do all that was asked of it. The resultant increases, it was agreed, would be phased in over the four year period.

1.3 Prior to 2017/18 mostly all authorities, irrespective of size, paid the same fee. Counties and Districts were the same (only the Unitaries created in 2009 paid a greater sum). From 2017/18 the intention was to make the proposed charging system more equitable to allow for size of authority and to also allow for the changing shape of authorities over the next few years.

1.4 The formula recommended by the Executive, and approved at the subsequent RSN AGM, was based not on a set level subscription but on the relevant percentage of the costs necessary to operate the group. That operating cost was set at £340k (by 2021/22). This was determined as a fixed cost. Therefore, it would get lower per member if we achieved greater membership as the percentage share would decrease. Conversely -- if we lost subscribing members, the cost to remaining members would have to increase.

1.5 The formula adopted was one based on a standard charge of £1,500 plus a relatively small amount (less than a penny) per rural resident in each members’ area to achieve the balance required. Caps were also introduced on the amount payable of £3,000 for two tier authorities and £6,000 for single tier Unitary Councils (or for newly created ‘super two tier Districts or Counties’ should their normally calculated charges under the formula adopted be above those figures.

1.6. Very regrettably, as reported elsewhere on this Agenda, some 9 Authorities have, this year, served notice of withdrawal. The withdrawal dates vary dependant on the date notice was served on us - as the RSN Constitution requires a full 12 months’

notice expiring 31st March. We will, of course, seek dialogue with those seeking to withdraw and try to persuade them to reverse their decision – we feel there is a particularly strong case where the authority concerned gains from our financial representational role.

1.7 Unfortunately, the consequence of the withdrawals (especially given the number involved) is to increase future charge costs to the remaining membership in accordance with the agreed policy set out in paragraph 1.4 above

1.8 This report makes recommendations as to the required revised level of charge from 2018/19 to 2021/22.

1.9. Of course, if we are successful in getting any of the withdrawals from membership revoked, the required increases will be reduced accordingly and a recalculation carried out by the AGM (using the recommended new formula, if approved).

2.0. REVISING THE CHARGING STRUCTURE

2.1 In all we have considered seven different methods of revising the charging formula so that the most equitable change for all types (and sizes) of authority can be achieved.

2.2 **The revised charges recommended are set out in the Appendix to this report.** For each year concerned, each authority in membership is listed, and the headings in the Appendix show REPORT (being last year's report) PREDICTED (being the amount now recommended) and Difference (being the amount by which the charge is increased each year if our recommendation in this report is accepted.

2.3 The suggested changes to the formula to give the results shown in the Appendix are:-

- Ø The predicted subs for Assembly members under the new formula start at £600 in 2018/19, and are increased yearly by £50 to bring them to £750 in 2021/22. The report initially had them set at £535 in 2018/19, and increased them by £20 yearly.
- Ø The predicted subs for SPARSE-RURAL members are calculated in the same way as had been previously used in last year's report, on an initial contribution of £1500 per authority, with (a small) additional amount added that is related to the specific authority's rural population. Unitary authorities continue to be subject to a double weighting to their rural populations over that of district and county authorities.
- Ø Last year's report set maximum charges of £6000 and £3000 for unitary authorities and district/county authorities respectively. In contrast to the report, the charges under the recommended new formula, increase the maximum

charges, starting at £6200 and £3100 in 2018/19. The increase has been set at £100 and £50 per year respectively, resulting in new maximum levels of £6500 and £3250 by 2021/22

3.0 RECOMMENDATION.

3.1. That the Executive approves the new formula and resultant increases in membership charges from 2018/19 as a recommendation to the next RSN AGM.

		REPORT 2018/19 Sub	PREDICTED 2018/19 - Sub	difference	REPORT 2019/20 Sub	PREDICTED 2019/20 - Sub	difference	REPORT 2020/21 Sub	PREDICTED 2020/21 - Sub	difference	REPORT 2021/22 Sub	PREDICTED 2021/22 - Sub	difference
Allerdale	SPARSE	2529	2637	108	2683	2900	217	2855	3058	203	3000	3228	228
Ashford	SPARSE	1961	2010	49	2030	2128	97	2107	2198	91	2196	2274	79
Aylesbury Vale		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Babergh	SPARSE	2386	2479	93	2518	2705	187	2666	2841	175	2835	2987	151
Barnsley	ASSEMBLY	535	600	65	555	650	95	575	700	125	595	750	155
Bassetlaw	ASSEMBLY	535	600	65	555	650	95	575	700	125	595	750	155
Bath and North													
East Somerset	ASSEMBLY	539	600	61	559	650	91	579	700	121	599	750	151
Blaby	ASSEMBLY	535	600	65	555	650	95	575	700	125	595	750	155
Boston	SPARSE	1749	1775	26	1786	1838	52	1827	1876	49	1875	1917	43
Bradford			0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0
Braintree	SPARSE	2499	2604	105	2648	2859	211	2815	3012	197	3000	3177	177
Breckland	SPARSE	2893	3039	147	3000	3150	150	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
Broadland		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bromsgrove	ASSEMBLY		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0
Buckinghamshire		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calderdale	ASSEMBLY	535	600	65	555	650	95	575	700	125	595	750	155
Canterbury	ASSEMBLY	535	600	65		0	0		0	0		0	0
Cherwell	SPARSE	539	662	123		0	0		0	0		0	0
Cheshire East	SPARSE	4599	4925	326	5061	5716	654	5579	6191	613	6000	6500	500
Cheshire West and													
Chester	SPARSE		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0
Chichester	SPARSE	2278	2359	82	2394	2558	164	2523	2677	154	2672	2805	133
Chorley	ASSEMBLY	535	600	65	555	650	95	575	700	125	595	750	155
Copeland	SPARSE	1800	2333	533	1800	2525	725	1800	2641	841	1800	2765	965
Cornwall	SPARSE	6000	6200	200	6000	6300	300	6000	6400	400	6000	6500	500
Cotswold	SPARSE	2385	2478	93	2517	2703	187	2664	2839	175	2834	2985	151
County Durham	SPARSE	6000	6200	200	6000	6300	300	6000	6400	400	6000	6500	500
Craven	SPARSE	2011	2064	54	2087	2195	108	2172	2273	101	2270	2357	87
Cumbria	SPARSE	3000	3100	100	3000	3150	150	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
Dartford	ASSEMBLY		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0
Daventry	SPARSE	2282	2364	82	2399	2564	165	2529	2684	155	2679	2813	134
Derbyshire	SPARSE	539	662	123	559	767	208	579	801	222	599	837	238
Derbyshire Dales	SPARSE	2259	2339	80	2372	2533	160	2499	2649	150	2644	2774	130
Devon	SPARSE	3000	3100	100	3000	3150	150	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
Dorset	SPARSE	3000	3100	100	3000	3150	150	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
Dover		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

		REPORT 2018/19 Sub	PREDICTED 2018/19 - Sub	difference	REPORT 2019/20 Sub	PREDICTED 2019/20 - Sub	difference	REPORT 2020/21 Sub	PREDICTED 2020/21 - Sub	difference	REPORT 2021/22 Sub	PREDICTED 2021/22 - Sub	difference
East													
Cambridgeshire	SPARSE	2395	2489	94	2528	2717	189	2677	2854	177	2849	3002	153
East Devon	SPARSE	2546	2656	110	2702	2923	221	2877	3084	207	3000	3250	250
East Hampshire		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Hertfordshire	SPARSE	1933	1979	46	1998	2089	91	2070	2156	86	2153	2227	74
East Lindsey	SPARSE	2956	3100	144	3000	3150	150	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
East													
Northamptonshire	SPARSE	2034	2090	56	2114	2227	113	2203	2309	106	2306	2397	91
East Riding of Yorkshire	SPARSE	5779	6200	421	6000	6300	300	6000	6400	400	6000	6500	500
East Sussex	SPARSE	3000	3100	100	3000	3150	150	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
Eden	SPARSE	2061	2120	59	2145	2263	118	2238	2349	111	2346	2442	96
Essex	SPARSE	3000	3100	100	3000	3150	150	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
Fenland	SPARSE		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0
Forest Heath	SPARSE	2138	2205	67	2233	2367	135	2339	2465	126	2462	2571	109
Forest of Dean	SPARSE	2334	2422	88	2458	2635	176	2598	2763	165	2758	2900	143
Gateshead	ASSEMBLY	535	600	65	555	650	95	575	700	125	595	750	155
Gedling	ASSEMBLY	535	600	65	555	650	95	575	700	125	595	750	155
Guildford	ASSEMBLY	535	600	65	555	650	95	575	700	125	595	750	155
Hambleton	SPARSE	2451	2552	100	2593	2794	201	2752	2940	188	2935	3097	163
Hampshire	SPARSE	3000	3100	100	3000	3150	150	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
Harborough	SPARSE	2357	2447	90	2485	2666	181	2628	2797	169	2792	2938	146
Harrogate	SPARSE	2229	2305	77	2337	2491	154	2459	2603	144	2599	2723	125
Herefordshire, County of	SPARSE	4076	4347	271	4460	5004	544	4890	5399	509	5384	5824	440
Hinckley and Bosworth	ASSEMBLY	539	600	61	559	650	91	579	700	121	599	750	151
Horsham	SPARSE	2349	2438	89		0	0		0	0		0	0
Huntingdonshire	SPARSE	539	662	123	559	767	208	579	801	222	599	837	238
Isle of Wight	SPARSE	3280	3280	0	3280	3280	0	3280	3280	0	3280	3280	0
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	SPARSE	2542	2652	110	2698	2918	220	2872	3078	206	3000	3250	250
Lancashire	SPARSE	3000	3100	100	3000	3150	150	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
Lancaster	ASSEMBLY	535	600	65	555	650	95	575	700	125	595	750	155
Leicestershire	SPARSE	500	535	35	500	555	55	500	575	75	500	595	95
Lewes	SPARSE	1923	1967	45	1986	2075	89	2057	2140	84	2138	2210	72

