



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 21st NOVEMBER, 2016** at approximately 1.00 pm 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: 28th October 2016

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 16th November, 2015 (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 (Shropshire) [Midlands]]**
- 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 Gordon Nicolson (North), Cllr Adam Painter (South and South West), Cllr Lewis Strange (Counties) Cllr Peter Stevens (East), Cllr Derrick Haley (ex-portfolio), Cllr Robert Heseltine ex-portfolio), Cllr Sue Sanderson (ex-portfolio), Cllr Peter Thornton ex-(portfolio), Cllr Janet Duncton (South East)

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

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5. **Election of First Vice Chair for the ensuing year (to also be the First Vice-Chairman of the SPARSE-Rural sub-sig.) [Current First Vice Chair is Cllr Robert Heseltine- (North Yorkshire, ex-portfolio).**
6. **IF DEEMED NECESSARY AND BENEFICIAL. To appoint a Chair and Vice Chair(s) of the RURAL ASSEMBLY SUB-SIG**
7. **FUTURE DIRECTIONS:** To receive and consider the Report of the RSN Executive (Attachment 2) Report includes report attachments 'A', 'B', and 'C'
8. **NEXT MEETING:** Next RSN AGM to be held on Monday 20th of November 2017
9. **Rural Services Network Statement about Modern Slavery Act** (Attachment 3)

PART 2: RURAL ASSEMBLY SUB-SIG ISSUES

9. Minutes of the last full meeting – 11th July 2016

To approve the Minutes of the last Meeting subject to Minute 10 (e) being amended to read - Good links had been established with the LGA's Public Transport Consortium who would be taking part in a workshop session at the September conference. (Attachment 4)

10. Minutes of the last Executive meeting – 26th September 2016

(Attachment 5)

11 Membership (Constitutional Requirement)

To consider the annual report on membership (verbal report)

12. Budget 2016/17 and 2017/18 (Constitutional Requirement)

Budget report for 2016/17 (Actual to date & Revised) and 2017/18 (Estimate) (Attachment 6)

13. To receive and consider the RSN submission to HM Treasury re the Autumn Statement 23rd November, 2016 (Attachment 7)

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14. STATE OF THE RURAL SERVICES REPORT, 2016

Presentation by Graham Biggs on behalf of Brian Wilson and Rural England C.I.C.

15. Update on the Health Scrutiny Project

Verbal report by Kerry Booth

16. Rural Conference 2016

Presentation by Kerry Booth

17. Rural Conference 2017

To discuss arrangements for September 2017

18. Meeting Dates for 2017 (Attachment 8)

19. Any Other Business-

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Notes of the Annual Meeting of the Rural Services Network Special Interest Group – 16th November 2015

Title:	Rural Services Network Special Interest Group
Date:	Monday 16 th November 2015 beginning at 1 pm
Venue:	Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

Those persons listed in the notes of the Rural Assembly Group Meeting held on the same day in the same accommodation.

Apologies

The same as listed in the notes of the Rural Assembly Meeting.

1. Election of Chairman for ensuing year

Cllr Cecilia Motley, Shropshire CC, (Chair of the Sparse Rural Sub Group) was elected formally as the Chair of the Rural Services Network for the ensuing year.

2. Election of Vice Chairs

It was agreed that the vice chairs as appointed by the Sparse Rural meeting immediately preceding this meeting be appointed in the same positions for the Rural Services Network.

3. Election of First Vice Chair

Cllr Cecilia Motley nominated Cllr Robert Heseltine, North Yorkshire as First Vice Chair. The nomination was agreed by members.

4. Constitution

Members accepted the Constitution formally put before the meeting as the Constitution of the Rural Services Network as a whole.

REPORT FROM THE RSN EXECUTIVE TO THE RSN AGM:

21st NOVEMBER 2016

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Executive held a Blue Sky Day on Monday 26th September taking an overview of where the organisation had reached and mapping out the challenges now facing both RSN and rural areas generally over the next few years. Here is our report and recommendations to the AGM.

In addition to addressing issues relating to the future sustainability of RSN as an organisation, our recommendations seek to map potential ways forward that might appeal to both existing and potential members as we steer the organisation through what are certain to be challenging times for every sector.

The reports/discussion documents considered by the Executive are available in full on the website.

The Executive considered the following issues in a full, broad ranging meeting

- a. **Sustainability-** how does the RSN cope with elements of voluntary work in the organisation disappearing as future personnel changes occur? (Two of our lead officers currently between them contribute some £50k worth of voluntary unpaid time p.a)

If the organisation as a whole is to be sustainable it has to have a financial plan that deals with this. The Executive has considered what the subscription pattern should be in changing circumstances. To take full account of this situation alone suggests there will be a need for an annual increase in the overall budget in the region of £50k by the end of a five year period.

- b. **Equitable Authority Contributions** - Given evolving new structures in local government what should our operating budget be and what would be a fair division in terms of 'contribution' of that target sum for the ever differing forms of members?
- c. **Cycle of Meetings** - As the Grant Settlement situation moves to a Business Rate and Council Tax based finance system- and assuming financial provision will remain at the core of our services - what is the cycle of meetings that best meets members' needs and represent the considerations of member authorities and those of rural areas in England?

- d. **Future Services** - What services would RSN member authorities find of most value in this fast changing local government world? How can we change ourselves to make us stronger? This also requires a future detailed operational examination following the key decisions arising from this Report. However, this Report considers the financial remit and a suggested vulnerability service at this point as they flow directly from our meeting considerations.

For convenience, we have constructed our report and recommendations under the following broad headings, although we recognise that some of the issues cross these groupings:-

- **PART 1: RSN – Strategically important for the future sustainability of the organisation.**
- **PART 2: NEW RSN ACTIVITIES – Strategically Important to England’s Rural Areas & Communities in a post BREXIT world.**
- **PART 3: RSN OPERATIONAL ISSUE CONSEQUENT ON PARTS 1 AND 2.**

Before moving on to the specific recommendations we set out below the background and context which has led us to make this report and recommendations.

CONTEXT

Extract from the keynote speech made by Professor Tony Travers on Brexit - Rural Conference, Cheltenham 7th September 2016 (full transcript available on the website).

“Let’s put it this way, unless the rural voice is strong, it won’t be heard. And the lobby has to be one that will have to work more powerfully now than ever before because trade associations working for, let’s say, the car industry, will be, and rightly, working very hard. But the rural lobby is a different thing and has generally existed for different purposes. What it hasn’t traditionally been about, and I stand corrected in a room of people who know more about this than me, is thinking about the terms of Britain’s relationship with the rest of the world in terms of rural economies. It has been about issues to do with the countryside or small schools or rural bus services, but not about what economy and what package of deals made by the UK Government would be the best one for the rural economy - and that will have to be altered quickly, as the car industry, cities, Scotland, Wales will definitely ...Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are all going to have a place at the table in the negotiations, but other interests won’t. The LGA will be consulted, but the LGA itself is a club representing all sorts of different interests...”

“The whole purpose of leaving the EU, I thought, was to get sovereignty back to Westminster, that’s the major democratic purpose, so I think a lot of it will have to be voted through by Westminster and MP’s will not vote through things that are bad for rural interests, the car industry, Scotland, you name it. When it comes to it, they will vote in blocks and against cross parties where necessary to get what they want. County Councils Network, I made this point when we were talking before we started, effectively stopped acadamisation. It was Conservative leaders of County Councils who put their foot down, worked with Conservatives in Parliament... it was a very interesting piece of politics, to break the Government’s authority. We have seen from that how Local Government using its MP’s can change things. ...I do think it will come down to a more parliamentary solution. It was a referendum sure, a yes no vote, but nothing in Britain is ever black or white, a or b, for very long”.

BACHGROUND OVERALL SITUATION

The Executive considers that the RSN is now the only organisation left in a position to seek to bring together the rural voice at the national level both by direct working and through initiatives it undertakes.

There is no Rural Advocate, or Commission for Rural Communities anymore. The Regional Rural Forums, Action for Market Towns are all gone. There is no longer even a Rural Commission inside the LGA. There are, of course, many strong particular rural interests like the CLA, the NFU, CPRE, the Countryside Alliance, ACRE, and Plunkett, but they are all very sector-specific and the issues of concern to them relate to their particular activity. None of them can deal with rural governance or rural service issues in the round as they affect rural communities - whether those services are provided by the public, private, or voluntary/not for profit sectors. The RSN fills a very significant gap in that regard that has opened up over recent years.

