

## **Meeting Notes for the RSP Rural Vulnerability Group (nee Panel)**

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019**

**Venue – The Soroptomists, 63 Bayswater Road, London**

### **Present:**

RSN Officers: David Inman (DI) (Corporate Director RSN), Jon Tuner (JT) (Policy Director RSN)  
Reverend Richard Kirlaw (Chair of RSP); Nik Harwood, (Chief Executive Young Somerset);  
Hazel Graham (Chief Executive, Cumbria Action for Sustainability); Gavin Jones (Head of  
Communications & External Affairs, Hastoe Group); Patrick Ford (Campaigns & Policy Assistant,  
CPRE); Digby Chacksfield (Easton & Otley College)

### **General Introduction**

The Chairman, Rev Richard Kirlaw, thanked all those present for attending.

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Graham Biggs, (Chief Executive RSN) and Cllr Cecilia Motley (Chair of RSN)

#### **2. Minutes of the Previous meeting 9<sup>th</sup> April 2019.**

DI explained that the rural vulnerability campaign was a joint initiative between the Rural Services Partnership/Rural Services Network (RSP/RSN) and Rural England Community Interest Company, (RE). DI explained that RSN is the campaign and representation organisation and RE is a research company totally independent from the Network.

DI outlined that RE had been working with some 30 energy and utility companies who support the Research. As energy and power companies have an obligation to their regulatory authorities to consider rural vulnerability a number had expressed an interest to be involved in specific vulnerability research. Discussions had taken place and a Research Panel was being established.

It might be confusing to have both a RSP and a Rural England panel and it was suggested the RSP Panel be re-named as a Group. It might, in future operate as the RSP Rural Vulnerability Group.

The Chair put this to the meeting and the motion seconded by Nik Harwood and was carried unanimously.

Hazel Graham (HG), asked if RE were working with Electricity Northwest and DI explained that they were and that they were considering undertaking some regional research about rural vulnerability in that area.

#### **3. Rural Vulnerability and Disadvantage Statement 2020**

DI introduced the revised 2020 Statement. DI explained that the Statement was a 'work in progress document' and welcomed input from Group members.

HG, requested that reference should be made to climate impact, in particular flooding impact.

Gavin Jones, asked that future homes standards be referred to. It was agreed that suitable amendments should be made.

All those present agreed that the Rural Vulnerability and Disadvantage Statement was a very useful undertaking. It was agreed however that appendices needed to be added to emphasise the exemplar work being undertaken by Group members, for example Hastoe and Cumbria Action for Sustainability.

It was agreed that this suggestion be proceeded with and that Partner organisations be consulted with over such a suggestion.

With the addition of the appendices, this would not only enable the Statement to be used to promote exemplar case studies and best practice, but also compliment rural vulnerability campaigns both collectively and for individual members.

RK requested, that exemplar examples of best practice be sought to inform the Vulnerability Statement during 2020.

#### **4. Rural England Vulnerability/Research Panel.**

This item had been addressed earlier in the meeting.

#### **5. General Discussion**

Digby Chacksfield expressed an interest to empower local groups to take more of a role in the direct delivery of health services in preference for health contracting.

Those attending were supportive of the work of the Vulnerability Group and were keen to provide on-going input.

#### **6. A.O.B**

DI outlined the purpose of the embryo MP Parliamentary Group on Rural Vulnerability, which has a membership of circa 40 active MP and Peers, albeit this might change with the pending election. DI explained that the Group can represent to government if they had robust evidence to support such approaches.

DI explained that the next Parliamentary Vulnerability Day was due to take place in early March 2020 and the topic would be focusing on young people in rural areas.

The next RSP Rural Vulnerability Group will take place in April 2020. Date, time and venue to be confirmed.