		REPORT 2018/19 Sub	PREDICTED 2018/19 - Sub	difference	REPORT 2019/20 Sub	PREDICTED 2019/20 - Sub	difference	REPORT 2020/21 Sub	PREDICTED 2020/21 - Sub	difference	REPORT 2021/22 Sub	PREDICTED 2021/22 - Sub	difference
Lichfield	SPARSE	1817	1851	33	1864	1931	67	1917	1980	63	1978	2032	54
Lincolnshire	SPARSE	3000	3100	100	3000	3150	150	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
Maldon	SPARSE		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0
Malvern Hills	SPARSE	1917	1961	44	1980	2068	88	2049	2132	82	2129	2201	71
Melton	SPARSE	2038	2094	57	2118	2231	113	2208	2314	106	2311	2403	92
Mendip	SPARSE	2666	2789	123	2840	3087	246	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
Mid Devon	SPARSE	2330	2417	87	2454	2629	175	2592	2756	164	2751	2893	142
Mid Suffolk	SPARSE	2511	2617	106	2662	2875	213	2830	3030	200	3000	3197	197
Mid Sussex	SPARSE	539	662	123	559	767	208	579	801	222	599	837	238
New Forest	SPARSE	2353	2443	90	2480	2660	180	2623	2791	169	2786	2932	146
Newark and Sherwood	SPARSE	2026	2292	266	2026	2474	448	2026	2584	558	2026	2702	676
Norfolk	SPARSE	3000	3100	100	3000	3150	150	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
North Devon	SPARSE	2162	2232	70	2261	2401	140	2372	2503	131	2499	2612	113
North Dorset	SPARSE	2232	2309	77	2341	2496	154	2463	2608	145	2604	2729	125
North Kesteven	SPARSE	2145	2525	380	2145	2762	617	2145	2904	759	2145	3057	912
North Lincolnshire	SPARSE	3131	3303	172	3374	3719	344	3647	3969	322	3959	4238	279
North Norfolk	SPARSE	2583	2697	114	2745	2974	229	2926	3140	214	3000	3250	250
North Somerset	SPARSE	3182	3359	177	3433	3788	355	3713	4046	332	4036	4323	287
North Warwickshire	SPARSE	2108	2172	64	2199	2328	128	2301	2421	120	2417	2521	104
North West Leicestershire	SPARSE	2079	2140	61	2165	2288	122	2262	2376	114	2373	2472	99
North Yorkshire	SPARSE	3000	3100	100	3000	3150	150	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
Northamptonshire	SPARSE	300	300	0	300	300	0	300	300	0	300	300	0
Northumberland	SPARSE	6000	6200	200	6000	6300	300	6000	6400	400	6000	6500	500
Nottinghamshire	SPARSE	3000	3100	100	3000	3150	150	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
Oxfordshire	ASSEMBLY	515	600	85	515	650	135	515	700	185	515	750	235
Purbeck	SPARSE	1902	1944	42	1962	2046	85	2029	2108	79	2106	2174	69
Redcar and Cleveland	ASSEMBLY		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0
Ribble Valley	SPARSE	2067	2126	60	2151	2271	120	2246	2358	112	2355	2452	97
Richmondshire	SPARSE	2055	2113	58	2137	2254	117	2230	2340	110	2336	2431	95
Rother	SPARSE	2006	2059	53	2082	2188	107	2166	2266	100	2263	2350	87
Rotherham	ASSEMBLY	535	600	65	555	650	95	575	700	125	595	750	155
Rugby	SPARSE	1759	1786	27	1798	1852	55	1841	1892	51	1890	1935	44

		REPORT 2018/19 Sub	PREDICTED 2018/19 - Sub	difference	REPORT 2019/20 Sub	PREDICTED 2019/20 - Sub	difference	REPORT 2020/21 Sub	PREDICTED 2020/21 - Sub	difference	REPORT 2021/22 Sub	PREDICTED 2021/22 - Sub	difference
Rutland	SPARSE	2298	2382	84	2417	2585	168	2550	2708	158	2703	2839	136
Ryedale	SPARSE	2052	2110	58	2135	2251	117	2227	2336	109	2333	2427	94
Scarborough	SPARSE	2002	2055	53	2077	2183	106	2161	2260	99	2257	2343	86
Sedgemoor	SPARSE	2282	2365	82	2399	2564	165	2530	2685	155	2680	2814	134
Selby	SPARSE	2369	2461	91	2499	2682	183	2644	2816	172	2811	2959	149
Sevenoaks	SPARSE	2369	2460	91	2499	2682	183	2644	2815	172	2810	2959	149
Shepway	SPARSE	1943	1990	47	2010	2103	94	2084	2171	88	2168	2244	76
Shropshire	SPARSE	6000	6200	200	6000	6300	300	6000	6400	400	6000	6500	500
Solihull	ASSEMBLY	535	600	65	555	650	95	575	700	125	595	750	155
Somerset	SPARSE	3000	3100	100	3000	3150	150	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
South													
Cambridgeshire	SPARSE	2715	2843	128	2896	3150	254	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
South Derbyshire	SPARSE	539	662	123	559	767	208	579	801	222	599	837	238
South Hams	SPARSE	2326	2413	87	2450	2624	174	2588	2751	163	2746	2887	141
South Holland	SPARSE	2105	2169	64	2195	2323	128	2296	2416	120	2412	2516	103
South Kesteven	SPARSE	2460	2561	101	2603	2806	203	2764	2953	190	2948	3112	164
South Lakeland	SPARSE	2606	2723	116	2771	3005	234	2956	3175	219	3000	3250	250
South Norfolk	SPARSE	2648	2769	121	2819	3062	242	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
South													
Northamptonshire	SPARSE		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0
South Oxfordshire	SPARSE	2850	2992	142	3000	3150	150	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
South Somerset	SPARSE	2732	2862	130	2916	3150	234	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
South Staffordshire	SPARSE	540	663	123	560	768	208	580	802	222	600	838	238
St Edmundsbury	SPARSE	2228	2304	77	2336	2490	154	2458	2602	144	2597	2722	124
Stafford	SPARSE	2103	2167	63	2193	2320	127	2294	2413	119	2409	2512	103
Staffordshire	SPARSE	3000	3100	100		0	0		0	0		0	0
Stratford-On-Avon	SPARSE	2782	2917	135	2974	3150	176	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
Stroud	SPARSE	2006	2059	53	2081	2188	107	2166	2266	100	2263	2349	86
Suffolk	SPARSE	3000	3100	100	3000	3150	150	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
Suffolk Coastal	SPARSE	2414	2510	96	2550	2743	193	2703	2884	181	2878	3034	156
Sunderland	ASSEMBLY	535	600	65	555	650	95	575	700	125	595	750	155
Surrey	ASSEMBLY	535	600	65	555	650	95	575	700	125	595	750	155
Swindon	ASSEMBLY		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0
Tandridge	SPARSE	539	662	123	559	767	208	579	801	222	599	837	238

		REPORT 2018/19 Sub	PREDICTED 2018/19 - Sub	difference	REPORT 2019/20 Sub	PREDICTED 2019/20 - Sub	difference	REPORT 2020/21 Sub	PREDICTED 2020/21 - Sub	difference	REPORT 2021/22 Sub	PREDICTED 2021/22 - Sub	difference
Taunton Deane	SPARSE	1986	2038	51	2059	2162	103	2140	2236	96	2233	2316	83
Teignbridge	SPARSE	2431	2529	98	2570	2766	196	2725	2909	184	2904	3063	159
Telford and Wrekin	ASSEMBLY	535	600	65	555	650	95	575	700	125	595	750	155
Tendring	ASSEMBLY		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0
Tewkesbury	SPARSE	1965	2014	49	2034	2132	98	2112	2203	92	2201	2280	79
Torridge	SPARSE	2181	2253	72	2283	2427	144	2397	2531	135	2527	2644	116
Tunbridge Wells	SPARSE	1992	2044	52	2066	2170	104	2148	2245	97	2243	2327	84
Uttlesford	SPARSE	2348	2437	89	2474	2653	179	2616	2784	168	2778	2923	145
Vale of White Horse	SPARSE	2230	2307	77	2339	2493	154	2461	2605	144	2601	2726	125
Wakefield	ASSEMBLY		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0
Warwick	ASSEMBLY	515	600	85		0	0		0	0		0	0
Warwickshire	SPARSE	535	658	123	555	763	208	575	797	222	595	833	238
Waveney	SPARSE	539	662	123	559	767	208	579	801	222	599	837	238
Wealden	SPARSE	2845	2986	142	3000	3150	150	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
Wellingborough		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Berkshire		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Devon	SPARSE	2072	2132	60	2157	2278	121	2252	2365	113	2362	2460	98
West Dorset	SPARSE	2498	2603	105	2647	2858	211	2814	3011	197	3000	3176	176
West Lindsey	SPARSE	2447	2547	100	2589	2789	200	2747	2934	187	2928	3090	162
West Oxfordshire	SPARSE	2618	2736	118	2785	3021	236	2972	3193	221	3000	3250	250
West Somerset	SPARSE	1870	1909	39	1925	2003	78	1987	2060	73	2058	2121	63
West Sussex	SPARSE	3000	3100	100	3000	3150	150	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
Winchester		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Worcestershire	SPARSE	535	658	123	555	763	208	575	797	222	595	833	238
Wychavon	SPARSE	2722	2851	129	2904	3150	246	3000	3200	200	3000	3250	250
Wycombe	ASSEMBLY	535	600	65		0	0		0	0		0	0
Wyre Forest		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
York	ASSEMBLY	535	600	65	555	650	95	575	700	125	595	750	155
		289964	303730		292966	315606		303301	327482		313440	339358	

RURAL SERVICES NETWORK

EXECUTIVE 25TH SEPTEMBER, 2017

BUDGET 2017/18 AND FUTURE YEARS

Attached as Appendix A is the budget report for 2017/18 – with Actual to end of August – and estimate 2018/19 in the usual format.

Attached as Appendix B is a budget report looking at the budget right through to 2023/24 (5 years away). This is presented in a different format.

Instead of the balance brought forward being the first entry and therefore included as Total Income it now appears at the end so that the difference between what is estimated to be raised in any year and the amount of expenditure estimated for that year can be clearly seen.

We have taken the budget through to 2023/24 so that it goes beyond the date which **may** apply to both the Chief Executive and Corporate Director leaving the organisation. In this estimated budget their remuneration has been removed from the budget in 2022/23 and a new salary at £83000 p.a. added for a full time post. We think it is important to be assured that, as far as can be seen so far in advance, that the budget does stack up.

On the income side we have assumed that the recommendations we are making regarding future member contributions are accepted for the purpose of this budget. We have not assumed any new income from membership which is somewhat negative thinking; however any additional income from those sources from local authority members should just serve to reduce contributions from existing members.

It includes the budget for the new appointee discussed at the last meeting.

We have become concerned about the sustainability of the way we deal with people who work for us in the Devon Office for PAYE purposes. If we were to be subject to an HMRC inspection we believe, and we have consulted the Company's Tax Accountants on this point, HMRC would say we should treat quite a few of the people who work for us (full or part time) as employees for tax and national insurance purposes. We have therefore taken the opportunity to build Employers National Insurance and Workplace Pension Employers costs into this budget from 6th April, 2018 when the new appointee will join us.

We have also incorporated an allowance for both a general provision for inflation and additionally for "employee costs". We stress these are provisions and we have no idea what inflation costs will be in future years.

CONCLUSION

The estimated budget to 2023/24 does “stack up”. By 2022/23 more is being spent each year than is being generated. In 2023/24 £9164 is taken from balances – this still leaves a balance of £23894 which is capable of funding a further 2 years in full.

There is no room in the budget for any additional costs

Many, many things will change over the 5 year period and we do believe the budget should be accepted and monitored so that if change looks to be needed there is time to do so over a period and avoid a need for “emergency action”.