The imperative of Brexit (both pre and post 2020), in many ways now forces our hand. Somebody has to attempt to co-ordinate the overall rural argument. In doing so it has to be able to present a validly formed consensus view, supported by evidence, from the collective voice of rural interests, incorporating, as far as possible, the views of rural people and rural areas generally. Thanks to the elected mandate of its member authorities RSN has the democratic legitimacy to offer to do this. If rural areas do not seek common voice then, as Tony Travers put it “... **unless the rural voice is strong, it won’t be heard. And the lobby has to be one that will have to work more powerfully now than ever before because trade associations working for let’s say the car industry, will be, and rightly, working very hard**”. Looking post 2020, as the EU has always been more supportive of rural initiatives than Westminster has been, it’s highly likely rural areas will generally receive even less governmental support than they do at the moment unless the rural voice can successfully make itself heard.

PART 1: RSN – Strategically important for the future sustainability of the organisation.

1.1 OUR FIRST PRIORITY - SUSTAINABILITY

Unashamedly, the first priority for us is that we find a formula of costs and services to members which allows RSN to survive and progress as the public sector world gets tougher and as the organisation's personnel changes.

Put quite bluntly if the RSN cannot be sustained all that we presently do and propose to do will not happen and national rural arguments will fail to be researched, collated and advanced or heard. Rural areas will be the losers

1.2 MEMBERSHIP AND EQUITABLE AUTHORITY CONTRIBUTIONS

We have to change the way we charge authorities. At the moment we mostly charge all authorities the same amount.

'Subscriptions' are now, however, regarded as a form of perk and are cut by hard pressed authorities on that basis. No longer should our income be considered as a subscription. It has to be re-framed as an annual investment into an authority's rural areas to allow argument of the rural case applicable to every local authority area to be made. Thus if all authorities throughout England which should support the RSN as they have rural areas within their boundaries become members, the individual cost as recommended consequently reduces. Conversely it has to increase if authorities which are current members are not prepared to continue to give support. (Section 3 and Recommendation 8 below refer)

We need to achieve a balance in that charge between authorities with smaller and larger rural populations. Otherwise as authorities are forced by the economics of austerity to become larger and larger operative units we will be left with much lower overall income. Thus part of the basis for the RSN charge should be an amount per head of rural population across an authority's area (with the remainder being a flat rate fixed sum).

If the RSN is to argue all rural disadvantage/anomalies across all services the future charge will need to reflect that. A slight overall increase will be needed to cover the increased number of bases being covered.

No longer can the organisation and its members rely on voluntary input. It cannot continue to rely on Chief Officers putting in circa £50k p.a of unpaid work. (In addition the element for which they are remunerated is far from the going rate.) At some stage they will wish to retire and the position will then certainly change. The budget will, over the coming 5 years, need to be increased gradually to reflect that if the organisation is to survive. Experience shows us that if we are to have real impact in relation to rural issues we will need a budget in the region of £350k a year.

RECOMMENDATION ONE

In order to address the issues facing the organisation as described above, the future level of charge for RSN membership be as set out in Appendix A attached commencing on the 1st April 2018

1.3 COMPARISON STATISTICS

The Executive believes the RSN needs to undertake a constant examination of key statistics (beyond RSG per head) to show how rural is under-supported across the board and to track what progress is being made. This major plank of the argument for our existence has to be continually demonstrated in a forceful and very prominent exposition of the facts in clear tabular form.

We have made a start on this and an example of such a table is given in **Appendix B**.

In future we believe the RSN needs to seek to expand the present Financial Service so that it also comments on other areas of public sector financial work. This has to be THE hand to play as RSG and an Annual Settlement fade. We consider it right to seek if we can develop some home expertise with a nominated lead “officer” per area. Funding areas such as **Police, Fire, Health, Public Health, Transport, and Schools** should be included, although we must be careful not to duplicate the work of others. This work should fall into the Sparse Rural side of the organisation (and of course it’s Sub Groups).

The above is aimed at developing the essential message that the rural resident gets unfair funding allocations and therefore a below par service package across the spectrum and that matters left unchecked would undoubtedly deteriorate further. We acknowledge that the RSN should not be seen as always concentrating on “the negatives” but nevertheless feel that we need a much broader and deeper range of current data available to us to aid our representative work.

RECOMMENDATION TWO

- (a) That as part of both the future representational role of the RSN and the services from the RSN to individual member authorities a suggested compendium of key rural statistics be developed and maintained.**
- (b) That we seek to develop some home expertise with a nominated lead “officer” per area for funding areas like Police, Fire, Health, Public Health, Transport, and Schools (which should fall into the Sparse Rural side of the organisation and its Sub Groups).**

1.4 WESTMINSTER

The Executive is absolutely certain that the RSN's relationship with Parliamentarians is paramount. We need to alter our emphasis at Westminster to seek to campaign much harder across a broader base.

Going forward we envisage three very active groupings of Parliamentarians:

- (a) Rural Fair Share Group of MPs in the Commons which has shown how successful these groups can be.
- (b) A Rural Issues Group to take up and campaign on rural issues as they arise allied to the Rural Services APPG which would meet at least twice a year.
- (c) A Grouping of Rural Peers operating in the House of Lords. (we would need to work this up)

The Issues Group would give a strong base for MPs' arguments about the need for rural support in a post Brexit world.

All these would, as indicated, be backed up by the present APPG which might meet less frequently (all APPGs must meet at least twice a year under Parliamentary rules).

RECOMMENDATION THREE

We recommend particular parliamentary emphasis on running the three groups of parliamentarians and peers referred to above in addition to the APPG.

1.5 SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON RURAL VULNERABILITY - RURAL ASSEMBLY informed by Rural England research and RSP Working Groups input.

The Executive is recommending a new "Rural Vulnerability Initiative" - possibly working alongside the Rural England Community Interest Company - as part of the RSN spread of Activities.

Over the past ten years rural residents have seen, amongst others, the following decline in local services:-

- A worrying percentage of local Doctors Surgeries have closed.
- Village pubs and shops have significantly reduced.

- Local Bus Services are reducing.
- The percentage of people over 65 living in rural areas has increased by over 4% and now will comprise towards one in four of the rural population (while in predominantly urban areas that increase has been 0.9% and only one in six of the population falls into that age range). By 2039, one third of the rural population is likely to be over 65.
- The internet revolution which has been of benefit to many people in England has, in rural areas, been marred by poor telecommunication and broadband provision. It is clear that the countryside will always struggle behind technological advancement nationally due to lack of commercial economies of scale.

In our view this is a massive rural problem that will grow more acute over the coming years. The Executive considers that it is vital that as a rural organisation championing the rural cause, the RSN gives full consideration to both the problem of rural vulnerability and initiatives that can be taken to assist. If the membership agrees this will be developed for further detailed consideration following discussion with other key partners.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR

That the membership agrees:

- (i) that it is vital, that as a rural organisation championing the rural cause, the RSN gives full consideration to both the problem of “Vulnerability” in the rural context and about initiatives that can be taken to assist; and**
- (ii) that this be developed for further detailed consideration following discussion with other key partners.**

PART 2: NEW RSN ACTIVITIES – Strategically Important to England’s Rural Areas & Communities in a post BREXIT world.

2.1 BREXIT

Britain’s departure from the European Union and where and how matters proceed, together with the outcomes arising from that move are absolutely key factors in relation to the future economic, and social, position in which rural areas will be placed.

Therefore we are making a firm recommendation in this area which we hope to take forward immediately.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE

That the RSN, with its democratically representational legitimacy, seeks to bring together key rural voices from across all sectors to develop a position statement and collective voice about the requirements of rural areas to fulfil their full economic and social potential for the benefit of the UK as a whole, in relation to both:-

(a) the period to 2020 as the terms of the UK’s withdrawal from membership of the EU are negotiated; and

(b) post 2020.

2.2 DEVELOPING A STRONG COHESIVE RURAL VOICE

We want to ensure that each Sounding Board and the Rural Panel (hopefully funded through Rural England’s operation) comprise each at least some 300 people.

