



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

Venue:- LGA, Smith Square, London

Date: Monday 9th April 2018

Time: 12.00 pm to 3.00 p.m.

- 1. Apologies for absence**
- 2. Minutes** of the last Rural Assembly meeting and RSN AGM 20th November, 2017(Appendix A)
- 3. Minutes** of the last Executive meeting – 28th March 2018
(Appendix B to follow)
- 4. A Community Banking Initiative: Presentation by Comoola Tree Ltd**
- 5. Regional Meetings/Seminars**
 - (a) To receive and consider the minutes of the first two Regional Meetings/Seminars
(Attachments C & D)
 - (b) To note the Regional Meetings/Seminar Programme for 2018 (Attachment E)
- 6. Brexit Related**
 - (a) To consider the Notes of the Rural Brexit Roundtable Meeting held on 20th February and the Rural Strategy Template referred to therein (Attachment F & G).
 - (b) To consider a briefing/discussion document on the Government’s Consultation “The Future for Food, Farming and the Environment” (Attachment H)
- 7. Rural Vulnerability Day and Parliamentary Group**
David Inman to report on present position

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers



- 8. Government Consultation on National Planning Policy Framework**
To consider a briefing note prepared by Jo Lavis (attachment I)
- 9. Budget Report**
(Appendix J)
- 10. Affordable Housing Sounding Board Survey March 2018**
(Attachment K)
Consideration of topic for next meeting
- 11. Rural Services Network Annual Rural Conference**
To discuss the draft programme for 2018 (Appendices L (a) & (b))
- 12. Report on the RSP Service Groups/ Network Bodies**
 - (a) Housing (Andy Dean)
 - (b) Health (Graham Biggs)
 - (c) Crime (Graham Biggs)
 - (d) Fire (Graham Biggs/David Inman)
 - (e) Rural Services APPG (Graham Biggs)
 - (f) Rural England CIC
- 13. Any Other Business**

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

David Inman, Director Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0BZ
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Note of last SPARSE Rural Special Interest Group meeting

Title: Rural Services Network Special Interest Group

AGM Meetings:

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

Date: Monday 20 November 2017

Venue: The Westminster Archives, London

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions
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1 Apologies for absence

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

2 Minutes of the Previous meeting

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

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

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

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

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

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

It was agreed that both would remain the same.

6 Next Meeting

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

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

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

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

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

Action:

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

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

9 Membership (Constitutional Requirement)

Members noted the membership report from David Inman.

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

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

Action:

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

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

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

11 Brexit Rural Roundtable: Outcome from Meeting 2

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

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

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

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

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

Member comments included the following:

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

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

Action:

Presentation to be made available on RSN's website.

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

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

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

Comments included:

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

would endeavour to ensure this;

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

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

Action:

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

14 Urban and Rural Dementia Challenges and Solutions

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

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

Key points in the presentation included:

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

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

Action:

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

15 Rural Conference 2017

Apologies were received from Kerry Booth.

Members noted the presentation which headlined the following information:

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

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

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

Action:

Slides to be made available on RSN's website.

16 Sounding Board Survey

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

17 Meeting Dates for 2018

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

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

Schedule of RSN Executive Meeting Dates and Venues 2018

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

Schedule of Main Meeting Dates and Venues 2018

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

18 Any Other Business

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

There was no other business.

Attendance:

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

Apologies for Discussion on Rural Social Care and Health Group

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

Apologies for RSP AGM – 20th November 2017

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

Apologies List for RSN AGM – 20th November 2017

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

RSN West Midlands Regional Seminar
12th February 2018
Stafford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford ST16 3AQ

Thank you to Stafford Borough Council for kindly hosting this event

(Attendance had unfortunately been determined by who had been able to travel. Conditions had been made very difficult by the ice and snow that had descended over- night)