RSN (INCOME & EXPENDITURE) 2017/18 WITH							
ACTUAL TO END SEPTEMBER							
NB RED FIGURES IN ESTIMATES COLUMNS ARE RECOMMENDED CHANGES SINCE LAST BUDGET REPORT							
				ACTUAL	ACTUAL TO	ESTIMATE	
				2016/17	END	2017/18	
					SEPTEMBER		
INCOME				£	£	£	
Balances at Bank B/Fwd net of o/s cheques				12304			
GENERAL BALANCE						13755	
VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS BALANCE						8500	
DEBTORS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR (NET OF VAT)							
Rural Assembly held by NKDC at year end					2873	2873	
Rural Assembly Outstanding					745	745	
RSP Subscriptions					990	990	
Rural Crime Network			8012		5918	5918	
Rural Health Conference					175	175	
Housing Group Related			1100				
Coastal Communities Alliance (Gross)			1037		1037	1037	
Fire Group			100				
RHA Website Development Contributions			1300				
Subscriptions							
SPARSE Rural/Rural Assembly			252155		237644	280136	
SPARSE/RA subs held by NKDC at month end					12885		
2016 VOLUNTARY CONTRIBS re BUSINESS RATES			51713				
CCN Contrib to Finance Study			3863				
RSP			10042		8689	10642	
Commercial Partner First Group Buses			10000			10000	

				ACTUAL TO END MARCH £	ACTUAL TO END SEPTEMBER £	ESTIMATE 2017/18 £		
Subscriptions from Rural Health Group								
Income from Rural Housing Group				6895	6150	7390		
Income from Fire & Rescue Group				2480	1985	2480		
OTHER INCOME								
Conferences/Seminars								
Rural Conference Income				16365	8644			
Rural Conference Surplus						5000		
Rural Health Conference				4214				
Service Level Agreements								
Recharges ro Rural Crime Network (5 months 17/18)				20833	4063	4063		
Contras re RCN@				34642	1895			
Recharges to Rural England CIC Back Office Support (£1200)				1200		1200		
Recharges to Rural England re AMAZON Contract						3500		
Recharges to Rural England re Elec NW Commission						1375		
Coastal Communities Alliance (Gross)				3113	1037	4149		
Contributions to RHA Website Development				450		800		
Miscellaneous								
Contras				2605	662			
VAT								
VAT Refund				20337	8504			
VAT Received				11823	5841			
TOTAL INCOME				476583	309737	364728		

				ACTUAL TO END MARCH £	ACTUAL TO END SEPTEMBER £	ESTIMATE 2017/18 £		
EXPENDITURE								
VAT Paid on Goods & Services				33029	10728			
CONTRACTS FOR SERVICES ACTIVITY BREAKDOWN (EST)								
Corporate Management		DI,GCB, & AD1 100%. KB 40%	58259	35557	70447			
Finance/Performance and Data Analy		, DW, 100%, KB 20%	28835	15028	29456			
Communications (incl Seminars)		Rose Regen,JT, AD3 100%	8010	3765	8570			
Additional Comms Activity by RuralCity Media				1441	5013			
Administrative and Technical Support		RI, WI,WC,BA,MB 100%	47464	23472	50156			
Research and Monitoring		BW, JH, 100%	11837	2544	11843			
Service Group Networking		KB40%	8181	4216	8540			
Economic Development Service		AD5 100%	5000	2550	5100			
Coastal Communities Contract			3650	1825	3650			
Rural Health Network			750					
Rural Crime Network			20200					
Rural Communities Housing Group		AD2 100%	6500	3315	6630			
Rural Transport Group		AD6 100%	2000	1020	2040			
OTHER EXPENDITURE								
Budget for Brexit Project				684	7000			
Communications Strategy Support			4800					
Rural Fair Shares/Business Rates "Campaigns"								
Rural Fair Shares Campaign etc.			9500		9500			
Pixell Financial Service (core Annual Service)			10500	956	10500			
Fair Sharesand Other Campaign Media Relations					2500			
SPEND FROM VOLUNTARY CONTRIBS (BUSINESS RATES)				49563	3691	8500		

				ACTUAL TO END MARCH £	ACTUAL TO END SEPTEMBER £	ESTIMATE 2017/18 £		
Conferences/Seminars								
Rural Conference				11398				
Rural Conference 2017				474	2981			
Rural Conference Drinks Reception				1144	1300	1300		
Rural Health Network & Conference				4872				
Seminar Costs				861	680	800		
Service Level Agreements								
RCN -CONTRAS @				33898	1425			
RCN Non Recoverable Travel & Subsistence				1027				
Rural Housing Group (RHG)				2050	647	1600		
RHG Website Maint					45	408		
Rural England CIC to re-charge)				977	227			
Rural Inland CIC transfer of part of First Group Support				7000		7000		
APPG/Rural Issues Group Costs				579	462	1000		
Parlia. Rural Vulnerability Group					199			
Rural England/Vulnerability Service Contrib				3000		3000		
Business Expenses								
RSN Online etc.				19927	4523	18239		
Database Update (media contrcts)				2235				
Website Upgrade					2850	5350		
Ongoing Website Updates								
Travel and Subsistence				18509	7817	18000		
Print, Stat,e mail, phone & Broadband@				4015	1815	3800		
Meeting Room Hire				1643	1814	2300		
Website and Data Base software etc				3627	1842	4000		
Rent of Devon Office & Associated Costs				4597	3010	8800		
Accountancy Fees				720	392	750		
NKDC Services				2128		2145		
Companies House Fees				13	13	13		
Bank Charges				84	38	90		
IT Equipment &Support & Other Capital				985	75	1000		
Insurance				567		600		
Corporation Tax				72		376		
Membership of Rural Coalition				200		200		
Refunds of Overpayments/ Contras@				1439	662			

				ACTUAL TO END MARCH £	ACTUAL TO END SEPTEMBER £	ESTIMATE 2017/18 £		
ARREARS - PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR								
Rural Housing Alliance				2675	792	792		
Contract for Service (ADMIN)				1349	1775	1775		
Contracts for Service (CORP MAN)				2427	1100	1100		
Communications					500	500		
Rose Regeneration				2000	333	333		
Seminars					71	71		
PIXEL					5203	5202		
B Wilson Arrears				3525	3525	3525		
RSN Online arrears				4840	9874	9874		
Travel and Subsistence arrears				675	718	720		
Printing, Phone and Stationery (arrears)				199				
Office Service Charge						5000		
Data base etc (arrears)				355	1130	1129		
Bank Charges				9	8	8		
Rural England				155				
TOTAL EXPENDITURE				454328	168638	350245		
BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD						14483		
BALANCE AT BANK 1/4/16				12304				
ADD INCOME 2016/17				464279				
LESS EXPENDITURE 2016/17				-454328				
BALANCE AT BANK 31/3/17				22255				
GENERAL BALANCE				13755				
VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS BALANCE				8500				

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	RSN (INCOME & EXPENDITURE) 2017/18 AND											
2	ESTIMATES FOR 2017/18 to 2023/24											
3						ESTIMATE	EST	EST	EST	EST	EST	EST
4						2017/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
5	INCOME					£	£	£	£	£	£	£
6	VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS BALANCE B/FWD					8500						
7	DEBTORS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR (NET OF VAT)											
8	Rural Assembly held by NKDC at year end					2873						
9	Rural Assembly Outstanding					745						
10	RSP Subscriptions					990						
11	Rural Crime Network					5918						
12	Rural Health Conference					175						
13	Coastal Communities Alliance (Gross)					1037						
14	Subscriptions											
15	SPARSE Rural/Rural Assembly					280136	303730	315606	327482	339358	346145	353068
16	Ditto Held by NKDC at Month End											
17	RSP					10642	10483	10483	10483	10483	10483	10483
18	Commercial Partner First Group Buses					10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
19						ESTIMATE	EST	EST	EST	EST	EST	EST
20						2017/18	2018/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
21												
22						£	£	£	£	£	£	£
23	Subscriptions from Rural Health Group											
24	Income from Rural Housing Group					7390	7390	7390	7390	7390	7390	7390
25	Income from Fire & Rescue Group					2480	2480	2380	2380	2380	2380	2380
26	OTHER INCOME											
27	Conferences/Seminars											
28	Rural Conference Income											
29	Rural Conference Surplus					5000	5000	5000	5000	5000	5000	5000
30	Rural Health Conference											
31	Service Level Agreements											
32	Recharges ro Rural Crime Network (5 months 17/18)					4063						
33	Contras re RCN@											
34	Recharges to Rural England Back Office Support £1200)					1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200
35	RE recharge re Amazon Contract					3500						
36	RE recharge re Elec NW Commission					1375	1000	2125				
37	Coastal Communities Alliance Gross)					4149	4149	4149	4149	4149	4149	4149
38	Contributions to RHA Website Development/Maintenance					800	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200
39	Miscellaneous											
40	Contras											
41	VAT											
42	VAT Refund											
43	VAT Received											
44	TOTAL INCOME					350973	346632	359533	369284	381160	387947	394870

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
45						ESTIMATE	EST	EST	EST	EST	EST	EST
46						2017/18	2018/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
47	EXPENDITURE					£	£	£	£	£	£	£
48	VAT Paid on Goods & Services											
49	General Provision for Inflation						1000	1100	1200	1300	1400	1500
50	CONTRACTS FOR SERVICES											
51	Corporate Management	£83K SA	DI,GB,AD1100% KB 40			70447	63114	63114	63114	63114	100101	100101
52	Finance/Performance and Data Analy		, DW, 100%, KB 20%			29456	29456	29456	29456	29456	29456	29456
53	Communications (incl Seminars)		RoseR,JT,NP,AD3 100%			8570	8070	8070	8070	8070	8070	8070
54	Additional Comms Activity by RuralCity Media					5013	5763	5763	5763	5763	5763	5763
55	Administrative and Technical Support		RI, WI,WC,BA,MB 100%			50156	50311	50311	50311	50311	50311	50311
56	Research and Monitoring		BW, JH, 100%			11843	11843	11843	11843	11843	11843	11843
57	Service Group Networking		KB40%			8540	8540	8540	8540	8540	8540	8540
58	Economic Development Service		AD5 100%			5100	5100	5100	5100	5100	5100	5100
59	Coastal Communities Contract					3650	3650	3650	3650	3650	3650	3650
60	Rural Crime Network											
61	Rural Communities Housing Group		AD2 100%			6630	6630	6630	6630	6630	6630	6630
62	Rural Transport Group		AD6 100%			2040	2040	2040	2040	2040	2040	2040
63	Provision for Inflation on Contracts (1% p.a.)						1050	1060	1070	1080	1090	1100
64	OTHER EXPENDITURE											
65	Budget for Brexit Project						7000					
66	Rural Fair Shares/Business Rates "Campaigns"											
67	Rural Fair Shares Campaign etc.						9500	9500	9500	9500	9500	9500
68	Pixell Financial Service (core Annual Service)						10500	10500	10500	10500	10500	10500
69	Fair Sharesand Other Campaign Media Relations						2500	2500	2500	4000	4000	4000
70	SPEND FROM VOLCONTRIBS (BUSINESS RATES)						8500					
71	Conferences/Seminars											
72	Rural Conference 2017											
73	Rural Conference Drinks Reception						1300	1300	1300	1300	1300	1300
74	Rural Health Network Conference											
75	Seminar Costs						800	800	800	800	800	800

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
76						ESTIMATE	EST	EST	EST	EST	EST	EST
77						2017/18	2018/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
78												
79	Service Level Agreements					£	£	£	£	£	£	£
80	RCN -CONTRAS @											
81	Rural Housing Group (RHG)					1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800
82	RHG Website Maint					408	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200
83	Rural England CIC to re-charge)											
84	Rural Inland CIC transfer of part of First Group Support					7000	7000	7000	7000	7000	7000	7000
85	APPG/Rural Issues Group Costs					600	600	600	600	600	600	600
86	Rural England/Vulnerability Service Contrib					3000	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
87	Business Expenses											
88	RSN Online etc.					18239	18239	18239	18239	18239	18239	18239
89	Database Update (media contracts)						900	900	900	900	900	900
90	Website Upgrade					5350						
91	Ongoing Website Updates											
92	Travel and Subsistence					18000	18000	18000	18000	18000	18000	18000
93	Print, Stat,e mail, phone & Broadband@					3800	3800	3800	3800	3800	3800	3800
94	Meeting Room Hire					2300	800	800	800	800	800	800
95	Website and Data Base software etc					4000	4000	4000	4000	4000	4000	4000
96	Rent of Devon Office & Associated Costs					9000	9000	9000	9000	9000	9000	9000
97	Accountancy Fees					750	800	800	800	800	800	800
98	NKDC Services					2145	2145	2145	2145	2145	2145	2145
99	Companies House Fees					13	13	13	13	13	13	13
100	Bank Charges					90	90	90	90	90	90	90
101	IT Equipment &Support & Other Capital					1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
102	Insurance					600	650	650	650	650	650	650
103	Corporation Tax					376	300	300	300	300	300	300
104	Membership of Rural Coalition					200	200	200	200	200	200	200
105	Refunds of Overpayments/ Contras@											