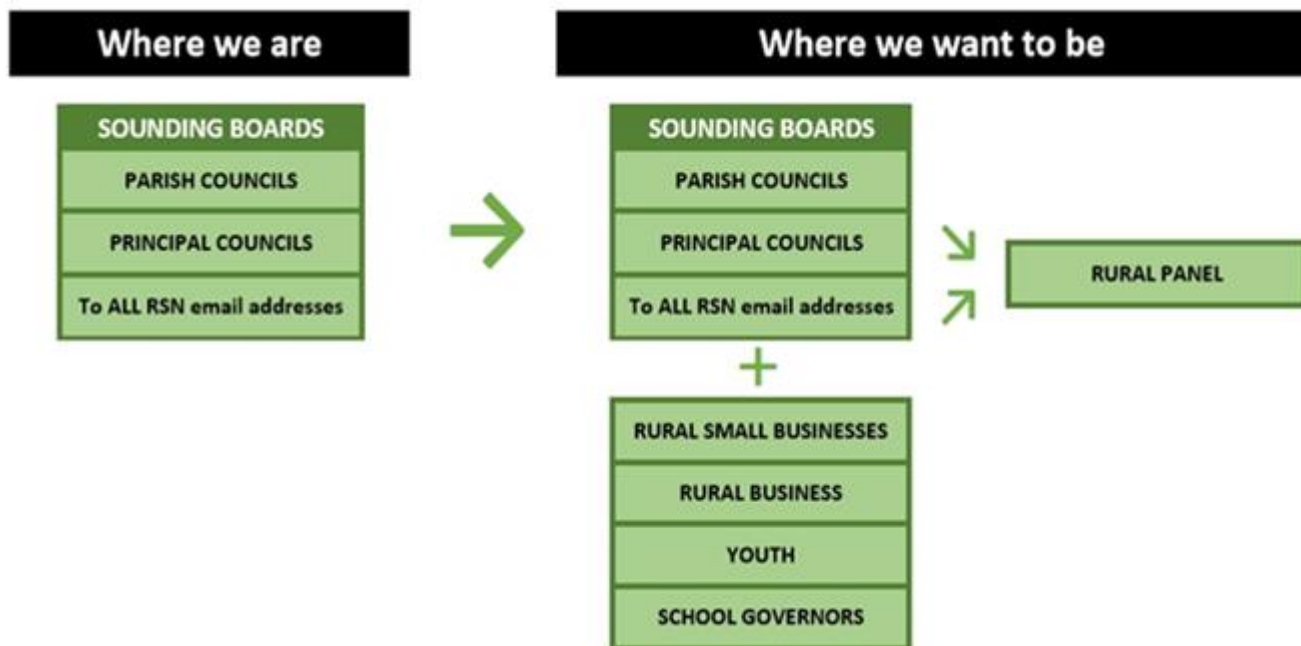
This should materially expand the mechanisms we can employ to substantiate that we ourselves are expressing ‘THE rural view’.

We recommend the following:-

RECOMMENDATION SIX

(A) SOUNDING BOARDS AND A RURAL PANEL

It is recommended that we expand our consultative processes as follows.



2.3 HARNESSING COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC ENDORSEMENT FOR RURAL CONCERNS AND INPERATIVES.

The Executive considers that there is a need to achieve a process (possibly a biennial 'Rural Meeting') that enables comment on, and expands on the expressed views from the rural sounding boards and panel beyond the RSN's own discrete mechanisms.

At the present time practically all of the rural views expressed come from individual bodies and therefore lack any 'united' voice. For example, the RSN's rural financial work is not endorsed by any wider forum because no such forum exists. When we move to Brexit considerations there won't automatically be a process involving the public/wider rural community to support those groups most affected. Important rural stances that are relatively non-controversial in a rural context don't get supported because no central forum or process exists.

If we look at the Sounding Boards and intended Panel above, they constitute a useful device to establish what appears to be the consensus view, however we feel, this does not quite meet the need identified by Professor Tony Travers. This seems to require a system which can underpin and articulate the essential rural messages from public consultative processes. We suggest this should be some sort of 'Meeting' or 'Forum' sitting outside RSN. This could potentially be initiated once every two years and will obviously have to run on a very small budget.

Any such system also clearly needs to work in tandem with the Rural Coalition.

Many of RSN's existing elements could feed into such a process and "Meeting".

- (a) We plan sounding boards and (with Rural England) a rural panel to feed in consensus views.
- (b) We have the largest rural e-mail distribution list.
- (c) We use that list already to canvas views and on occasions to seek evidence.
- (d) We already run an Annual Rural Conference which this 'event' could be happily positioned adjacent to.
- (e) We have in the Rural Assembly a body which could do much of the initial questionnaire development.

However to have credibility we suggest it would perhaps need the support of the Universities with the greatest interest in rural matters in the Country as well as other Rural organisations like Acre and Plunkett and the Parish organisation 'NALC'.

We would recommend that such a system needs to be in place by 2019 when discussion on the successor systems from the EU are likely to rise to the top of the agenda.

The decision about the constituent groups to be represented at such a 'Meeting' is of course vital. Clearly Principal and Parish/Town Councillors in RSN membership are important but so are Youth Representatives, School representatives, Landowners, Farmers, LEPS, and Small Businesses. Who is invited and how a balance achieved for such a meeting is obviously a discussion point.

This all needs discussion with interested parties but as an Executive we would like to see the following emerging.

- A fulcrum role for the RSN's Rural Assembly at particular stages of the process.
- Our e-network being used for general consultation to 'backbone' the process (further enhancing the value of our network)

- Our Sounding Boards and any Rural Panel outcomes being employed to gauge rural opinion and to inform the agenda items for the event.
- A block of at least 15% of the attendees at the event being reserved for Local Authority representatives.

RECOMMENDATION SEVEN

We recommend we discuss the concept of some form of biennial Rural Meeting with the organisations detailed above and report back in due course.

PART 3: RSN OPERATIONAL ISSUE CONSEQUENT ON PARTS 1 AND 2.

3.1 THE ESSENTIAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT MESSAGE

The financial future for local authorities is changing for all principal local authorities as the revenue support grant regime is proposed to give way to one driven by business rates (and Council Tax).

- (a) Even in a business rate system the old financial arguments will never disappear as they come from the world involving needs assessment and formulae. They will be as relevant as they have been since 1974. Periodic reviews will take place, arguments will be presented and government will be required to make decisions that will please some and infuriate others. We have to be at the centre of this work. RSN as Sparse Rural is the only organisation able to represent “rural” in these **financially** based arguments.
- (b) Authorities need to see growth across their areas - particularly business rate growth as they will be allowed to retain this income (or at least some of it). The mass of green countryside in their areas with limited potential in this context due to poor services, environmental designations, restricted grant opportunities, difficult demographics and second rate technology, is not an inviting prospect to many businesses. RSN need to be with those authorities fighting all the issues involved to make sure respectable growth can be achieved in authorities’ rural areas in some ways (or there is proper recognition of these issues in the Business Rates re-distribution processes). These **economic and social** arguments involving the RSN’s Rural Assembly work will be equally as vital to ‘rural councils’ as our direct financial work. There are, by our calculation, 240 authorities with such a rural interest who will very significantly benefit through our work, representing to them a massive

beneficial multiplier of the annual cost of our services to them through this work alone.

Our importance to many authorities will, therefore, actually be doubling as a result of the move to a business rate regime.

The Executive firmly believes the RSN needs to do all it possibly can to get all these 240 authorities involved working as a whole if rural arguments are to prevail to the extent we would wish so that a level playing field can be achieved. Those who shy away from involvement simply sell both themselves and all other rural authorities short by large amounts simply to save a very small sum.

RECOMMENDATION EIGHT

The list of the authorities which are not in current membership and which we hope can be persuaded into assisting us to the extent shown is attached as Appendix 'D' with the level of charge recommended set out therein. Obviously if this new income can be brought in under the new charging system now recommended the charges to individual members would reduce as the overall operational resource would have expanded.

3.2 ANNUAL MEETINGS TIMETABLE

The Executive considers that this should alter to reflect both our own new initiatives and the new Business Rate Retention system.

The Executive suggests 4 meetings a year to allow detailed financial and rural issue debate over individual days. This should strengthen the Rural Assembly which will then be perceived as being the independent entity intended when it was created in place of the LGA's former Rural Commission. We would also timetable the proposed Rural Social Care and Health Group so that it runs parallel with proceedings on other London days.

RECOMMENDATION NINE

That a revised timetable of meetings as outlined below be approved:-

January - **Sparse Rural** 12 to 3pm: The Chair of the Parliamentary Rural Fair Share Group be invited to this Meeting.

April - **Rural Assembly** 12 to 3pm: (Preceded by a Meeting of the Social Care & Health Group at 11 a.m.) Seek to involve Chair of the EFRA Select Committee and the Chair of the Rural Issues Parliamentary Group.