Attendance

Name	Organisation
Cllr Roger Phillips	RSN Vice Chair for the Midlands
David Inman	RSN
Cllr Cecilia Motley (a.m.)	Shropshire Council
Cllr Lee Chapman (a.m.)	Shropshire Council
Cllr Les Caborn	Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Mark McEvilly	Herefordshire Council
Cllr Frances Beatty MBE	Stafford Borough Council
Chris Cowcher, Community Manager	ACRE
Cllr Alan Seldon	Herefordshire Council
Cllr Jeremy Pert	Staffordshire County Council
Nicola Swinnerton, Rural Development & Access Manager	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Ann Edgeller	Stafford Borough Council & Staffordshire County Council
Allan Reid, Consultant Public Health	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Jack Kemp	Stafford Borough Council
Samantha Taylor, Health & Wellbeing Initiatives	Stafford Borough Council

1. Welcome

The Chair, Cllr Roger Phillips, welcomed people to the first RSN regional meeting. He thanked those attending for having taken on the conditions on a difficult day to be there.

He stated that all the meetings would comprise presentations on a particular topic and discussion after lunch would be to agree an RSN position and /or work on the topic under discussion. He felt that it was important here that the Meeting's deliberations contributed to the RSN response on the intended Social Care Green Paper. The meeting was really important from that viewpoint alone in his view.

2. Format and Reason for the Regional Meetings.

David Inman RSN Director explained the thinking behind the Executive's decision to hold annual regional seminars.

By its very characteristic rural areas were often peripherally located. It was appreciated therefore that Councillors from some authorities might find it difficult (and expensive in these financially

difficult times) to attend meetings in London. These meetings represented maybe a half -way house for some. They would however have specific work task and in no way would replicate the London meetings.

Additionally the Executive had agreed there would be specific bulletins for the Council's nominated representative at the AGM of Authorities and there would also be specific bulletin for rural councillors to ensure that, whether they were able to get to meetings or not, they were kept in touch with, and involved with, the work of the RSN. (This service would be in addition to the weekly Digest, the mid -week topic bulletin and the commentary of Hinterland at the end of each week.)

The Rural Services Network were the sole organisation in England specifically still dealing with rural service provision and governance matters and it was vital that all authorities with rural areas continued to be engaged with them. The need was now greater than ever as services were put under pressure through the cut backs.

The Rural Services Network, in addition to its strong community group, was looking to strengthen its lines of communication in Westminster in the hope of firmly getting across the rural viewpoint across a range of areas. The Rural Fair Share Group of MPs had been successful and now the RSN was forming a rural Peers Panel and Rural Vulnerability Group of MPs. This was in addition to the APPG on Rural Services which the Group ran. The Group did now feel they were in a position to seek to persuade parliamentarians on rural issues.

3. PRESENTATIONS

The meeting received presentations from on the topic of Health Statistics from Nicola Denis and Tom Bell.

(A) NICOLA DENNIS – Senior Knowledge Transfer Facilitator – Public Health England

Nicola very helpfully took members through the data that NHS England recorded across a range of different areas. The data was detailed down to mainly District level. She explained how the tool kit was designed to work and how it could be useful in terms of both area and overall breakdowns. She illustrated just how the data was capable of interpretation to provide statistical information across from a health, professional and individual viewpoint.

(B) TOM BELL- Lecturer- University of Central Lancashire.

Tom had had a background spanning both commerce and the NHS. In his view the NHS were paying insufficient attention to the keeping, cataloguing and maintenance of important medical and social data. In his opinion this was particularly relevant in rural areas where because of more sparse topography and different patterns of population important messages were not being either established and subsequently heard. He asked for members to assist in a process seeking to identify shortcomings in present data compilation.

Tom also felt the NHS was being slow to take advantage of available technologies. His view was that people may be far more responsive than people were predicting to having 'technological time' with medical advisers than travelling considerable distances and have to wait for what were relatively

brief consultations on medical issues. The NHS in his view were falling behind other countries in this regard.

Ivan Annibal referred to the call for rural research projects from the National Institute for Health Research which can be found on their website with a deadline of 24 July. He said he would be happy to advise members the RSN on some of the opportunities if members were interested. He also raised the value of linking to local Academic Health Science Networks and the RSN exploring a national relationship with them as he knew they are currently open to rural engagement.