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
106						ESTIMATE	EST	EST	EST	EST	EST	EST
107						2017/18	2018/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
108												
109						£	£	£	£	£	£	£
110	ARREARS - PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR											
111	Rural Housing Alliance					792						
112	Contract for Service (ADMIN)					1775	1390	1390	1390	1390	1390	1390
113	Contracts for Service (CORP MAN)					1100						
114	Communications					500						
115	Rose Regeneration					333						
116	PIXELL					5202						
117	Seminar Costs					71						
118	B Wilson Arrears					3525	3525	3525	3525	3525	3525	3525
119	RSN Online arrears					9874						
120	Travel and Subsistence arrears					720	700	700	700	700	700	700
121	Printing, Phone and Stationery (arrears)											
122	Office Service Charge					5000						
123	Data base etc (arrears)					1129						
125	Bank Charges					8	9	9	9	9	9	9
126	Rural England											
127	TOTAL EXPENDITURE					350245	300328	300438	300848	300858	337855	337865
129	ADD FOR NEW APPOINTEE RECRUITMENT/RETENTION						46000	46000	46000	46000	46000	46000
130	ADD FOR EMPLOYERS NI						9000	9090	9181	9273	19684	20323
131	TOTAL REVISED EXPENDITURE					350245	355328	355528	356029	356131	403539	404188
132												
133												
134	TOTAL INCOME					350973	346632	359533	369284	381160	387947	394870
135	LESS TOTAL EXP (INCL NEW APPOINTEE at £35K)					-350245	-355328	-355528	-356029	-356131	-403539	-404188
136	DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IN YEAR INC & EXP					728	-8696	4005	13255	25029	-15592	-9318
137	ADD BALANCES BROUGHT FORWARD					14483	15211	6515	10520	23775	48804	33212
138												
139	BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD					15211	6515	10520	23775	48804	33212	23894
140												

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
141												
142												
143												

REPORT OF THE RSN EXECUTIVE TO THE AGM REGARDING RSN COMBINED SEMINAR AND MEETINGS AT “REGIONAL” LEVEL.

INTRODUCTION

At this enormously difficult time we feel we need to be seen to be giving as much as we possibly can in Services to Members.

This report recommends the introduction of an annual combined Seminar/Rural Assembly Meeting with the aim of encouraging a wider circle of members into more direct involvement with the organisation within their “Regional Area”.

PROPOSALS

The RSN are currently running 4 (free to participants) Seminars a year. These are intended to be regional but there are only 4 meetings and seven regions.

If, then, we are to consider seeking a series of Regional Seminars/Meetings closer to authorities how we would attempt to do that:-

- It is not recommended we lose any of the LGA meetings at this time. Separating out Rural Assembly from Sparse Rural gives only two meetings a year in London for both and we need to retain that number.
- How do we apply the term regional
 - ~ At the moment we have the following through our Vice Chair system. SW, SE, E, West Midlands, N, Yorkshire. (5)
 - ~ In terms of previous Regional Offices Government had it as SW, SE, E Midlands, NW, NE, West Midlands, Yorkshire (7)

Obviously the closer you get to a group of authorities the more potential for individual authority connection and the regional office system seems better but we consider 6 is a maximum we can support.

- It would be unreasonable to expect the Chair to take many more meetings a year. We therefore consider the Vice Chairs, especially the Area Vice Chairs, to be the most appropriate to Chair the events – this would create immediate links back to the Executive.
- ‘Officer’ wise we would deploy, as Lead Officers, for these 6 events:-
 - ~ SW- David Inman
 - ~ West Midlands –Graham Biggs

~ East Midlands- Kerry Booth

~ Yorkshire, NE, NW- all three to Andy Dean as he is located in the north of the country

We have the fewest members in the SE and it is closest in proximity to the London meetings and so, unfortunately, we therefore do not suggest a Regional meeting for the SE at this time.

- We envisage the July SPARSE Rural meeting to also be a Finance Seminar with Finance Directors and Portfolio Holders invited as this year.
- **When would the events be held:-**

~This would be quite open - anytime between the 1st of January and the date of the AGM in November but we would try to avoid dates too close to main meeting dates.
- **Who could attend:-**

~We consider that it is solely RSN members paying a charge to the RSN/RSP. Therefore solely principal local authorities and RSP representatives (initially all RSP members would receive the invitation to each of the events as we do not know their Regional arrangements (if any)
- **Where would the events be:-**

~ We would attempt to use member authority Council Chambers to avoid additional cost.
~We would attempt to vary location within the region from year to year
- **What would the agenda of the meeting and seminar aspects of the event comprise:-**

~these it is suggested would be RSN meetings with Rural Assembly (General Rural) considerations.
~the RSN Chair and the CEO would annually pick the overall format and themes to be considered by the events (meetings and seminars on the same broad topic) based on the RSN agreed priorities. RSN Members in each Region would then be asked for their suggestions as to more precise content. This would have to be carried out well in advance so that speakers/presenters can be arranged
- Where then do the minutes and any recommendations from these events go?

~Unless they are considered to have emergency status they would fall to the RSN

AGM in November. Quite frequently the meeting element of the event would seek to establish a RSN position on certain defined issues.

- The Executive would be given authority to deal with any emergencies arising.
- It is envisaged these Regional events would run 11.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. for the Seminar with the Meeting session 1.p.m. to 3.30/4 p.m. A sandwich lunch would be provided where possible.
- ~ Up to 3 presenters might be involved in the Seminar element – to include from one of the member authorities in that Region, if appropriate.
 - ~ The organisation of the speakers for the seminar would, remain contracted to Ivan Annibal of Rose Regeneration. The events themselves would be led by the RSN Vice Chair and Officer present.
 - ~ We would attempt to have a variation of themes between regional areas so authorities would get varying topics over a 3 year period.
 - ~ although the meeting itself would be restricted to member authorities and RSP members the Seminar session might, if accommodation was considered to be likely to be available, also be available to RSN Community members (from the Regional Area) from either Sparse Rural or Rural Assembly type members.

RECOMMENDATION

That the AGM approves the introduction of such a system as outlined above, at least on a trial basis

Cecilia Motley

RSN Chair.

RSN (INCOME & EXPENDITURE) 2017/18 WITH							
ACTUAL TO END OCTOBER							
NB RED FIGURES IN ESTIMATES COLUMNS ARE RECOMMENDED CHANGES SINCE LAST BUDGET REPORT							
				ACTUAL	ACTUAL TO	ESTIMATE	
				2016/17	END	2017/18	
					OCTOBER		
INCOME				£	£	£	
Balances at Bank B/Fwd net of o/s cheques				12304			
GENERAL BALANCE						13755	
VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS BALANCE						8500	
DEBTORS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR (NET OF VAT)							
Rural Assembly held by NKDC at year end					2873	2873	
Rural Assembly Outstanding					745	745	
RSP Subscriptions					990	990	
Rural Crime Network			8012		5918	5918	
Rural Health Conference					175	175	
Housing Group Related			1100				
Coastal Communities Alliance (Gross)			1037		1037	1037	
Fire Group			100				
RHA Website Development Contributions			1300				
Subscriptions							
SPARSE Rural/Rural Assembly			252155		250529	280136	
SPARSE/RA subs held by NKDC at month end					10862		
2016 VOLUNTARY CONTRIBS re BUSINESS RATES			51713				
CCN Contrib to Finance Study			3863				
RSP			10042		8689	10642	
Commercial Partner First Group Buses			10000			10000	

				ACTUAL TO END MARCH £	ACTUAL TO END OCTOBER £	ESTIMATE 2017/18 £		
Subscriptions from Rural Health Group								
Income from Rural Housing Group				6895	6150	7390		
Income from Fire & Rescue Group				2480	1985	2480		
OTHER INCOME								
Conferences/Seminars								
Rural Conference Income				16365	9194			
Rural Conference Surplus						1000		
Rural Health Conference				4214				
Service Level Agreements								
Recharges ro Rural Crime Network (5 months 17/18)				20833	4063	4063		
Contras re RCN@				34642	1895			
Recharges to Rural England CIC Back Office Support £1200)				1200	600	1200		
Recharges to Rural England re AMAZON Contract						3500		
Recharges to Rural England re Elec NW Commission						1375		
Coastal Communities Alliance Gross)				3113	1037	4149		
Contributions to RHA Website Development				450		800		
Miscellaneous								
Contras				2605	889			
CCN Contrib re BREXIT costs						2000		
VAT								
VAT Refund				20337	8504			
VAT Received				11823	6116			
TOTAL INCOME				476583	322251	362728		

				ACTUAL TO END MARCH £	ACTUAL TO END OCTOBER £	ESTIMATE 2017/18 £		
EXPENDITURE								
VAT Paid on Goods & Services				33029	12276			
CONTRACTS FOR SERVICES ACTIVITY BREAKDOWN (EST)								
Corporate Management		DI,GCB, & AD1 100%. KB 40%		58259	43317	70447		
Finance/Performance and Data Analy		, DW, 100%, KB 20%		28835	17182	29456		
Communications (incl Seminars)		Rose Regen,JT, AD3 100%		8010	3598	8570		
Additional Comms Activity by RuralCity Media					1441	5013		
Administrative and Technical Support		RI, WI,WC,BA,MB 100%		47464	28037	50156		
Research and Monitoring		BW, JH, 100%		11837	6176	11843		
Service Group Networking		KB40%		8181	4919	8540		
Economic Development Service		AD5 100%		5000	2975	5100		
Coastal Communities Contract				3650	1825	3650		
Rural Health Network				750				
Rural Crime Network				20200				
Rural Communities Housing Group		AD2 100%		6500	3868	6630		
Rural Transport Group		AD6 100%		2000	1190	2040		
OTHER EXPENDITURE								
Budget for Brexit Project					1088	7000		
Communications Strategy Support				4800				
Rural Fair Shares/Business Rates "Campaigns"								
Rural Fair Shares Campaign etc.				9500		9500		
Pixell Financial Service (core Annual Service)				10500	956	10500		
Fair Sharesand Other Campaign Media Relations						2500		
SPEND FROM VOLUNTARY CONTRIBS (BUSINESS RATES)				49563	3691	8500		

					ACTUAL TO	ACTUAL TO	ESTIMATE		
					END	END	2017/18		
					MARCH	OCTOBER			
					£	£	£		
Conferences/Seminars									
Rural Conference					11398				
Rural Conference 2017					474	6255			
Rural Conference Drinks Reception					1144	1300	1300		
Rural Health Network & Conference					4872				
Seminar Costs					861	680	800		
Service Level Agreements									
RCN -CONTRAS @					33898	1425			
RCN Non Recoverable Travel & Subsistence					1027				
Rural Housing Group (RHG)					2050	647	1300		
RHG Website Maint						337	408		
Rural England CIC to re-charge)					977	365			
Rural Inland CIC transfer of part of First Group Support					7000		7000		
APPG/Rural Issues Group Costs					579	462	1000		
Parlia. Rural Vulnerability Group						199	200		
Rural England/Vulnerability Service Contrib					3000	3000	3000		
Business Expenses									
RSN Online etc.					19927	4523	18239		
Database Update (media contrcts)					2235				
Website Upgrade						2850	5350		
Ongoing Website Updates									
Travel and Subsistence					18509	9290	17500		
Print, Stat,e mail, phone & Broadband@					4015	3419	4500		
Meeting Room Hire					1643	2100	3000		
Website and Data Base software etc					3627	1895	4000		
Rent of Devon Office & Associated Costs					4597	3432	8800		
Accountancy Fees					720	449	750		
NKDC Services					2128		2145		
Companies House Fees					13	13	13		
Bank Charges					84	44	90		
IT Equipment &Support & Other Capital					985	75	500		
Insurance					567		600		
Corporation Tax					72		0		
Membership of Rural Coalition					200		200		
Refunds of Overpayments/ Contras@					1439	889			