July - **Sparse Rural** 12 to 3pm: (LEPS and Mayors to be invited?). The Minister for Business Development to be invited to this meeting.

(Sept - Conference in Cheltenham)

November - **AGM Rural Service Network and Rural Assembly Day** 12 to 3pm: A DEFRA Minister would be invited to this meeting. (Preceded by a Meeting of the Social Care & Health Group at 11 a.m.)

Backed up by four Rural Seminars held in varying regional locations throughout the year

Each Rural Assembly meeting would receive a Sounding Board report and consider a topic for the next one

Each meeting would consider whether they wished to write to a Minister on a topic and what press release they wished to focus upon

3.3 COMMUNICATIONS

The Executive will, at its next meeting consider a “Communications Strategy” for the RSN and its operations as we consider this to be of vital importance to future success.

CONCLUSION

The Executive presents nine recommendations about how we might stabilise and then shape the Rural Services Network so that it can continue to play a vital role for all the rural areas of England over the coming decades.

In addition the Executive has presented the best options as we see them of harnessing and hopefully establishing rural opinion in a radical way at a really critical time.

I commend the Report and its Recommendations.

CECILIA MOTLEY

CHAIR RURAL SERVICES NETWORK

FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE RSN EXECUTIVE

	Sub 2017/18, £	2018/19 Sub	2019/20 Sub	2020/21 Sub	2021/22 Sub	2022/23) Sub based on rural population (after £1500 contribution), £:
Allerdale	2145	2279	2529	2683	2855	3000
Ashford	1850	1849	1961	2030	2107	2196
Aylesbury Vale	998	0	0	0	0	0
Babergh	2145	2170	2386	2518	2666	2835
Barnsley	495	515	535	555	575	595
Bath and North East Somerset	499	519	539	559	579	599
Bassetlaw	499	515	535	555	575	595
Blaby	495	515	535	555	575	595
Boston	1850	1688	1749	1786	1827	1875
Bradford	495	515	535	555	575	595
Braintree	2145	2256	2499	2648	2815	3000
Breckland	2145	2554	2893	3000	3000	3000
Broadland	499	0	0	0	0	0
Bromsgrove	495	515	535	555	575	595
Buckinghamshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calderdale	495	515	535	555	575	595
Canterbury	495	515	535	555	575	595
Cherwell	499	519	539	559	579	599
Cheshire East	2145	3844	4599	5061	5579	6000
Cheshire West and Chester	2145	2894	3342	3617	3925	4278
Chichester	2145	2088	2278	2394	2523	2672
Chorley	495	515	535	555	575	595
York	495	515	535	555	575	595
Cornwall	7645	6000	6000	6000	6000	6000
Cotswold	2145	2169	2385	2517	2664	2834
Craven	2145	1886	2011	2087	2172	2270
Cumbria	2145	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Dartford	495	515	535	555	575	595
Daventry	2145	2092	2282	2399	2529	2679

Derbyshire	495	519	539	559	579	599
Derbyshire Dales	2145	2074	2259	2372	2499	2644
Devon	2145	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Dorset	1800	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Dover	998	0	0	0	0	0
County Durham	6335	6000	6000	6000	6000	6000
East Cambridgeshire	2145	2177	2395	2528	2677	2849
East Devon	2145	2291	2546	2702	2877	3000
East Hampshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Hertfordshire	1850	1828	1933	1998	2070	2153
East Lindsey	2145	2601	2956	3000	3000	3000
East Northamptonshire	2145	1904	2034	2114	2203	2306
East Riding of Yorkshire	3537	4737	5779	6000	6000	6000
East Sussex	1850	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Eden	2145	1924	2061	2145	2238	2346
Essex	1800	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Fenland	2145	2037	2209	2315	2434	2570
Forest Heath	2145	1982	2138	2233	2339	2462
Forest of Dean	2145	2131	2334	2458	2598	2758
Gateshead	495	515	535	555	575	595
Gedling	495	515	535	555	575	595
Guildford	495	515	535	555	575	595
Hambleton	2145	2220	2451	2593	2752	2935
Hampshire	1850	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Harborough	2145	2148	2357	2485	2628	2792
Harrogate	1850	2051	2229	2337	2459	2599
Herefordshire, County of	2919	3449	4076	4460	4890	5384
Hinckley and Bosworth	499	519	539	559	579	599
Horsham	2145	2142	2349	2475	2617	2779
Huntingdonshire	499	519	539	559	579	599
Isle of Wight	2145	3733	4451	4892	5385	5950
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	2145	2289	2542	2698	2872	3000
Lancashire	1800	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000

Lancaster	495	515	535	555	575	595
Leicestershire	1800	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Lewes	2145	1820	1923	1986	2057	2138
Lichfield	1800	1740	1817	1864	1917	1978
Lincolnshire	2145	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Maldon	2145	1998	2158	2256	2366	2492
Malvern Hills	2145	1816	1917	1980	2049	2129
Melton	2145	1907	2038	2118	2208	2311
Mendip	2145	2382	2666	2840	3000	3000
Mid Devon	2145	2128	2330	2454	2592	2751
Mid Suffolk	2145	2265	2511	2662	2830	3000
Mid Sussex	499	519	539	559	579	599
New Forest	1800	2145	2353	2480	2623	2786
Norfolk	2145	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Northamptonshire	1800	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
North Devon	2145	2001	2162	2261	2372	2499
North Dorset	2145	2054	2232	2341	2463	2604
North Lincolnshire	2735	2734	3131	3374	3647	3959
North Norfolk	2145	2320	2583	2745	2926	3000
North Somerset	2145	2772	3182	3433	3713	4036
North Warwickshire	2145	1960	2108	2199	2301	2417
North West Leicestershire	2145	1938	2079	2165	2262	2373
North Yorkshire	2145	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Northumberland	5491	5116	6000	6000	6000	6000
Nottinghamshire	1800	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Purbeck	2145	1804	1902	1962	2029	2106
Redcar and Cleveland	495	515	535	555	575	595
Ribble Valley	2145	1929	2067	2151	2246	2355
Richmondshire	2145	1920	2055	2137	2230	2336
Rother	2145	1883	2006	2082	2166	2263
Rotherham	495	515	535	555	575	595
Rugby	1850	1696	1759	1798	1841	1890
Rutland	2491	2103	2298	2417	2550	2703

Ryedale	2145	1918	2052	2135	2227	2333
Scarborough	2145	1880	2002	2077	2161	2257
Sedgemoor	2145	2092	2282	2399	2530	2680
Selby	1800	2158	2369	2499	2644	2811
Sevenoaks	2145	2157	2369	2499	2644	2810
Shepway	1850	1835	1943	2010	2084	2168
Shropshire	5150	5201	6000	6000	6000	6000
Solihull	495	515	535	555	575	595
Somerset	2145	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
South Cambridgeshire	2145	2419	2715	2896	3000	3000
South Derbyshire	499	519	539	559	579	599
South Hams	2145	2125	2326	2450	2588	2746
South Holland	2145	1958	2105	2195	2296	2412
South Kesteven	2145	2226	2460	2603	2764	2948
South Lakeland	2145	2337	2606	2771	2956	3000
South Norfolk	2145	2369	2648	2819	3000	3000
South Northamptonshire	2145	2186	2406	2541	2693	2866
South Oxfordshire	2145	2521	2850	3000	3000	3000
South Somerset	2145	2432	2732	2916	3000	3000
South Staffordshire	500	520	540	560	580	600
St Edmundsbury	2145	2051	2228	2336	2458	2597
Stafford	1850	1956	2103	2193	2294	2409
Staffordshire	2145	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Stratford-On-Avon	2145	2470	2782	2974	3000	3000
Stroud	2145	1883	2006	2081	2166	2263
Suffolk Coastal	2145	2191	2414	2550	2703	2878
Suffolk	2145	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Surrey	495	515	535	555	575	595
Sunderland	495	515	535	555	575	595
Swindon	495	515	535	555	575	595
Tandridge	499	519	539	559	579	599
Taunton Deane	1850	1868	1986	2059	2140	2233
Teignbridge	2145	2204	2431	2570	2725	2904

Telford and Wrekin	495	515	535	555	575	595
Tendring	495	515	535	555	575	595
Tewkesbury	2145	1852	1965	2034	2112	2201
Torridge	2145	2015	2181	2283	2397	2527
Tunbridge Wells	1850	1873	1992	2066	2148	2243
Uttlesford	2145	2141	2348	2474	2616	2778
Vale of White Horse	1800	2052	2230	2339	2461	2601
Wakefield	495	515	535	555	575	595
Waveney	499	519	539	559	579	599
Warwick	495	515	535	555	575	595
Warwickshire	495	515	535	555	575	595
Wealden	2145	2517	2845	3000	3000	3000
Wellingborough	495	0	0	0	0	0
West Berkshire	1800	0	0	0	0	0
West Devon	2145	1932	2072	2157	2252	2362
West Dorset	2145	2255	2498	2647	2814	3000
West Lindsey	2145	2217	2447	2589	2747	2928
West Oxfordshire	2145	2346	2618	2785	2972	3000
West Somerset	2145	1780	1870	1925	1987	2058
West Sussex	1800	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Winchester	4290	0	0	0	0	0
Worcestershire	499	515	535	555	575	595
Wychavon	2145	2425	2722	2904	3000	3000
Wycombe	495	515	535	555	575	595
Wyre Forest	300	0	0	0	0	0
	269358	281854	303730	315606	327482	339358

Money allocated in general grant assistance to Local Government by Government per head of population £ in urban areas £ in rural areas.