4. Issues from the Seminar Session

5. Issues on the Subject of Health and Social Care which were of current concern in the Region.

6. Call for Evidence for the Inquiry into the Long Term Funding and provision of Adult Social Care to feed into the Governments forthcoming Green Paper.

Due to the inclement weather conditions members decided to run the agenda items together.

The following they felt were important:-

- Members totally agreed with Tom Bell that the present way statistical information was kept meant that there was few clear ways that the situation as it related to rural areas, certainly in the rural areas of the West Midlands, could be accurately identified and monitored because information tended to be kept in such a general way. They agreed with the presenter that pressure needed to be brought on Government and the NHS for statistics to be kept in a fashion that would give a true insight into the problems in rural areas and in a way that allowed those problem areas to be monitored.

The problem areas as they detailed them (which also should have relevance for the RSN input into Green Paper process) were:-

1. The lack of data so often in anything lower than District level. Parish data would, it was felt, really help parishes to look further at their role in terms of community care.
2. Lack of data on farming suicides
3. Lack of data on the extra time and mileage occasioned by care and contact officers operating in rural areas with the resulting 'non- contact time'
4. The number of self-employed people in rural areas who found difficulty in taking time off and was a factor in late diagnosis
5. The lack of the use of technology availability in the NHS which it was felt many people would avail themselves of, as opposed to undertaking really difficult journeys.
6. The lack of true data of patient journey times to their nearest GP, the nearest clinic and the nearest hospital. If changes were being proposed by the NHS, decisions should be taken cognoscente of such data.
7. The fact that many rural people were 'asset rich but cash poor'.
8. Concern that early diagnosis was being prevented by the travel difficulties that were now increasing significantly

9. The suspicion that many 'missed appointments' were occasioned by transport problems- statistics needed to be broken down rural –urban so that this was capable of being more accurately recorded and monitored.
10. The fact that seemingly ready identification by postcode allowing easier urban- rural breakdowns was not more fully employed.
11. Consideration about wider use of a scheme so seemingly successfully employed in East Lindsey
12. The fact that 'rural pride' wasn't in anyway factored into any considerations.
13. The form of Community support often encouraged by ACRE required greater publicity- however it had to be acknowledged that community self- help could only go so far.
14. Schemes needed to be considered about how possibly parish councils could be galvanised. They might be able to assist in a monitoring role if they could be persuaded to be more proactive
15. It was felt that the basic poverty in many rural areas was not being identified and that schools might have statistics that identified rural poverty that were possibly not being harnessed- like free meals and failure to join in school trips where a cost was involved.
16. Travel distance (and costs) to schools were in danger of creating child health problems as they were increasing
17. There was a danger that cuts were in turn resulting in cutbacks that took out some of the limited rural evidence that had been available. An Audit of what data bases had disappeared and why might be very informative.
18. As was pointed out by Tom Bell there was an Academic Health Science Network. There were 13 branches across England who could make bids for research and liaison with them might be something worth exploring by authorities and indeed these regional gatherings.
19. The meeting felt that with the current focus on Social Care the problems building up in the Child Care arena were not being looked at sufficiently. In the view of many members the difficulties here were already worse than in Social Care and with continuing budget cuts the situation in this area was becoming very difficult. In their view government also needed to consider this area.
20. The members wished to emphasise the importance of ALL authorities inputting into the Green Paper consultation. Often the perceived importance of the inputs from various sectors was determined by the number and not just the quality of individual responses. As practically all authorities had scrutiny committees RSN were asked to encourage every principal council to consider making their thoughts and views known.
21. Members felt that a simple instruction to people claiming travelling expenses or entering time sheets to record their hours spent in travelling to destinations and then recording time spent at the destination would provide important information capable of being compiled into a strong case about rural financing.