					ACTUAL TO END MARCH £	ACTUAL TO END OCTOBER £	ESTIMATE 2017/18 £		
ARREARS - PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR									
Rural Housing Alliance					2675	792	792		
Contract for Service (ADMIN)					1349	1775	1775		
Contracts for Service (CORP MAN)					2427	1100	1100		
Communications						500	500		
Rose Regeneration					2000	333	333		
Seminars						71	71		
PIXEL						5203	5202		
B Wilson Arrears					3525	3525	3525		
RSN Online arrears					4840	9874	9874		
Travel and Subsistence arrears					675	718	720		
Printing, Phone and Stationery (arrears)					199				
Office Service Charge							5000		
Data base etc (arrears)					355	1130	1129		
Bank Charges					9	8	8		
Rural England					155				
TOTAL EXPENDITURE					454328	201217	350169		
BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD							12559		
BALANCE AT BANK 1/4/16					12304				
ADD INCOME 2016/17					464279				
LESS EXPENDITURE 2016/17					-454328				
BALANCE AT BANK 31/3/17					22255				
GENERAL BALANCE					13755				
VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS BALANCE					8500				

Rural Brexit Roundtable

Outcome from 2nd session

29 September 2017

Venue: CLA offices, 16 Belgrave Square, London, SW1X 8PQ

Present: Graham Biggs, RSN
 Margaret Clark, Rural Coalition
 Andy Dean, RSN
 Simon Edwards, CCN
 David Emerson, ACRE
 Matthew Hamilton, DCN
 Ian Miller, DCN
 Mark Shucksmith, Newcastle University
 Charles Trotman, CLA
 Carole Walker, Independent Chair

Apologies: Richard Quallington (ACRE), Cllr Liz Harvey (LGA)

Priorities

The previously suggested priorities were consolidated into two key areas:

1. **New Coherent Rural Strategy:**

Original proposal: A new long term Rural Strategy (for at least the next decade) should be agreed between central and local government and other key rural stakeholders. This should enable the full potential of rural economies to be realised and sustained (to support the national economy), and a fair deal for rural residents and communities. It would include coherent cross-departmental leadership from within central government alongside an England-wide “rural deal” which shares power, resources and responsibility with local government and communities through a framework of triple devolution and capacity building.

Discussion:

- This was a critical context for more detailed economy related objectives
- There is a once in a generation opportunity to get rural policies right
- Some ‘Principles of Localism needed be stated around resources, tools and context
- The Rural Coalition could be asked to take a lead in liaison with government departments etc., although it has acknowledged capacity/resource limitations
- Needs to be embedded across government departments, although there were different views as to which department should lead

- The 2001 Rural White Paper was the last rural policy document to gain real traction. A similar approach, with high level political backing, could be adopted.
- Starting point for the case for a Rural Strategy – covering the three Pillars of Economic, Social and Environmental) is: ‘Rural communities feel Neglected by the Centre and therefore disenfranchised’

2. A Rural Industrial Strategy:

Original proposal: A crucial part of the enabling framework for rural entrepreneurial potential to be fulfilled, contributing to national productivity, growth and innovation, is an Industrial Strategy that encourages rural businesses and builds on learning from the rural growth networks. This does not just mean rural-proofing the Industrial Strategy, but the adoption of a more effective approach in the development and implementation of a specific Rural Industrial Strategy. This would address skills and training, business support, infrastructure, planning and finance – taking ideas both from the Rural Productivity Plan 2015 and from EU schemes such as the RDPE, LEADER and Objective 1 and 5b. LEPs would be required to address rural issues through properly funded (capital and revenue) Rural Action Plans and monitored to ensure promised outcomes are delivered.

Discussion:

- Clear current focus for government and directly related to Brexit
- Should form top short term priority for the Roundtable
- LEPs may well have a role but accountability needs to be addressed
- As direct payments to farmers will be capped there will be ‘spare’ funds within the current CAP amount. Danger this all goes to the environment heading

Agreed short term priorities

1. Focus on rural economies through coordinated input to the Industrial Strategy
2. Focus on alternatives previously available monies to agriculture and through structural funds to ensure rural economies & communities do not lose out on funds previously available
Focus on Shared Prosperity Fund and how it should operate and be distributed to the 4 home nations
3. Focus on devolution/democratic local accountability and transparency – triple devolution to local areas

Next steps

1. RSN said that it would commission piece of work to review the Rural White Paper as an initial contribution to further debate on a New Rural Strategy.
2. Prepare an initial ‘Template’ for a Rural Strategy with an opening narrative, chapter headings and current views key points (and evidence to support) under each Chapter
3. CCN to discuss potential resource assistance from the LGA’s People & Places Board.

4. Consideration to be given regarding how to raise issues on the political agenda with new imagination.

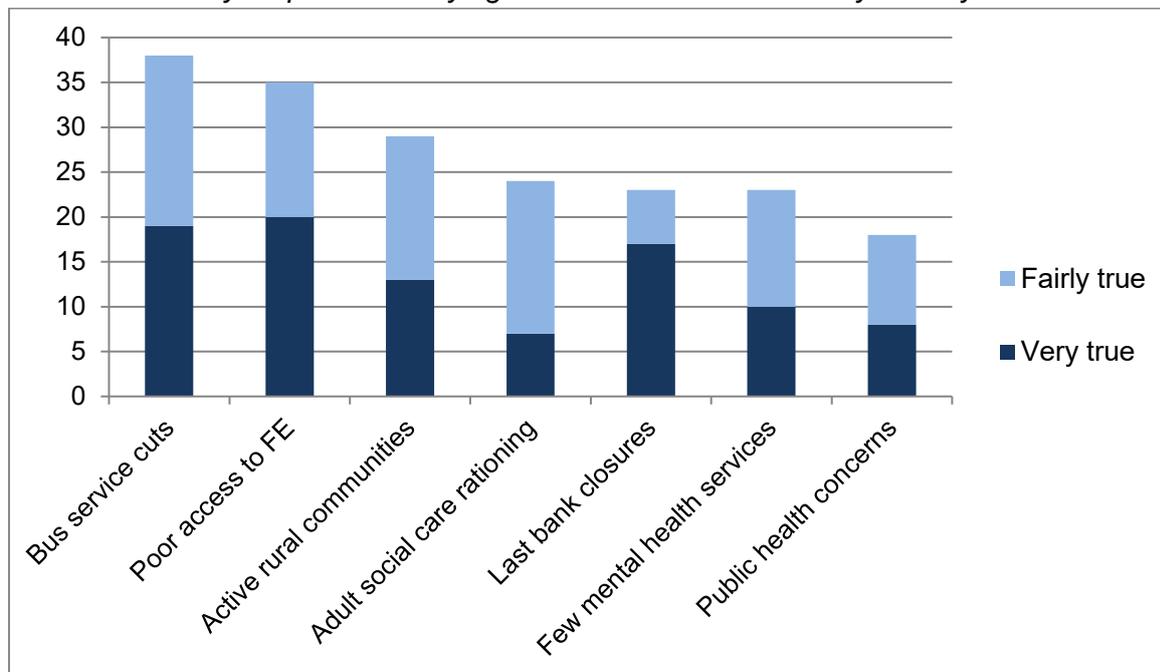
RSN MEMBERSHIP SURVEY: TESTING THE FINDINGS IN THE STATE OR RURAL SERVICES REPORT

Summary

RSN members were asked about seven key conclusions in the State of Rural Services (SORS) report produced by Rural England. In all cases, a majority of respondents agree that these conclusions are (very or fairly) true in their local areas. Those where agreement is most marked are that:

- Many subsidised rural bus services are being withdrawn or reduced;
- Many rural young people face long and difficult journeys to access FE; and
- Many rural communities are active in volunteering and tackling local concerns.

Number of survey respondents saying SORS conclusions are very or fairly true in their area



Taken in the round, the survey responses describe something of a hollowing-out of service provision and facilities across rural areas. Many responses put this in the context of financial pressures and sizeable budget reductions, particularly affecting principal local authorities.

Reductions to rural bus services are having knock-on consequences for access to a range of other services. Indeed, in some cases bus services cuts are taking place whilst local service outlets are closing.

One consequence of this is more cars on rural roads. Another is the impacts on quality of life impacts for certain groups. These include growing isolation for some older people, curtailed FE choices for some young people and less or more costly access to services for some low income households.

Community action is sustaining certain rural services and creating tailored solutions to local needs. However, some communities are better equipped for such action than others. Community access to officer support and small grants can be a key part of the mix.

There is sometimes a need to raise awareness about what services exist and how to access them. Examples include accessing bank accounts at Post Offices and mental health service provision. Promotional and signposting projects can play a valuable role.

It is notable that many of the initiatives described by survey respondents involve partnership working, across the public sector, with voluntary sector bodies and with rural communities. Described projects also indicate the potential for digital solutions in some areas.

The rest of this report runs through the survey results. A conclusions section expands on the points made above in this summary. This material should, amongst other things, provide further evidence to support the RSN's four priorities.

1. Introduction

In January 2017 the State of Rural Services (SORS) report was published by Rural England. This contained a number of core findings about trends in service provision to rural communities. The RSN decided to conduct a survey of local authorities in its membership, to test:

- How far those findings were seen as holding true in their areas;
- If so, what the main impacts are for rural communities; and
- What local projects or initiatives are seeking to address the trends.

An online survey was therefore run throughout September 2017. Its questions focussed on seven of the service trends, which were felt to be of particular RSN interest. That survey received 57 responses, 40 of which came from council officers, 15 of which came from elected councillors and 2 of which came did not state their role. Quite a few of the respondents felt able to answer questions about only some of the service topics, so individual topics each received between 35 and 47 responses.