2014/15 Government Funded Non Ring-fenced Spending power per head

Predominantly Urban received £155.33 more than Predominantly Rural

2015/16 Government Funded Non Ring-fenced Spending power per head

Predominantly Urban received £128.78 more than Predominantly Rural

Money paid in Council Tax per head

2014/15 Council Tax per head

Predominantly Urban paid £79.96 less than Predominantly Rural

2015/16 Council Tax per head

Predominantly Urban paid £80.58 less than Predominantly Rural

Number of social housing starts nationally. Number of social housing starts in rural areas, number of starts in urban areas.

In 2012-13 the rate of local authority/housing association permanent dwellings completed in England per 1000 households were:

Major Urban 1.3

Rural-50 1.1

Rural-80 1.1

Average wage of people working in rural areas against that of people living in urban areas.

Workplace based median gross annual earnings, (£), 2013

Predominantly Urban £24,500

Predominantly Rural £19,900

Percentage of residents who have a bus or train service within half a mile of

their home.

Bus availability indicator (2012):

49% of rural villages, hamlets & isolated dwellings where the nearest bus stop is within a 13 minute walk and has a service at least once an hour

86% of rural town and fringe dwellings where the nearest bus stop is within a 13 minute walk and has a service at least once an hour

96% urban dwellings where the nearest bus stop is within a 13 minute walk and has a service at least once an hour

Housing Affordability Ratios

Ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile workplace-based earnings (2012)

Predominantly urban 7.1

Predominantly rural 7.9

APPENDIX 'C' - Future Directions Report.

INVOLVEMENT WITH RSN

Rules of Operation:

1. If receiving Rural Services Delivery Grant (RSDG) – Sparse Rural Fee is usually at (£2145 or £1850)
2. If not receiving RSDG and over 130 rural output area suggest - £500 Rural Assembly Fee
3. If less than 130 rural output areas – 1p per rural resident and an Associate member basis.
4. No involvement if less than 20 rural output areas or less than 3000 rural residents. *Isles of Scilly apart.

No:	Authority	Number of Rural Output Areas	Rural Population	Hoped for Contribution £
1	Amber Valley	79	23,764	237
2	Arun	85	25,666	256
3	Barrow	80	22,773	227
4	Basingstoke & Deane	148	45,289	500
5	Bedford	151	51,735	500
6	Blackburn	23	6,860	68
7	Bolsover	115	36,155	361
8	Bracknell Forest	9	23,340	233
9	Brentwood	68	21,0121	210
10	Brighton & Hove	5	5,589	55
11	Broadland	201	61,205	500
12	Bromley	12	3,490	34
13	Bromsgrove	63	19,914	199
14	Buckinghamshire	547	165,740	500
15	Bury	12	5,089	50
16	Cannock Chase	34	10,644	106
17	Carlisle	93	29,161	1,850
18	Chelmsford	104	33,617	336
19	Cherwell	132	44,530	500
20	Chiltern	289	25,966	500
21	Colchester	169	52,381	500
22	Corby	16	4,445	44
23	Dacorum	65	19,086	190
24	Darlington	44	13,173	131
25	Doncaster	135	42,705	500
26	East Dorset	72	21,054	500

Excluded any authority with less than 20 rural outputs areas or less than 3,000 rural inhabitants

No:	Authority	Number of Rural Output Areas	Rural Population	Hoped for Contribution £
27	East Hampshire	133	42,229	500
28	East Staffs	83	26,258	262
29	Eastleigh	40	12,201	122
30	Epping Forest	114	34,407	344
31	Fylde	54	15,944	159
32	Gloucestershire	605	177,017	500
33	Great Yarmouth	118	33,849	338
34	Gravesham	61	19,498	194
35	Hart	87	28,580	285
36	Hertsmere	48	15,161	151
37	Hertfordshire	420	128,584	500
38	High Peak	98	27,903	279
39	Hillingdon	25	7,563	75
40	Hydburn	27	7,616	76
41	Isle of Scilly*	9	2,280	500
42	Kent	1,300	405,100	500
43	Kettering	64	19,485	194
44	Kirklees	151	49,661	500
45	Leeds	146	43,035	500
46	Maidstone	141	44,700	500
47	Mansfield	44	13,738	137
48	Medway	91	29,375	23
49	Milton Keynes	75	29,406	294
50	Mole Valley	73	22,002	220
51	Newcastle-on-Tyne	21	5,733	57
52	Newcastle-Under-Lyme	22	29,375	293
53	NE Derbyshire	68	20,193	201
54	NE Lincs	51	16,060	160
55	N Herts	79	23,156	231
56	North Tyneside	32	8,584	85
57	Pendle	43	12,416	124
58	Peterborough	70	22,142	221
59	Preston	27	8,170	81
60	Reigate & Banstead	22	7,061	70
61	Rochford	37	11,669	116
62	Rossendale	11	3,559	35

Excluded any authority with less than 20 rural outputs areas or less than 3,000 rural inhabitants

No:	Authority	Number of Rural Output Areas	Rural Population	Hoped for Contribution £
63	Rotherham	91	25,919	259
64	Rushcliffe	207	64,443	500
65	Sefton	14	3,966	39
66	Sheffield	32	9,603	96
67	South Bucks	67	21,613	216
68	South Glos	113	34,715	347
69	St Albans	41	13,640	136
70	St Helens	33	9,818	98
71	Staffs M	102	31,573	2,145
72	Stockton-on-Tees	24	7,719	77
73	Surrey Heath	46	14,481	144
74	Swale	102	33,684	336
75	Test Valley	141	42,512	500
76	Thanet	32	9,086	90
77	Three Rivers	15	4,735	47
78	Thurrock	65	20,160	201
79	Tonbridge & Malling	130	43,556	435
80	Warrington	75	25,541	255
81	Waverley	108	34,241	500
82	Welwyn & Hatfield	43	13,261	132
83	West Berks	181	57,472	500
84	West Lanes	135	42,408	500
85	Weymouth & Portland	45	12,962	129
86	Wigan	40	11,740	117
87	Wiltshire	729	230,049	6,000
88	Winchester	210	68,696	2,145
88	Windsor & M	51	15,094	150
89	Wokingham	90	27,773	277
90	Wyre	103	32,033	320
91	Wyre Forest	69	20,966	209

Excluded any authority with less than 20 rural outputs areas or less than 3,000 rural inhabitants

Rural Services Partnership & Network Statement about Modern Slavery Act

The Rural Services Partnership Ltd (also trading as the Rural Services Network) is a not for dividend Company Limited by Guarantee. It is a membership organisation which provides a range of services to its member rural local authorities and organisations serving rural communities. It acknowledges that Slavery can have a devastating impact on individual victims, their families and wider communities. The Rural Services Partnership/Network will take steps to ensure compliance with all due diligence, that Slavery and Human Trafficking are not present within its own organisation and are not prevalent within the (very limited) supply chains that it uses.

The Rural Services Partnership/Network does not directly employ any staff. It will, however, take steps to ensure that contractors that it uses for services are able to comply with the Asylum, Immigration and Nationality Act 2006, and are asked to supply evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK.

The Executive of the Rural Services Partnership Network is comprised of Members of Local Authorities and Directors of the Limited Company. The Rural Services Partnership/Network expects all Councillors to demonstrate the highest standards of conduct and behaviour. Each Councillor should abide by their formal Code of Conduct within their Local Authority. They should also record and declare personal and prejudicial interests as part of their Local Authority membership.