7. Next Actions.

It was felt that it would be good if the Regional meeting could do some '**task and finish work**' work around the question of **rural health information** it might be able to introduce some useful input into the search for a better system that was capable of producing more meaningful statistical evidence. (It was noted that government continually called for evidence when funding considerations were

being looked at.) (-it may be that West Midlands could double up with another region perhaps the South West in attempting to do this work-)

Members would therefore receive up- dates for their thoughts and comment by e mail in relation to this work area as it developed over the coming months and the subject would again be on the agenda for the next Regional meeting in February/March 2019.

8. Meeting Apologies.

The following were received:-

Apologies

Name	Organisation
Graham Biggs	RSN Chief Executive
Cllr Roy Aldcroft	Shropshire Council
Cllr Polly Andrews	Herefordshire Council
Cllr Bob Banks	Worcestershire County Council
Cllr Shirley Barnett	Lichfield District Council
Cllr Barry Bond	South Staffordshire Council
Cllr Peter Butlin	Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Eric Drinkwater	Lichfield District Council
Lynn Eccles, Director of Communications & Strategy	National Federation of Sub Postmasters
Cllr Arnold England	Telford & Wrekin Council
Cllr Liz Eyre	Worcestershire County Council
Cllr Ian Fletcher	Telford & Wrekin Council
Cllr Veronica Fletcher	Telford & Wrekin Council
Cllr Simon Geraghty	Worcestershire County Council
Cllr Karen Grinsell	Solihull MBC
Cllr David Harlow	Herefordshire Council
Cllr Paul Harrison	Worcestershire County Council
Cllr Gill Heath	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Peter Hogarth MBE	Solihull Council
Cllr Diana Holl-Allen	Solihull MBC
Cllr David Humphreys	North Warwickshire Borough Council
Cllr Tony Jefferson	Stratford District Council

Richard Kirlew	Sherborne Deanery
Rita Lawson, Chief Executive	Tees Valley Rural Community Council
Cllr Roger Lees	South Staffordshire Council
Dr John Linnane, Director of Public Health	Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Johnny McMahon	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr David Minnery	Shropshire Council
Cllr Peter Nutting	Shropshire Council
Elaine O'Leary, Chief Executive	Northamptonshire ACRE
Cllr Mary Rayner	Worcestershire County Council
Cllr Clive Rickhards	Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Carolyn Robbins	Rugby Borough Council
Cllr Chris Saint	Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Peter Shipp, Executive Chairman	EYMS Group Ltd
Cllr Bob Sleigh	Solihull MBC
Cllr Gail Sleigh	Solihull MBC
Cllr David Smith	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Mike Smith	Stafford Borough Council
Cllr Paul Snape	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Ray Sutherland	Stafford Borough Council
Paul Sutton, Director of Assets & Development	Shropshire Housing Group
Sarah Taylor, Events & Projects Officer	Plunkett Foundation
Cllr Peter Tomlinson DL	Worcestershire County Council
Cllr David Tremellen	Shropshire Council
Cllr Carolyn Trowbridge	Stafford Borough Council
Cllr Rebecca Vale	Worcestershire County Council
Cllr David Watkins	Malvern Hills District Council
Cllr Victoria Wilson	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Mark Winnington	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Susan Woodward	Staffordshire County Council

**Notes from the Rural Services Network
South West Regional Seminar/ Meeting
Kindly hosted by East Devon District Council
6th March 2018**