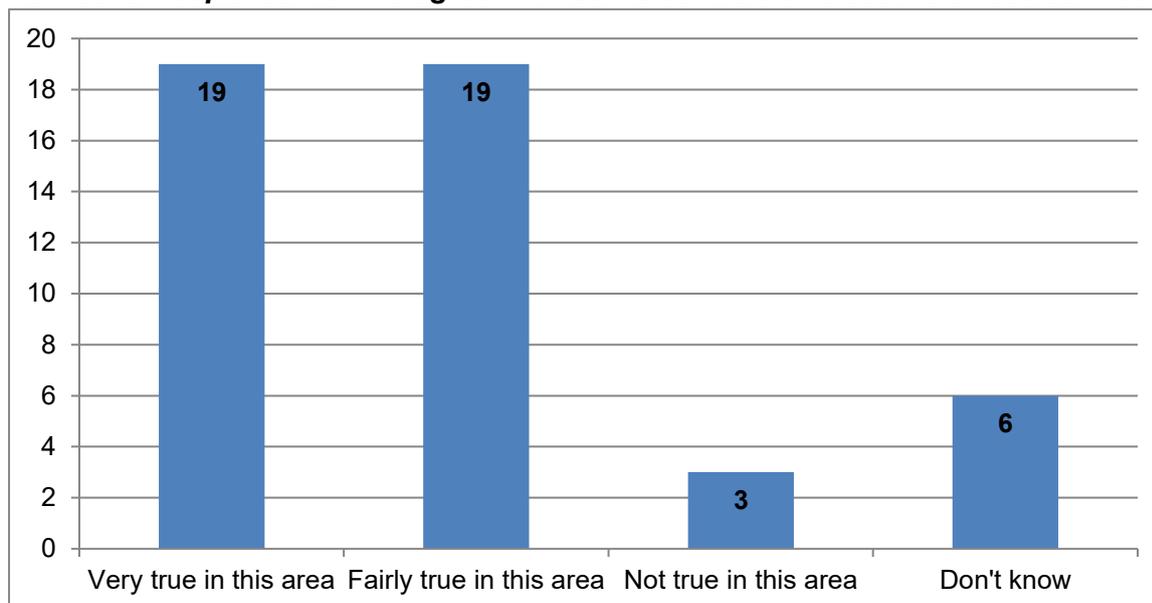
The rest of this paper summarises the findings of the RSN survey. Particular thanks are given to those who completed the survey.

2. Rural bus services

SORS report conclusion: many subsidised rural bus routes have been withdrawn or reduced in the last few years.

The great majority of respondents agree that this conclusion reflects the trend in their local area, with an even split between those saying it is very true and those saying it is fairly true.

Number of respondents who agree with SORS conclusion about rural bus services



Impacts of this trend for rural communities:

- The most frequently cited impact is considered to be a deterioration in access to service outlets and facilities, with many respondents highlighting (in particular) those services that require timed appointments e.g. GP surgeries, hospitals;
- Cited almost as often is the impact in terms of isolation for rural communities, where there is particular concern about the elderly and those on low incomes;
- Access to employment and training is also mentioned by a number, often with respect to young adults;
- Also mentioned by a number is that it puts more cars on rural roads, means more parked cars in village streets and makes rural communities more car dependent;
- Other issues cited include the impact on town centre viability if fewer people can get there, higher transport costs for households e.g. taxi use, and the combined effect if transport cuts happen alongside other service closures.

Local projects and initiatives to mitigate or address the issue:

The most frequent answer, unsurprisingly, is supporting community transport schemes, which local authorities variously help to fund, promote and partner with. A number of respondents also noted their authority still subsidises rural bus services despite budget pressures.

A variety of other answers were received, such as:

- Creating a Community Bus Partnership, to coordinate and support such schemes;
- Supporting Wheels to Work schemes, to help the young reach jobs and training;
- Supporting community car schemes or good neighbour schemes, with volunteers taking people to appointments and the like;
- Supporting car share or lift share schemes, including with a car sharing App;
- Supporting transport brokerage, offering advice to people about transport options;
- Undertaking research, to understand people's transport needs and inform solutions;
- Negotiating with bus operators, to retain as many local services as possible;
- Optimising remaining bus routes, to optimise their use and lessen their subsidy need;

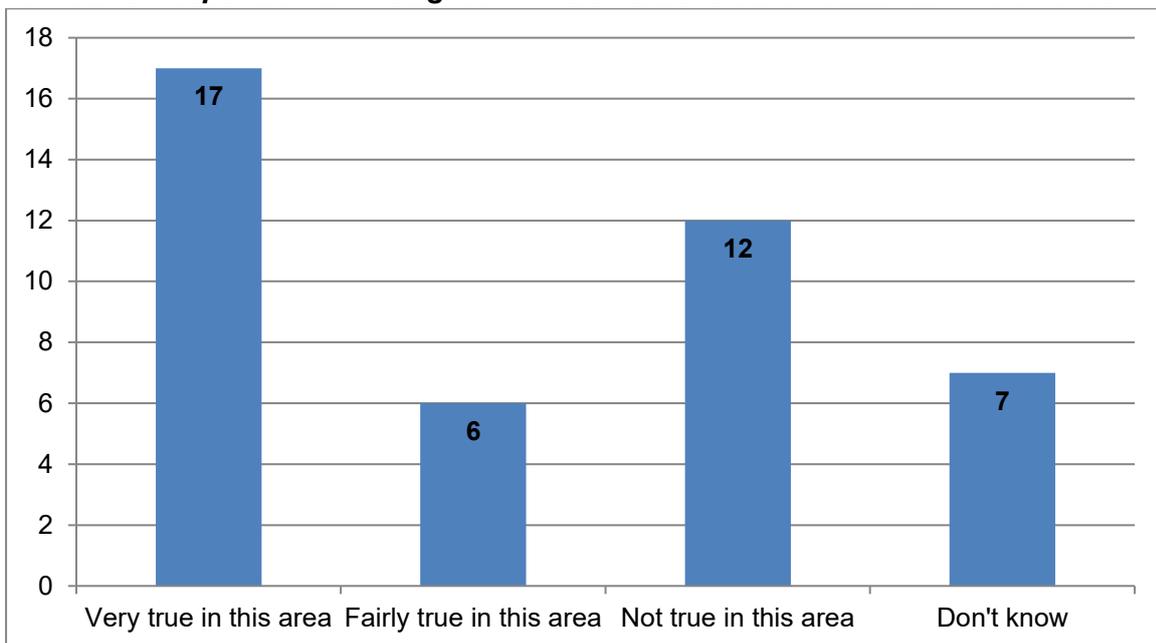
- Introducing a Cycling and Walking Plan, to encourage these modes of travel;
- Taking services out to rural communities e.g. mobile libraries, council help points.

3. Bank branches

SORS report conclusion: many rural towns have seen the closure of their last or only bank branch.

Although not true in all areas covered by the survey respondents, this conclusion is still a recognised trend in the majority of areas and is seen as very true in about 40% of cases.

Number of respondents who agree with SORS conclusion about bank branches



Impacts of this trend for rural residents:

- The most common group of responses referred to additional travel needs to reach a bank branch created where local outlets close and the travel time this requires;
- Some also mentioned the additional cost of the additional travel to access another bank branch;
- A number of respondents mentioned the impact for those who are not online and who cannot therefore make use of online banking;
- In any case (online or not), various responses cited the loss of access to cash, which despite trends is still needed and which some prefer to use;
- Other issues cited for residents include lack of broadband connectivity as a barrier to online banking, the knock on impact for local shops if more people shop online, the loss of access to specific banking services (unavailable at a Post Office) and the loss of personal service or interaction where physical services shut.

Impacts of this trend for rural businesses:

- The most common group of responses are those which refer to businesses which handle cash and which need to bank takings on a regular basis;

- Related to this are responses which mention the security or crime risk if businesses now store cash for some days at a time;
- A second group of responses are those which refer to businesses spending time travelling to bank branches further away – a task which is not a productive activity;
- Some mention that small rural businesses may lose much direct contact with bank staff, whom they may look to for advice about business plans or concerns;
- Other issues cited for businesses include lack of broadband connectivity as a barrier to online banking, the loss of footfall for nearby retailers/outlets and particular issues for tourism businesses whose users want cash.

As **Post Offices** (POs) now offer banking services on behalf of most other banks and building societies, we asked for comments on the usefulness of this service and what could improve it. Responses said that:

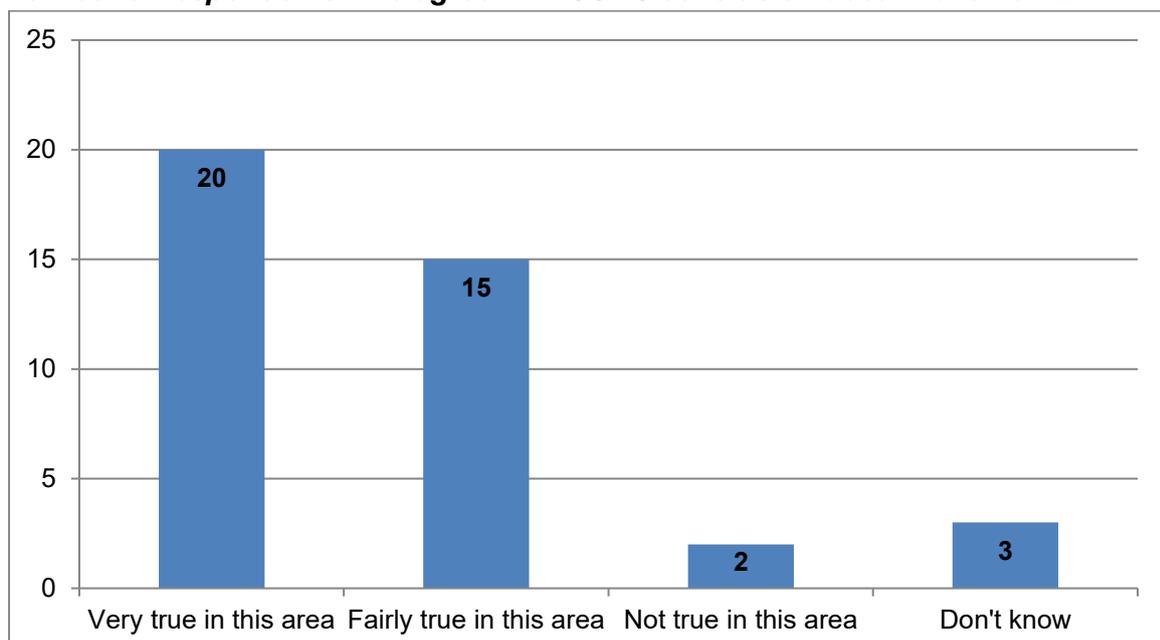
- This was a useful and welcome development (most frequent response);
- The PO offer needs more publicity and is not as widely known as it should be;
- There is confusion about which banks/building societies the service covers;
- The PO offer, whilst useful, provides a limited range of banking services;
- Not all communities have a PO and some have lost their PO branch;
- Some rural outlets have become community POs with limited opening hours;
- The situation underlines the need to retain the PO network in rural areas;
- It would help if more rural POs had an ATM or cash machine.

4. Access to further education

SORS report conclusion: many young people in rural areas face a long or difficult journey from home to their place of Further Education (college or sixth form).

Survey respondents overwhelmingly agree with this conclusion from the SORS report. Slightly more of them think it is very true, than think it is fairly true.

Number of respondents who agree with SORS conclusion about travel to FE



Impacts of this trend for rural communities:

- Many said that young people were spending large chunks of the day travelling on public transport to/from FE. This is tiring and eats into their social life or free time;
- In other cases parents spend much of their day driving their offspring to and from FE;
- There can be a substantive travel costs involved for families of young people, which is particularly hard for those on low incomes;
- Many said that young people can be dissuaded altogether from staying on at FE. It therefore effects their aspirations and holds them back from realising their potential;
- A number mentioned the impact on choice of courses. Some go to only their second or third choice, because their first choice is not available at the nearest FE institute. Specialist courses can be particularly hard to access;
- Other impacts mentioned include more cars on rural roads, young people learning to drive as soon as they legally can, young people dropping out of FE, young people unable to stay-on for extracurricular activities, young families moving out of villages and the skills loss to the rural economy.