Note of last SPARSE Rural Special Interest Group (Rural Assembly Sub-SIG) meeting

Title:	SPARSE Rural Special Interest Group – The Rural Assembly Meeting
Date:	Monday 11 July 2016
Venue:	Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	<p>Note of the Previous Meeting</p> <p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting..</p> <p><u>Decision</u></p> <p>Members agreed the minutes of the 11th April 2016 meeting.</p>	
2	<p>Minutes of the Executive Meeting - 20th June 2016</p> <p><u>Decision</u></p> <p>Members noted the minutes of the 20th June 2016 Executive Meeting.</p>	
3	<p>Rural Development Programme</p> <p>Andy Dean, Assistant Director of the Rural Services Network (RSN), updated members on the ERDP (rural development programme) meeting with DEFRA. The following commitments were made on EU funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There will be no change in short-term processing of EU claims.• There will be no future financial commitments made until the uncertainty over EU funding has been resolved. <p>Members responded with the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brexit should not affect the availability of funding, and Defra should follow the Prime Minister's guidance of business as usual.• A letter should be drafted ASAP seeking urgent clarification on EU funding and timescales from the relevant Minister at Defra. Also an article should be prepared for LG First Magazine on this topic. <p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Andy Dean to draft the letter to the Minister, and the article for First Magazine.</p>	

4 Defra LEP roundtable update

Andy Dean updated members on the latest meeting between LEPs and Defra of which the RSN is an attendee, including:

- There was much discussion on the uncertainty around EU funding and a call for more clarity for both short and long-term projects.
- Growth pilots were received well by Defra.
- There was an update on mobile infrastructure including the current national network coverage statistics, 5G, mast sharing proposals, and EE's plans for micro networks which promise to improve rural mobile coverage.
- There was a presentation on a pending promotion for rural food and drink tourism.

Members responded with the following comments:

- Mobile coverage for rural areas is poor despite Defra promises for ten years. This is having a detrimental effect on businesses.
- The statistics on mobile and broadband coverage are distorted by the differences in population densities between rural and urban areas.
- EE have mentioned plans to utilise the emergency airwaves service to extend some networks. This seems like a promising idea worth pursuing.
- Government plans for 2G and 3G networks are not ambitious enough and should be upgraded to 4G and 5G.
- The RSN should explore what proportion of rural areas have good mobile and broadband coverage to avoid using statistics distorted by urban area populations.

Action

Graham Biggs agreed to survey RSN members on the mobile and broadband coverage in members' rural areas and report the findings at the next Sparse meeting.

5 Election of Councillors to fill current vacancies until the AGM

The Chair updated the group on the two candidates filling the Vice Chair vacancies until the AGM.

Decision

The following be appointed until the next AGM

1. Vice Chair South East; Cllr Janet Duncton from West Sussex County Council
2. Vice Chair Without Portfolio; Cllr Sue Sanderson from Cubria County Council

6 Budget Report

Graham Biggs, updated members on the budget report, including: receipt of membership subs being up slightly in comparison with the same period last year, and that there are large consultancy fees expected due to the work around the implications of 100% Business Rates Retention

Decision

Members agreed the budget.

7 The Big Debate - Brexit

The Chair stated the importance of rural areas voicing their concerns and priorities for a post-Brexit deal, focussing on what's important for rural councils and communities.

Members responded with the following comments:

- A comprehensive list of what EU funding rural areas currently benefit from would be advantageous for beginning post-Brexit negotiations.
- EU level regulations which disadvantage rural authorities should be considered in any forward looking objectives.
- Many farmers need both continuity of the levels of funding and subsidies as received from the EU, and assurances of no new restrictions on migrant labour in order to remain sustainable businesses.
- Agricultural bureaucracy is an excessive burden on farmers and needs reviewing post-Brexit..
- There is an opportunity to lobby for a more comprehensive devolution package as a consequence of Brexit which should not be overlooked.
- Affordable housing in rural areas should form a part of the post Brexit considerations. This may be an ideal time to initiate a thorough review of rural areas, their funding, and the forces of change they are, and will be subject to.

Graham Biggs, responded to these comments stating that it would be advantageous to release a statement from the Sparse Group over the next few weeks voicing the group's concerns over financial stability for rural areas, especially those hardest hit in the austerity programme since 2010. Furthermore, that the group should support the LGA, who has a place at the table for Brexit negotiations.

Graham Biggs also agreed with the proposition that the Government should launch a thorough review of the needs of rural areas. The Chair agreed this point and suggested that these ideas be fed into the rural conference.

8 Ofcom consultation

The Chair introduced the report followed by Graham Biggs stating that the RSN had responded to the report which is lacking in multiple key areas.

Decision

Members noted the RSN response to the Ofcom report.

9 RSN Events – the Rural Conference

Graham Biggs updated members on the plans for conference, including a move to include more Brexit discussion and speakers towards this end in light of the referendum result.

The Chair asked members to ensure that they attend the rural conference and promote the event in their councils to both members and officers. The Chair also agreed to send a letter to RSN members promoting the conference.

Decision

Members noted the decision to change the conference programme to better reflect the Brexit decision, and the Chair agreed to send promotional letters to RSN members.

10 Report on RSP Service Groups

Graham Biggs updated members on the following RSN service groups:

- a) Housing** – Andy Dean, will be attending the Rural Housing Conference and will update members in due course.
- b) Health** – the decision has been taken to run the Health Network as a free service for a fixed term in order to build an extensive database. There will however, be a health conference in January/February 2017, which will offset some of the lost revenue.
- c) Crime** – the Rural Crime Network's (RCN) AGM is to be held next week, from which a decision as to its future work programme is expected. Furthermore, the RCN has funded research into the funding formula for the police which presently disadvantages rural forces.
- d) Fire** – in an upcoming meeting of the Fire Group, there is an expectation that the group's views on Business Rate Retention will be explored.
- e) Transport** – the transport agenda is pursued through the LGA's Transport special interest group which sends out a quarterly bulletin.

Decision

Members noted the update.

Rural Services Network Executive Meeting

Wednesday 26th September 2016. Westminster Archive Centre, London

Present:- Cllr Cecilia Motley (Chairman); Cllr Lewis Strange (County); Cllr Derrick Haley (East); Cllr Janet Duncton (South); Cllr Peter Stevens (ex portfolio); Cllr Sue Sanderson (ex-portfolio) Revd Richard Kirlew (community);John Birtwistle (Transport) Stewart Horne (Business); Christina Watson (Youth);

Officers: - Graham Biggs; David Inman; Andy Dean; Kerry Booth.

Apologies: - Cllr Robert Heseltine (First Vice Chair); Cllr Adam Paynter (South West); Cllr Gordon Nicholson (North)

1. Notes of Previous Meeting:-

Agreed as a correct record

2. Notes of Last Main meeting.

Agreed as a correct record.

3. RSN Rural Conference 2016.

It was considered the event had been very successful. Numbers had been marginally up on the previous year and a small surplus had been generated. The Executive members who had attended had received good feedback from those attending. Jessica Sellick's note on proceedings was received. It was felt the event should be held in Cheltenham again in 2017 and the University's kind offer of free accommodation again should be accepted with thanks. This free accommodation made the event viable and sustainable.

4. Budget.

A budget statement was circulated by the Chief Executive, Graham Biggs. The current situation saw a budget that was on target but 10k of RSN member subscription and £4K of RSP subscriptions were still outstanding

5. Arrangements with Pixel Consulting.

Graham detailed arrangements for the continuation of a financial service to members now that Dan Bates had moved to work with the financial consultants Pixel. The service included the financial service previously given but also now included periodic newsletters. The Executive were happy with these arrangements.

6. The Executive received four papers from the Director and the Chief Executive. These papers were a document entitled 'Future Directions' setting how it was considered the RSN organisation could go forward over the next five years; a document entitled 'Representing Rural ' discussing how consensus opinion across English rural areas might be identified and harnessed and two Addendum one showing the variance between the rural population and the overall population in the constituted shire areas of England; and the second showing how all the 240 council areas with

significant rural population could theoretically be involved in the representation of these rural areas as a whole through RSN membership.

The reports contained suggestions about future organisational sustainability; a revised system of service charge; suggestions in relation to future LGA based meetings, rural-urban comparison, the suggested future Sparse Rural Financial Service, a rural vulnerability initiative, and how rural could be best represented as an entity.