1. **Attendees:** Cllr Adam Paynter, (RSN Vice Chair for SW and Leader Cornwall County Council) David Inman (Director, RSN), Kerry Booth (Assistant Chief Executive, RSN), Susan Howl (East Devon District Council), Teresa Harvey (Sedgemoor District Council), Gary Powell (East Devon), Vikki Thomas (Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue), Cllr Amanda Ford (Teignbridge District Council), Cllr Rosemary Berry (Mid Devon District Council), Mandella Edwards (Hastoe Housing), Peter Moore (Cornwall Rural Housing Association), Cllr Andrew Leadbetter (Devon County & Exeter City Council), Cllr Saywell (Devon County Council), David Francis (National Pensioners Convention), Cllr Philip Hackett (Torridge District Council), Cllr Andrew Hadley (West Somerset Council), Cllr Paul Butterworth (Bath & NE Somerset Council), Kate Darch (Gloucester RCC), Andrea Gilbert (Inclusion Cornwall), Ivan Annibal (Rose Regeneration), Jessica Sellick (Rose Regeneration)
2. **Apologies:** The apologies for this meeting can be downloaded [here](#)
3. **Welcome:** Councillor Adam Paynter, as Vice Chair of RSN representing the South West, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to East Devon.
4. **Format:** David Inman of RSN outlined the new format of the Regional Meetings/Seminars and stressed the need for the RSN to promote a realistic view of life in Rural England and to provide a voice to rural service providers. He hoped that authorities would appreciate the opportunity to attend regional meetings rather than always having to travel to the national meetings held in London. These would also provide the opportunity for regional networking. This is the first year of trialing regional meetings and in future years, a programme of dates would be provided in advance at the start of the year to enable more to attend.

5. Seminar Session

Assisting Vulnerable People in Rural Areas

a) Kate Darch – Gloucester RCC – Village Agents

Kate kindly outlined the Village and Community Agent Project. These agents work within their local communities, approx. 10-15 hours a week supporting older people to stay at home and be independent. The agents facilitate access to services and have a vast knowledge of services in their local area. The concept was launched in 2006 as a DWP pilot in 96 areas and in 2008 was launched as a mainstream service. Other areas have developed similar schemes building on the approach to gain funding from other sources.

Village agents help to address social isolation and join up communities, helping to support the Prevention Agenda. Changes in the last 6 months have meant that the service comes under the Community Wellbeing Service for Gloucester and the age range has widened that the service supports. Digital exclusion is an issue recognized by the agents and there are also issues with broadband speeds and connectivity in the area. Some of the agents have backgrounds in public service i.e. police / nurse etc. but all are excellent communicators. Further information and a copy of the presentation is attached.

b) Andrea Gilbert – Inclusion Cornwall

Andrea outlined the Inclusion Cornwall project which is a cross sector partnership hosted by Cornwall County Council. They aim to 'challenge with diplomacy' where services are not working for customers. 17 neighbourhoods in Cornwall are on the most deprived list in England, 21% are economically inactive, the aim of the Inclusion Hub is to knit people together. There are a number of projects which inclusion Cornwall support for example the Winter wellbeing (Warm & Well) and the Helston & Lizard project. The Winter Wellbeing project prevented 63 hospital admissions. In 2016/17 for example the Winter Wellbeing service included over 30 partners to deliver common outcomes of reducing fuel poverty, improving health and progress to work. The Helston & Lizard Project was a specific piece of work where the DWP asked Inclusion Cornwall to work with approximately 200 people to help them gain skills, work experience and enhance their CV's through projects that will benefit communities across the area.

6. David Inman – Rural Vulnerability Statistics

David circulated a paper which included a number of statistics which help to demonstrate the depth of vulnerability in rural areas. Whilst urban areas may also experience some of these issues, when taken together and along with the lack of access to transport and services, rural vulnerability can be a very serious issue.

There was a lengthy discussion in the afternoon which focused on rural social care and health and for ease of reference, the information discussed at this session has been split into three areas:

- Indicators – what data would people like to see, or should we be encouraging the collection of?
- What issues affect rural social care and health in South West? – this also developed into a wider discussion on rural issues.
- Best Practice / signposts to useful information

INDICATORS – What data would people like to see, or should we be encouraging the collection of?

- How many missed appointments are there for health services due to lack of transport? How much is that costing the health service?
- More information about fuel poverty and the effects of fuel poverty
- Education and Health Outcomes, are these measured together? i.e. does increased education lead to better health outcomes?