Local projects and initiatives to mitigate or address the issue:

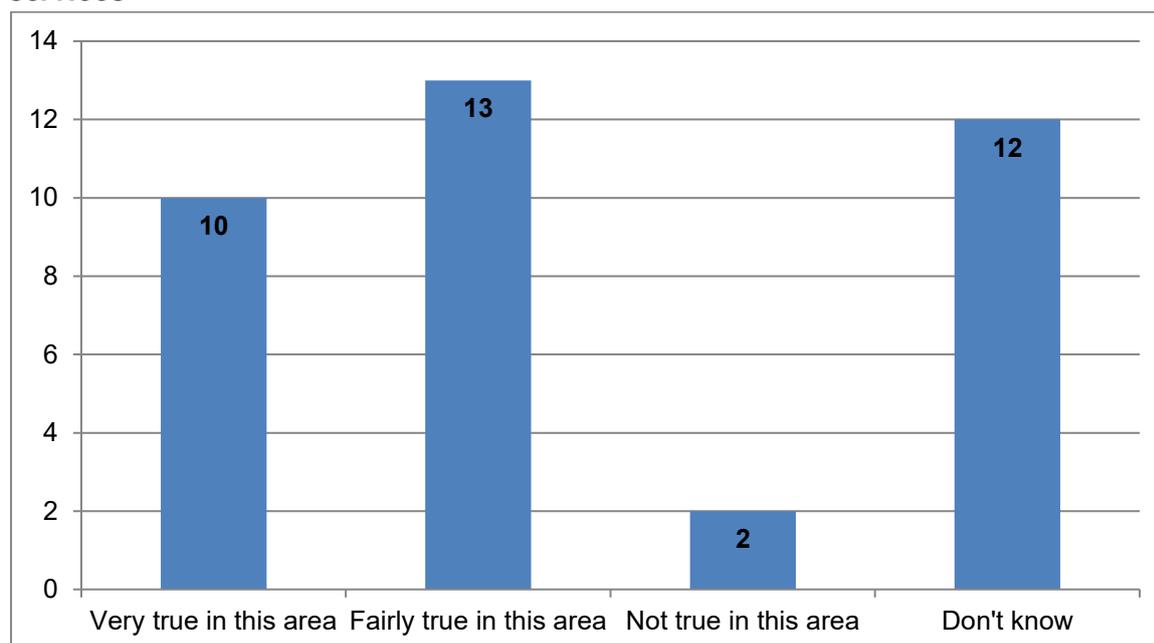
- Local authorities (including districts) partnering FE colleges to explore solutions;
- FE colleges and schools with sixth forms laying on their own transport;
- An FE college that has established an in-house transport department;
- Explicitly including the issue within a review of county bus services;
- Wheels to Work schemes that provide moped loans to young people;
- Exploring the possibility of a more local FE facility (sadly not viable);
- Local authorities subsidising bus passes for FE students; and
- The car sharing App scheme mentioned in section 2 of this paper.

5. Mental health services

SORS report conclusion: mental health services are thin on the ground in many rural areas.

Almost two thirds of respondents considered this conclusion to be true in their area. Slightly more thought it fairly than very true. A significant number said they did not know.

Number of respondents who agree with SORS conclusion about mental health services



Impacts of this trend for rural communities:

- The issue most frequently cited is the lack of rural transport and difficult access to existing mental health services, which may dissuade rural users;
- A number of respondents think the core issue is actually high or rising demand for such services, which is outstripping provision;
- One impact is isolation for some of those needing help, which may result in a worsening of their problems;
- Other issues mentioned include a gap between crisis support and generic services e.g. counselling, delays after someone has been referred, services being more reactive than preventative, particular access issues for those living near a county boundary and concern about rising numbers of self-harm and suicide cases. One respondent thought services were there, but were not sufficiently well known.

Local projects and initiatives to mitigate or address the issue include:

- A project with MIND to raise awareness and the ability to respond among school teachers;
- A project with a range of public sector frontline staff to raise awareness;
- A County Council-NHS project offering one-to-one support, delivered with rural GPs;
- A new housing scheme for tenants who have mental health issues;
- Support for a local voluntary sector run counselling service;
- Support for community-based projects with bodies like Parish Councils, MIND and Age UK;
- Development of new approaches with money received from the Better Care Fund;
- A review of mental health service provision led by a Clinical Commissioning Group;
- A Healthwatch Five Year Forward Review developing joined-up approaches; and
- A Health & Wellbeing Strategy making tackling mental health one of three objectives.

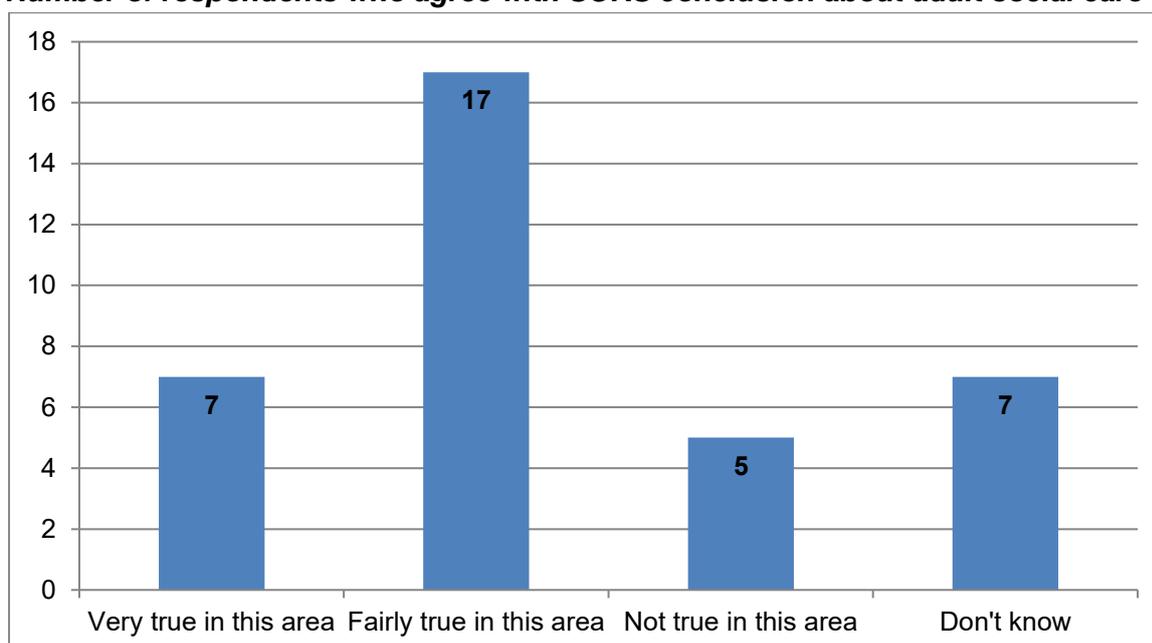
However, a couple of respondents note that this is a difficult area to address because of the sizeable funding gap.

6. Adult social care

SORS report conclusion: adult social care provision is increasingly focussed just on those people with the most serious needs.

Two thirds of survey respondents agreed with this conclusion, with easily the largest number saying that it was fairly true in their area.

Number of respondents who agree with SORS conclusion about adult social care



Impacts of this trend for rural communities:

- The most frequently cited is increased isolation for older people who are not receiving home visits or who receive fewer visits;
- A number of respondents mention older people not being discharged from hospital appropriately and so-called bed blocking;
- Agency carers may be given near impossible schedules to get round, which have no slack for rural travel mishaps;
- Rushed visits by carers can result in health issues going unidentified and low level issues being left until they turn more serious;
- Less formal care provision often puts more pressure on family members, voluntary sector bodies or GP surgeries;
- More emphasis is given to keeping people in their own home, since this is cheaper than placing them in a care home;
- The closure of some residential care homes has been problematic. In certain cases residents have been moved to alternative homes out of the local area; and
- Ultimately there are more older people left to cope on their own, some becoming housebound or experiencing declining physical abilities.

A couple of respondents agree do not dispute the State of Rural Services conclusion, but say it is equally impacting rural and urban areas.

Local projects and initiatives to mitigate or address the issue:

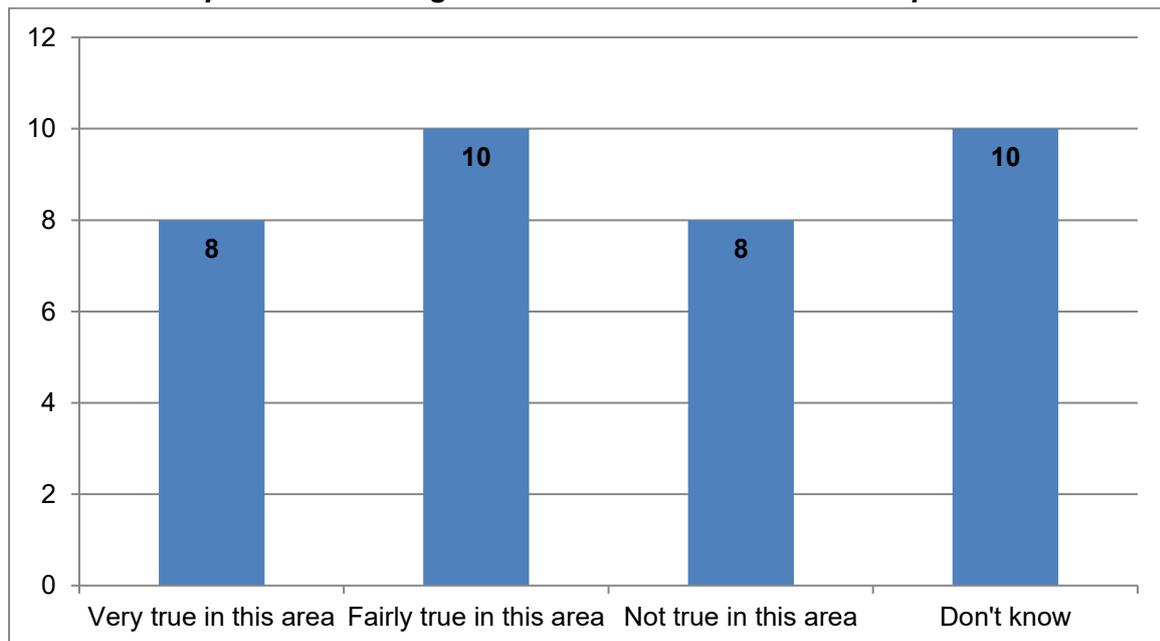
- A community-based, home visiting service that provides information about available support and which can refer to them. This early intervention service is open to those aged 50 plus;
- Supporting the work of a Seniors Forum, which is encouraging older people to try team-based activities;
- Managing a social prescribing pilot project for a period of three months;
- Action to recruit more carers to work in a rural setting (an issue given low wages);
- Initiatives cited by two respondents that seek to use digital technology to improve older people’s access to services, one using local authority digital hubs;
- District Council respondents that refer to providing information about or signposting to County Council run adult social care services;
- However, one respondent said some adult care services were being re-commissioned to save money. Another said addressing the issue was not made easier by having two Clinical Commissioning Groups within the county.

7. Public health issues

SORS report conclusion: many rural areas score badly on some public health indicators, including access to health checks, access to health screening and the prevalence of fuel poverty.

Half the survey respondents agreed with this conclusion, being quite evenly split whether it was very or fairly true. This is not surprising, as a good few said they didn’t know and the SORS conclusion is qualified, referring to “many rural areas” (so not all rural areas).