Detailed discussion took place on the documents presented and the Executive agreed the various recommendations some with slight wording changes. A report from the Executive would be prepared for presentation to the RSN AGM on the fourteenth of November. This report would be first sent to the Chair and then agreement from the rest of the Executive would be sought by e mail. It would then constitute the formal decisions/recommendations of the Executive on the issues concerned.

RSN (INCOME & EXPENDITURE) 2016/17 WITH								
ACTUAL TO END SEPTEMBER AND								
ESTIMATES FOR 2017/18								
					ACTUAL TO	ESTIMATE	ACTUAL TO	ESTIMATE
					END	2016/17	END	2017/18
					2015/16	(March 2016)	OCTOBER	
INCOME					£	£	£	£
Balances at Bank B/Fwd net of o/s cheques					19388	12304		18004
DEBTORS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR (NET OF VAT)								
Seminar Fees					205			
Rural Crime Network						8012	8012	
Infrastructure Group					500			
Rural Health Network						0		
Housing Group Related						1100	1100	
Coastal Communities Alliance (Gross)						1037	1037	1037
Fire Group						100	100	
RHA Websire Development Contributions						1300	1300	
Subscriptions								
SPARSE Rural/Rural Assembly					241414	256840	211400	256345
SPARSE Fighting Fund Levy					4150			
SPARSE Rura/RA held by NKDC at Year End					5250			
SPARSE Rural/Rur Assbly/ held by NKDC at Month end							39500	
VOL CONTRIBS held by NKDC at Month end							15902	
Contribs to Business Rates Campaign					1000			
2016 VOLUNTARY CONTRIBS re BUSINESS RATES						44102	24500	
CCN Contrib to Finance Study						4863		
RSP					17166	12025	8347	10630
Commercial Partner First Group Buses					10000	10000	10000	10000

					ACTUAL TO	ESTIMATE	ACTUAL TO	ESTIMATE
					END	2016/17	END	2017/18
					2015/16	(March 2016)	OCTOBER	
					£	£	£	£
Subscriptions from Rural Health Group					1975	0		
Income from Rural Housing Group					5134	6895	6895	7115
Income from Fire & Rescue Group					1390	2480	2480	2975
OTHER INCOME								
Conferences/Seminars								
Rural Conference Income					13304		15360	
Rural Conference Surplus						5000		5000
Rural Health Conference					3959	4500		4500
Rural Housing Conference Income					1710	0		
Service Level Agreements								
Recharges ro Rural Crime Network@					19500	25000	12500	25660
Contras re RCN@					32484		34283	
Recharges to Rural England CIC (Back Office Support)					600	1200		1200
Coastal Communities Alliance Gross)					3113	4149	1037	4149
Contributions to costs of Parish Guide to Affordable Housing					500			
Contributions to RHA Website Development					1700	450	450	
Miscellaneous								
Contras					215		784	
VAT								
VAT Refund					13240	706	10690	
VAT Received					12870		9623	
TOTAL INCOME					410767	402063	415300	346615

				ACTUAL TO	ESTIMATE	ACTUAL TO	ESTIMATE
				END	2016/17	END	2017/18
				2015/16	(March 2016)	OCTOBER	
				£	£	£	£
EXPENDITURE							
VAT Paid on Goods & Services				27421		20183	
CONTRACTS FOR SERVICES ACTIVITY BREAKDOWN (EST)							
Corporate Management		DI,GCB, & AD1 100%. KB 40%		55662	66000	38481	66200
Finance/Performance and Data Analy		, DW, 100%, KB 20%		29508	27745	16802	28300
Communications (incl Seminars)		Rose Regen,JT, AD3 100%		6831	8580	2862	11000
Administrative and Technical Support		RI, WI,WC,BA,MB 100%		46694	51853	27264	54353
Research and Monitoring		BW, JH, 100%		14990	11837	4261	11837
Service Group Networking		KB40%		3100	8181	4736	8345
Economic Development Service		AD5 100%		5000	5000	2917	5000
Coastal Communities Contract				3650	3650	1825	3650
Rural Health Network				3000	750	750	
Rural Crime Network		NP 100%		17000	20200	11784	20604
Rural Communities Housing Group		AD2 100%		6500	6500	3792	6630
Rural Transport Group		AD6 100%		2000	2000	1167	2040
OTHER EXPENDITURE				265			
Rural Fair Shares/Business Rates "Campaigns"							
Rural Fair Shares Campaign etc.				22376	8450	8450	14450
Pixell Financial Service					10550	10550	10550
Fair Shares Campaign Media Relations				1868	2245		2300
SPEND FROM VOLUNTARY CONTRIBS (BUSINESS RATES)					44102	10398	
Conferences/Seminars							
Rural Conference				9394		10339	
Rural Conference Drinks Reception					1144	1144	1300
Rural Health Network & Conference				1388	1900	368	1900
Rural Housing National Conference				1262	0		
Seminar Costs				662	600	40	600

					ACTUAL TO	ESTIMATE	ACTUAL TO	ESTIMATE
					END	2016/17	END	2017/18
					2015/16	(March 2016)	OCTOBER	
					£	£	£	£
Service Level Agreements								
Rural Crime Network Refund of overpayment@					20082			
RCN -CONTRAS @					23340		31264	
RCN Travel & Subsistence					825	1800	1400	1500
Rural Housing Group (RHG)					169	1300	626	1300
RHG Website Development					1000			
Rural England CIC to re-charge)					10786		424	
Rural Inland CIC transfer of part of First Group Support						7000	7000	7000
APPG/Rural Issues Group Costs					620	1200	579	1200
Rural England/Vulnerability Service Contrib					6750	3000	3000	3000
Business Expenses								
RSN Online etc.					24180	25174	9874	27174
Travel and Subsistence					16797	18000	9576	17000
Print, Stat,e mail, phone & Broadband@					4116	5000	1800	4500
Meeting Room Hire					2810	2000	581	1500
Website and Data Base software etc					4267	4300	1849	4300
Rent of Devon Office & Associated Costs					4959	9000	2910	9000
Accountancy Fees					710	825	439	875
NKDC Services						2145		2145
Companies House Fees					13	13	13	13
Bank Charges					101	110	48	110
IT Equipment &Support & Other Capital					1110	1800	937	1000
Insurance					549	600		650
Phd in Rural Crime Contribution					1000			
Training					50			
Corporation Tax					674	72		100
Membership of Rural Coalition					200	200		200
Refunds of Overpayments/ Contras@							782	

Representation to HM Treasury for the Chancellor's Autumn Statement 2016

Submitted by the Rural Services Network

This representation proposes two targeted measures which it would like to see included in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement in November 2016. One seeks to boost economic growth and productivity in rural areas. The other seeks to address a growing issue that results from an ageing rural population.

The Rural Services Network (RSN) is a membership organisation representing 154 local authorities (county, unitary and district councils) and almost 100 other rural service providers (such as fire and rescue authorities, housing associations and public transport operators). Thousands of parish/town councils and community bodies are associate members. The RSN exists: to make representations on issues affecting rural services; to promote active networking among rural providers and sectors; and to establish and share rural best practice.

A/ Removing barriers to rural economic growth

Policy proposal

Invest in rural infrastructure in order to support rural growth and employment. It is proposed that this focuses upon three widespread rural issues, namely broadband connectivity, public transport provision and the supply of affordable housing.

Rationale

The economy of rural England is a major contributor to the national economy. In 2014 the Gross Value Added (GVA) of 'predominantly rural' areas was £228,611 millions, which is 17% of the England total GVA¹. A further category, known as 'urban with significant rural' areas, had a GVA of £167,533 millions, which is 12% of the England total.

Similarly, 2014/15 figures show that rural areas were home to 568,835 registered businesses, which is 23% of the England total. The great majority of these are, unsurprisingly, small businesses.

Hence, it is important that rural economies can be productive and can grow, both for the wellbeing of rural areas themselves and as contributors to the national economy.

However, rural areas have some relative weaknesses;

¹ Defra, *Statistical Digest of Rural England*, September 2016

- Productivity levels are below the national average. 2014 figures show that in predominantly rural areas GVA per workforce job was £44,460, whereas the England average was £49,888;
- Wages from employment are below the national average. 2013 figures show that in predominantly rural areas workplace-based median gross annual earnings were £19,900, whereas the England median was £22,200; and
- Capital investment by business is below the national average. 2013 figures show that in predominantly rural areas capital investment per employee was £3,100, whereas the England average was £3,900.