- Any statistics on preventing ill health through education on nutrition and diet, are there statistics in relation to this?
- Important indicator is average incomes in relation to market rents – not everyone can buy in rural areas and so have to rent at high prices.
- How many people are taking up Help to Buy Scheme – after 5 years you start paying interest and does everyone on the scheme understand that their mortgage payments will jump up...storing up problems for the future
- Income levels mapped to communities that have produced a neighbourhood plan. Are resources targeted in the right areas so that everyone has the support to develop neighbourhood plans?
- Role of Parish Council increases at this current time but do they all have the right support?
- Rural residents can be very independent and loathed to claim benefits even if they are entitled to them...can you measure how many should be claiming?
- Suicide rates – Devon has high suicide rate – up to age 45-50 it is the biggest killer. Could be up to 4 times higher if not always clear cut so figures should be more – North Devon is a hotspot
- Lack of data on times and mileage for social services / there are areas where councils can't find providers, market forces intervene and it is difficult to provide services

ISSUES affecting rural social care and health in South West

- For housing development in rural areas where there is no mains as or sewer network, this can increase costs.
- Small developments in rural areas of 5 houses, may all be different to suit the local needs, i.e. affordable housing, single person property, family property, housing for older people and can therefore be expensive for the developer as they are not all standard properties. However, these can mean that people can stay in their homes for longer and become more independent.
- Need to make connection between housing and health benefits
- Good new housing and bringing housing up to standard can make a big impact on health
- Digital Exclusion – not everyone doesn't want to learn. Need to make extra arrangements for rural areas for example run sessions in libraries.
- New Homes need the right infrastructure and services to promote proper communities
- High Street Banks are closing, can we encourage Post offices to take over some of their services?
- Air Quality can be an issue
- Are Health and Wellbeing Boards working as well as they are meant to be – can they drill down into rural deprivation?
- Devon are currently looking at their Health and Wellbeing Board as Hospitals are not part of the process currently.

- It can be dangerous to push people to do all services online, particularly with the rise in dementia which can make it difficult to use services which require large amounts of passwords.
- Losing banks is an issue for rural small businesses, they may take cash but have nowhere to bank their takings to run their businesses.
- Cybercrime is also an issue with moving people onto digital services
- There has been a case study on a shop in Councillor Paynter's authority where the shop was completely turned around and now provides a range of services which ultimately saves the council money.
- Access to food banks – how far do you have to travel in rural areas and without transport is it feasible? Do mobile food banks exist?
- Access to higher education is an issue in SW for 16+. Need to travel to main centres for example in Mid Devon to Exeter, Newton Abbott or Taunton.
- Can be hard for those young people living in rural areas to socialize.
- Mental health provision for young people is important
- Social Media can give false impressions of what life is like.
- Recruiting social workers in Devon is an issue
- How do we attract and recruit/maintain social workers?
- Can take 18-21 weeks to get referrals to see mental health specialist
- Extra Care housing is important – can we keep people in their own communities which ultimately keeps costs down
- Cornwall now have transport powers through devolution which can help as for example it can arrange bus journeys to support train arrival and departure times
- Need integrated public transport system – school buses/normal use so that people in rural communities can get to work and not just cater solely for school children
- There is a scheme in Cornwall where parents pay for school bus pass post 16 but can pay more and get weekend travel and hopefully in the future train access, encouraging them to be out and about and accessing services more.

BEST PRACTICE / SIGNPOSTS to useful information

- Fingertips – run by Public Health England which enable comparisons of a wide range of indicators and often at local authority level
<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk>
- University of East Anglia doing research at the moment on looking at the Indices of Multiple Deprivation without the urban bias so that smaller pockets of deprivation can be identified.
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation – Study into Minimum Income Standards for rural areas compared to urban
<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/minimum-income-standard-rural-households>
- Rural Manifesto 2009 by the Carnegie Trust looks at measuring the capacity of rural areas

<https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/a-manifesto-for-rural-communities-inspiring-community-innovation/>

- There has been a case study in Scotland that looked at communities and how active they are to measure the resources a community has, for example Active Parish Council, Transport, Car Clubs, Activators etc.