Number of respondents who agree with SORS conclusion about public health issues



Impacts of this trend for rural communities:

- The most frequently mentioned issue is a lack of transport provision in many rural areas to reach public health appointments;
- This issue can be linked with a lack of local facilities or public health provision and, in some cases, with lost facilities e.g. a closed community hospital;
- Rural residents may, therefore, have to travel considerable distances to access public health provision and there is a cost to doing so;
- These issues may result in cancelled appointments or a failure to take-up public health appointment offers, perhaps especially among those on a low income;
- One outcome can be more pressure (down the line) on NHS services, due to there being less uptake of preventative care; and
- Some respondents also noted the implications for health that may result from living in fuel poverty, often in rural areas off the mains gas grid or in older properties.

Local projects and initiatives to mitigate or address the issue:

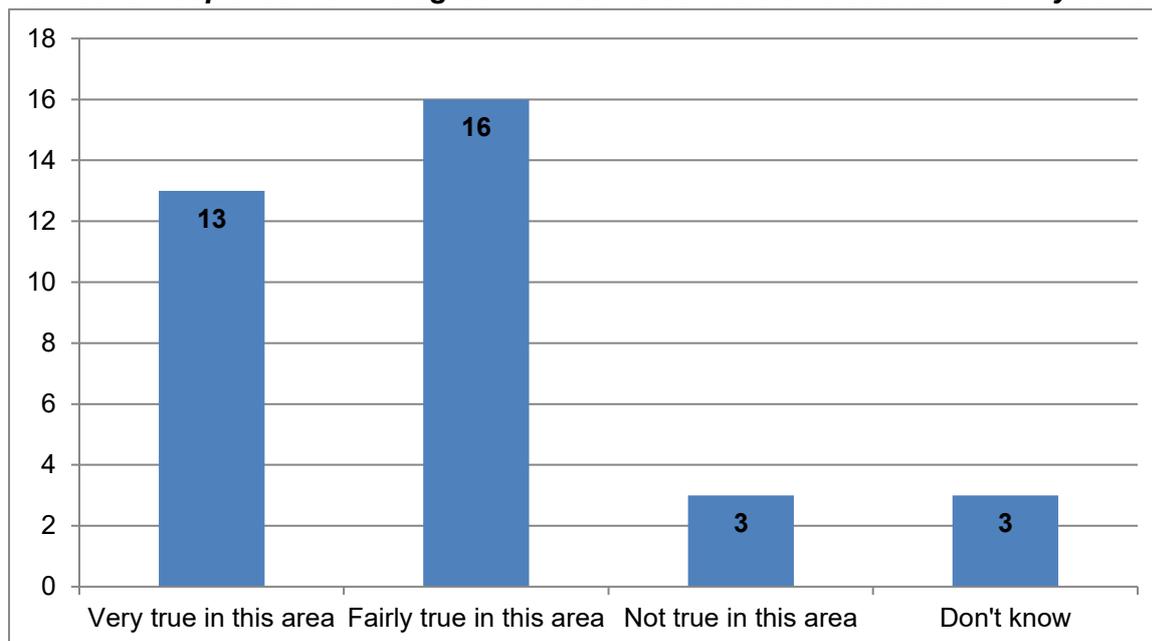
- Partnership working on the public health agenda is variously mentioned (between counties, districts and the NHS), including to deliver Health and Wellbeing Plans;
- A number of fuel poverty initiatives are cited, such as Switch Save Smile, Warm & Well, Warmer Homes Healthy People, a bulk oil buying scheme and the Warmer Homes Discount scheme;
- A First Contact scheme is also cited, where frontline staff visiting vulnerable people look out for a range of issues and, where appropriate, refer onwards;
- Community transport initiatives are mentioned by some respondents, as an appropriate way to take people to public health appointments;
- It is noted that GP surgeries are often used as a relatively local setting for public health service provision;
- Two service approaches seen as useful in this context are outreach provision in rural communities and a more flexible appointments system, where users can select a time that matches their transport;
- However, some responses refer to considerable funding pressures and the difficulty is maintaining funding for such initiatives.

8. Community action

SORS report conclusion: many rural communities are active in volunteering and tackling local concerns e.g. through community-run services and initiatives.

The great majority of respondents agreed with this SORS conclusion, with slightly more of them saying it was fairly true than saying it was very true in their area.

Number of respondents who agree with SORS conclusion about community action



Positive **impacts** from this trend include:

- Services which are better suited to local community needs;
- An enhanced sense of local ownership for assets in rural areas;
- A greater sense of community as a result of local action;
- More social interaction through volunteering and local action;
- Quality of life and wellbeing benefits for rural communities;
- Strong activity on certain issues, such as social care, leisure and transport; and
- Some respondents note the role played by Parish Councils encouraging local volunteers or groups.

However, there are qualifications to this positive outlook. Community action:

- Can be patchy and focused in communities with organisational strength and skills;
- Can depend on a few very active people, who may experience volunteer burn out;
- Tends to involve older age groups, with less engagement from younger groups;
- Tends to happen where there is something to fight for or against;
- Too often plugs gaps left by statutory services or indeed by their closure; and
- Still requires some funding and support to enable it to happen and be effective.

Local projects and initiatives to support or encourage community action include:

- Community grant schemes were mentioned by many, sometimes managed by Ward Councillors e.g. a Member Empowerment Fund, a Community Facilities Fund;
- Community support teams or officers, who provide advice, access to grants and capacity-building support to community groups (and sometimes Parish Councils);
- Economic Regeneration Officers who deliver support to community action groups;
- A Rural Officer post whose role is to provide advice to communities and help them access funding;
- A very active portfolio holder for communities within the pool of Councillors;

- Locality working approaches were also mentioned, such as Area Committees in one case (with dedicated staff and budgets) and Locality Teams in another case (working across the County, Districts, NHS and voluntary sector);
- However, one respondent lamented that dedicated community workers and community partnership support had largely ceased in their area as funding dried up.

9. Conclusions

The views gathered through this survey from RSN members largely substantiate the evidence and conclusions in the SORS report about trends in rural service provision. They concur particularly with its conclusions about: cutbacks to rural bus services; young people facing difficulties accessing FE; and rural areas benefiting from community action. Whilst there is much agreement with SORS conclusions about other service topics, it is qualified in that: either the conclusion appears to apply in some rural areas (but less so in others); or many respondents felt unable to offer a view.

Taken in the round the survey responses describe something of a hollowing-out of service provision and facilities in rural areas. In many cases descriptions of service cutbacks refer to much-reduced and over-stretched budgets, particularly with regard to principal local authorities. Some of these comments also express frustration and others resignation about what is happening locally in rural communities.

Financial savings are being made in various ways. In some cases there are service area reviews, such as those undertaken by some counties for subsidised bus services. In other cases there is greater rationing of provision, such as for adult social care support. In one or two cases respondents refer to the re-commissioning of services, doubtless at a lower (cheaper) specification. However, many service cuts may simply result from years of incremental budget reductions.

It is clear that cutbacks to rural bus services are having knock-on consequences for access to a range of services. For instance, the responses about access to bank branches, to FE and to public health services all include various comments about poor and declining transport access. Indeed, some point out that the closure of local service outlets and bus service reductions are happening at the same time.

Another consequence of these trends is to put more car traffic onto rural roads. To take two examples, more parents have to ferry their youngsters to FE colleges and more business owners who handle cash have to travel to reach a bank branch.

Many responses from the survey refer to the impacts in terms of reduced quality of life for particular groups. They consider that:

- Some rural young people are having their ambitions curtailed through not being able to access FE courses of choice;
- Some rural older people are becoming more isolated and even facing a heightened risk to their health; and
- Some rural low income households are facing a choice between living with less access to services or paying more to reach such services.

On a positive note, the responses offer further evidence that rural communities are frequently active, with volunteers coming together in community groups to seek solutions to service needs. This can sustain threatened services and can result in locally tailored approaches. That said, some communities are better equipped to respond to service challenges than others. Officer support and small grants for community groups would seem to be a key part of the mix.

It is notable, too, that many of the local initiatives or projects seeking to address rural service issues involve partnership working to be effective. Responses typically cited the involvement of different tiers of local government, other public sector players e.g. the NHS, and voluntary sector bodies. Initiatives for public health and mental health are notable for drawing in a range of partners. Finding alternatives to traditional, subsidised bus services are also engaging many players, not least rural communities themselves.

One particular point that has arisen is the need to raise awareness about what services exist. Too few people know about using POs to access bank accounts. Scant knowledge about mental health services means people not seeking help. Initiatives which promote, signpost and advice about available services and how to access them have a potentially valuable role to play.

Finally, the responses hint at the potential for digital solutions to some long-standing rural service concerns (a point made by the SORS report). One response described the development of a car sharing App scheme. Another described helping older people to access adult care services at local authority digital hubs.

The findings from this RSN members' survey provide additional evidence to underpin the network's four priorities on public sector funding, barriers to access, the future of rural areas, and health and wellbeing. They hopefully have immediate relevance, too, for RSN's policy influencing work on some current topics, such as the DCLG local government fairer funding review and proposals by DCMS to introduce a broadband universal service obligation.

Brian Wilson
October 2017



Ian is a founder member of the Plymouth University Dementia Group. Their research to date includes “Early Diagnosis of Dementia in Plymouth” Dementia Quality Mark for Residential care, Evaluation of day opportunities provided by the Voluntary and Private sector for individuals with dementia and their carers, evaluation of residential care in Torbay 2015 which recently received the British Medical Journal award for Dementia team of “The Year 2015”. He has presented at the Alzheimer’s International Conference 2012/14/, the all Wales Dementia Conference 2014/2015/16, the Prime Ministers Dementia Challenge launch, he also presented at the D.of.H Expo. Ian is a member of the Prime Ministers Dementia Friendly Communities Challenge Group 2015/16/17/18/19, his role on this group is chair of the South and South West of England. Ian stepped down as a Trustee after six years on the Board nationally for the Alzheimer’s Society. Ian is now an Ambassador for the Alzheimer’s Society. Ian was an advisor to Devon County Council for their Center of Excellence approach to dementia care. He is a founder member of the Plymouth Dementia Alliance and Dementia Friendly Parishes around the Yealm. Ian is the chair of the Prime Ministers Task and Finish group for Rural Dementia 2015/2016/17/18/19. He also chairs the national Air Transport dementia group 2015/16/17/18/19. Ian is the driving force behind the six successful Plymouth International Dementia Conferences. Ian is also the chair of the Plymouth Dementia Action Alliance which won a national award of “Dementia Friendly City of the year 2016/17”. Ian was commissioned by the Drake Foundation to evaluate the ex-military veteran’s memory café in Plymouth. This service is seen as an exemplar in dementia support. Ian is currently working with researchers from the Netherlands and Japan. Ian has just been awarded two year finance to teach Chinese students both here in the UK and China 2017/18. Ian and a team from the university have secured six year funding to evaluate living well programme for older people in Torbay. Ian launched the first dementia friendly community in Italy in September 2016. Ian was a key note speaker at the 2017 Tokyo and Osaka dementia conferences. Ian has just signed a memorandum agreement between Plymouth University and the University of Macau March 2017/18. He is also in great demand as a key note speaker at national and International conferences on dementia.

Suggested Meeting Dates for 2018

RSN Executive Meetings

Monday 15th January

Monday 5th March

Monday 11th June

Monday 24th September

Also RSP Ltd Board of Directors meeting

Main Meeting Dates

Monday 29th January - SPARSE Rural Sub SIG

Monday 9th April - Social Care & Health Group
Rural Assembly Sub SIG

Monday 25th June - SPARSE Rural Sub SIG

Monday 12th November - Social Care & Health Group
RSP AGM
RSN AGM

Possible Rural Conference 2018 Dates

Tuesday 4th & Wednesday 5th September

Possible Rural Vulnerability Day in Parliament Dates

Tuesday 20th November