There is therefore considerable scope to boost the productivity of rural economies and to improve the employment opportunities of rural residents. One means for achieving this would be by improving the infrastructure that supports businesses and their employees.

It is proposed that three widely acknowledged weaknesses in rural infrastructure provision should be addressed. They are:

- *Broadband connectivity*: the current Superfast Broadband Programme aims to connect 95% of all premises by 2017. This leaves 5% of premises, nearly all of them in rural locations (and which constitute roughly a quarter of all rural premises). We recognise that Government is proposing to give the remaining 5% a Right to Ask broadband providers, as a form of Universal Service Obligation. This will, however, need some public funding from central Government behind it, if it is to be successful and is not to penalise premises in deep rural areas. Without this some rural businesses and households will be asked to pay high – and perhaps unaffordable – amounts to gain a broadband connection.
- *Public transport*: public transport helps people to reach education, employment and training opportunities. This is especially true of young people and those from low income households, who are less likely to have access to a car. Public transport networks are much thinner in rural than in urban areas and many rural bus services are being cutback, as subsidy for them is reduced by cash strapped local authorities. In 2012, prior to most of the cuts, only 49% of households in smaller rural settlements had access to a regular bus service². 2015/16 was similar to prior years, in that 124 bus services were withdrawn altogether and 248 services were reduced or otherwise altered. Some additional funding to sustain rural bus services is urgently needed to reverse this trend.

² Department for Transport accessibility indicators

- *Affordable housing*: businesses need a resident workforce nearby and if people are priced out the local economy will suffer. House purchase prices in rural areas are significantly above the national average, rendering them unaffordable for many rural dwellers. As noted above, local wages also tend to be low. 2012 figures show that the ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings was 7.9 in predominantly rural areas, whereas the ratio was 7.4 for England as a whole. In many rural areas the ratio is higher still. Those who are a long way from being able to buy and who would struggle with private sector rents, will look to social housing. However, as 2011 Census figures show, social housing comprises just 8% of the housing stock in smaller rural settlements (compared with 19% in urban areas). The Government is promoting Starter Homes for those who may be able to join the housing market. This needs to be complemented with support for the social housing sector, for those who (realistically) cannot afford a discounted home. The most likely solution would be grant funding to Housing Associations and the like via a Rural Programme by the Homes and Communities Agency.

Costs

Broadband connectivity: the current Superfast Broadband Programme cost central Government £780 million, taking connectivity from around 80% to around 95% of all premises. Connecting the last 5% will be costlier (per premises). Nonetheless, investment of £250 million to support the Right to Ask USO – ensuring businesses and households are not faced with unreasonable connection charges – would make substantive progress possible and help achieve the goal of universal provision.

Public transport: by 2014/15 the amount spent supporting non-commercial bus services had fallen to £250 million across England. If an additional £45 million were now injected, that would restore the funding position as it was in 2010/11, enabling many rural bus services to be restarted, extended or improved.

Affordable housing: in recent years the Homes and Communities Agency has provided grant funding to Housing Associations of around £21,000 per dwelling. This has proved a low figure, especially in rural areas where development costs tend to be higher. However, a Rural Programme of around £50 million should allow around 2,200 to 2,500 new dwellings to be built in rural areas – a sizeable contribution towards meeting the current need for affordable housing.

Benefits

Broadband connectivity: this would simplify and speed up the roll out of superfast broadband networks to the last 5% of premises. It would do so in a way that is fair, overcoming the current position where many businesses and households will face an extra cost burden if they take-up the Right to Ask USO. Evidence from the Superfast Broadband Programme indicates that take-up of a superfast connection will be high in these areas (25% or more). Businesses will be made more efficient, being much

better able to innovate, to market products online, to form e-supply chains, to sell goods online and to complete regulatory or tax returns online. In short, it will put businesses in the last 5% on a level playing field when competing with businesses elsewhere. Further evidence of benefits can be found in the UK Broadband Impact Study which DCMS commissioned from consultants SQW in 2014.

Public transport: rural residents will find it easier to access employment, education and training opportunities. A lack of public transport can reduce the area of job search, not least for those who are unemployed. Its provision will give businesses access to a wider pool of potential employees, helping them to recruit and sustain a workforce. It will be especially useful for those without a car, including young people and those with a lower income.

Affordable housing: this will help to ensure that rural areas can sustain a local workforce, including those who are in lower paying sectors or occupations. If nothing is done many rural areas will continue the trend, whereby they are becoming places where only the better off can afford to live. This trend has both economic and social costs, and it undermines the goal of sustainable communities.

Deliverability

The broadband connectivity proposal would most obviously be delivered by BDUK (within DCMS), as the organisation overseeing delivery of the current Superfast Broadband Programme.

The public transport proposal would most obviously be delivered through a special grant to rural local authorities, who are transport authorities and who are currently responsible for supporting services.

The affordable housing proposal is likely to be best delivered through the Homes and Communities Agency managing a Rural Programme.

B/ Adult social services provision in rural areas

Policy proposal

Revenue grant funding investment to end further reductions in adult social services provision and to take account of the ageing population.

Rationale

Rural areas have a disproportionate number of older people within their populations. At the time of the 2011 Census those aged 65 and over comprised 23% of the rural population, compared with 17% of the national (England) population. ONS population projections show there will be a substantial increase in the number of older people and the fastest growth rates will be found in rural areas. Indeed, in

some rural and coastal areas the share of the population which is aged 85 and over is projected to more than double by 2037. This, of course, will place a significant extra burden on adult social services.

Adult social services are already over-stretched as a result of reducing local authority budgets. Budgets available to adult social services departments have reduced³ by 31% between 2010/11 and 2015/16. Many social services departments have tightened up their criteria for helping residents and now focus only on high priority cases. One outcome is that many older people are not discharged from hospital as quickly as they otherwise could be, which is an additional cost for the NHS.

The growing demand for adult social services risks taking the situation to breaking point. It is acknowledged that upper tier local authorities are being allowed to raise their portion of Council Tax income by an extra 2% to help address this concern. This, however, does not keep pace with rising costs faced by the sector, including those from National Minimum Wage and National Insurance increases.

Costs

Funding for adult social services should in future be protected, as it is for the NHS. There is a clear rationale for this, given the links between the two: a cost for one can be a saving for the other. Central Government could achieve this with a specific extra grant to upper tier local authorities. Despite attempts to protect frontline services, in the 2014/15 financial year the relevant authorities were planning budget reductions of £420 million for adult social services. A slightly larger sum would then be needed to take account of the growing number of older people. Nationwide somewhere in the region of £1 billion would be needed to stop further service reductions or pressures in just one financial year. Of course, Government may prefer to plan budgets over a three year period.

Benefits

Older people would receive more appropriate levels of formal care to meet their needs and the pressure to further ration services to high priority clients would be dissipated. This should enable more older people to continue living in the familiar surroundings of their own home (supported by home care visits). It would also reduce pressure on and save costs in the NHS, allowing older patients to be discharged more swiftly from hospital. There would therefore be some offsetting cost savings for the public purse. These benefits would not only accrue to rural areas, but they would be particularly valuable there given their population profiles.

Deliverability

The additional grant should be distributed to upper tier local authorities in proportion to the size of their (non-self funding) elderly populations and with some adjustment to

³ Source is ADASS, the Association of Directors of Social Services

reflect sparsity costs in rural areas i.e. where unit delivery costs are higher because of the travel cost/time involved in serving a dispersed client base.

The RSN hopes that these two proposals are considered and assessed carefully by HM Treasury. It is the view of RSN that they would make a very significant difference to rural communities, boosting economic potential and enhancing support for a growing cohort of older people.

Rural Services Network
6th October 2016



MEETING DATES FOR 2017

(1) Main Meetings

30th January Midday to 3 p.m.

SPARSE Rural – 30th January- Chair of Rural Fair Share Group to be invited.

10th April

Meeting of Social Care and health Group 11 a.m. to Midday.

RURAL ASSEMBLY Midday to 3 p.m. – Chair of EFRA Select Committee to be invited.

10th July

SPARSE Rural – The Minister for Business Development to be invited.

20th November

Meeting of the Social Care and Health Group 11 a.m. to Midday.

RSN AGM and Rural Assembly. Midday to 3 p.m. – DEFRA Minister to be invited.

RSP AGM will also take place.

(2) Executive Meetings

12th December 2016

13th March

12th June

25th September

(3) Meeting of Directors of RSP

25th September

(4) 2017 Rural Conference

Provisionally 5th and 6th September in Cheltenham