Regional Meetings Format

Where & When:

Date	Region	Town	Primary Topic being considered	Vice Chair	RSN
12.02.18	West Midlands	Stafford BC - Confirmed	Rural Social Care and Health	Cllr Roger Phillips - confirmed	David - confirmed
06.03.18	South West	East Devon Council Confirmed	Rural Social Care and Health	Cllr Adam Paynter – Confirmed	David
25.05.18	North East	Durham Council Confirmed	TBD	Cllr Kevin Beaty – confirmed either date	Andy Confirmed Either date
09.07.18	East Midlands/ East Anglia	Huntingdonshire Council - confirmed	TBD	Cllr Peter Stevens - confirmed	Kerry - confirmed
08.10.18	North West	Lancashire Confirmed	TBD	Cllr Peter Thornton Confirmed	Andy
10.12.18	Yorkshire	Harrogate Council Room booked but chased re room hire charge 23.03.18	TBD	Cllr Robert Heseltine - confirmed	Andy

Why:

1 – So as to encourage greater direct member participation in the work of the RSN, to enable all member authorities the opportunity to attend an event close to home and thus incur less travelling time and costs. We appreciate that not all authorities can make our London meetings.

2 - To enable some regional rural networking, discussion and debate on issues of great concern to rural areas for example Rural Social Care and Health and Rural Connectivity.

Who can attend / will be invited:

Local Authority Sparse and Rural Assembly Members and Rural Services Partnership Members (Community Group members may be invited on a meeting by meeting basis dependent on the capacity of the meeting room – they cannot vote in the Round Table Discussions though)

Leaders / Nominated Member Reps

Portfolio holders/Lead Members for the Topic Areas under discussion.

All other elected members from member authorities in the Region representing rural wards
Officers For the Topic Areas under discussion

Format:

Approx timings:

11.00am -12.30pm Seminar (Led by RSN Lead Officer but speakers organised by Ivan Annibal) 2/3 presenters on a specific subject decided by the RSN Chief Executive and Chair based on RSN Priorities

12.30pm-1.00pm Lunch Break (Lunch provided)

1.00pm – 3/3.30pm Round Table Discussion based on the mornings seminar and an agenda that includes as a standard item, RSN non-financial representational current campaigns and work

Email to CX and Leaders:

Dear Chief Executive/Councillor,

In 2018 RSN will be entering into its programme a series of Regional Meetings/Seminars for member local authorities. The purpose of these events is two-fold. Firstly, so as to encourage greater direct member participation in the work of the RSN, to enable all member authorities the opportunity to attend an event close to home and thus incur less travelling time and costs. We appreciate that not all authorities can make our London meetings. Secondly, to enable some regional rural networking, discussion and debate on issues of great concern to rural areas for example Rural Social Care and Health and Rural Connectivity.

The events will be split into two sessions:

- a) A Seminar session with expert speakers on a key rural topic
- b) A more round table discussion / meeting where RSN members can come together at a regional level to look at the topic in more detail from both a national and regional focus and share ideas and best practice. This could lead to a future RSN campaign or research activity.

There will of course also be an opportunity to discuss current work and campaigns of the RSN.

The event will be chaired by the relevant Vice Chair for the region

These are the proposed dates for the meetings:

Regional Meetings 2018

Date	Region	Town
12.02.18	West Midlands	Stafford
19.03.18	South West	Sidmouth Devon
21.05.18	North East	Durham
09.07.18	East Midlands/	Huntingdonshire

Attachment E

	East Anglia	
08.10.18	North West	Lancaster
10.12.18	Yorkshire	Harrogate

We will not be having a formal regional meeting in the South East because of its proximity to London and the National meetings but if South East RSN members are interested in events elsewhere they are of course very welcome to attend.

We will obviously send out formal papers and agenda nearer the days involved but can people please enter the relevant date in their diary at this stage.

The events will be supplementary to the national meetings in January, April, June and November

We have attached a list of the authorities split into the regions, if authorities are interested in days in other regions they can of course attend but we would be grateful if they could give us notice that they are going to do so. Similarly, if authorities feel they have a natural fit with an alternative region, please let us know so we can adapt our list.

We hope that the meetings will be of benefit to you and your Members and Officers to further support your work for your rural communities.

Kindest Regards,

David

Rural Brexit Roundtable – Note of meeting

Tuesday 20 February 2018

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

Present: Margaret Clark, Rural Coalition
Simon Edwards, CCN
Richard Quallington, ACRE
Cllr Liz Harvey, LGA
Charles Trotman, CLA
Andy Dean (RSN)

Apologies: David Emerson (ACRE), Mark Shucksmith (Newcastle University), Tom Keen (NFU), Ian Miller & Matthew Hamilton (DCN), Joe Ling (LGA), Graham Biggs (RSN)

Notes

Andy Dean chaired the meeting and opened by summarising the **original purposes** of the Roundtable as follows:

1. To provide a platform for sharing information and activities relating to Brexit and rural areas across participating organisations.
2. To explore opportunities for potential joint case making and lobbying in relation to the future of rural areas in the context of Brexit.

Each representative outlined **current relevant work** including:

- Recent success in achieving increased funding allocations to rural local authorities in relation to Adult Social Care and the Rural Services Delivery Grant (RSDG). This represented clear acknowledgement from government of the needs of rural areas and close working with rural MPs.
- Direct contact with ministers reflecting the need for detailed evidence in relation to the increased costs associated with service delivery in rural areas.
- The LGA Brexit officer working group.
- Quarterly activity reports which ACRE produce for Defra including information from across all 38 Rural Community Councils covering rural England.
- A government-led review of LEPs which is underway.
- Research currently being commissioned by Defra into:
 - The dynamics of the rural economy (due for publication in September)
 - The impact of ERDF and ESF in rural areas (due for publication in October)
- Defra have also established an Academics Panel to advise on specific issues in relation to rural research and evidence.
- Research commissioned from SRUC by the Prince's Countryside Fund to investigate how remote rural communities can become sustainable, due for publication in July.

Attachment F

- CLA work in response to the Industrial Strategy which is seeking institutional change reflecting the need for high level cross-departmental leadership in relation to rural affairs, triple devolution and ring-fenced rural resources through the Shared Prosperity Fund. This includes a call for a Rural Industrial Strategy.

A review of the 2000 **Rural White Paper** had been commissioned by RSN and circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed that this was a very useful working document which it would be useful to be able to share. It was agreed that RSN would produce a slightly amended version for partners to be able to share on a confidential working basis as part of individual organisations' Brexit related work. Andy Dean agreed to seek RSN approval for this approach prior to circulating the amended document.

The draft **Rural Strategy** template, circulated prior to the meeting, was discussed. It was agreed that a strategy would not be produced but the group would seek to agree a series of principles in relation to outcomes sought from the Brexit process and the way we will seek to work alongside each other.

Conclusions and Next Steps

1. It was agreed that there is great value in sharing work in relation to Brexit through the Roundtable group. Any organisation wishing to share information, evidence or research should forward this to Andy Dean for onward distribution to the Roundtable partners.
2. The group would organise meetings as and when useful in the future.
3. RSN would circulate an amended version of the Rural White Paper analysis document for use by partners.
4. A short list of principles would be agreed across the Roundtable partners focussing on both collective 'key messages' to government and agreed ways of operating together. Through discussion at the meeting this would include:

Key messages:

- A Rural Industrial Strategy is created for England.
- Government sets out its policy in relation to the future of rural areas, their communities and businesses.
- High level cross-department leadership is provided to the Rural Affairs agenda by government.

Operations:

- Share relevant information, evidence and research across Roundtable partners.
- Deploy resources effectively with individual organisations taking a lead on key issues where they have agreed core expertise.

All Roundtable partners were requested to consider this list and suggest additional potential core principles.

A Rural Strategy for England

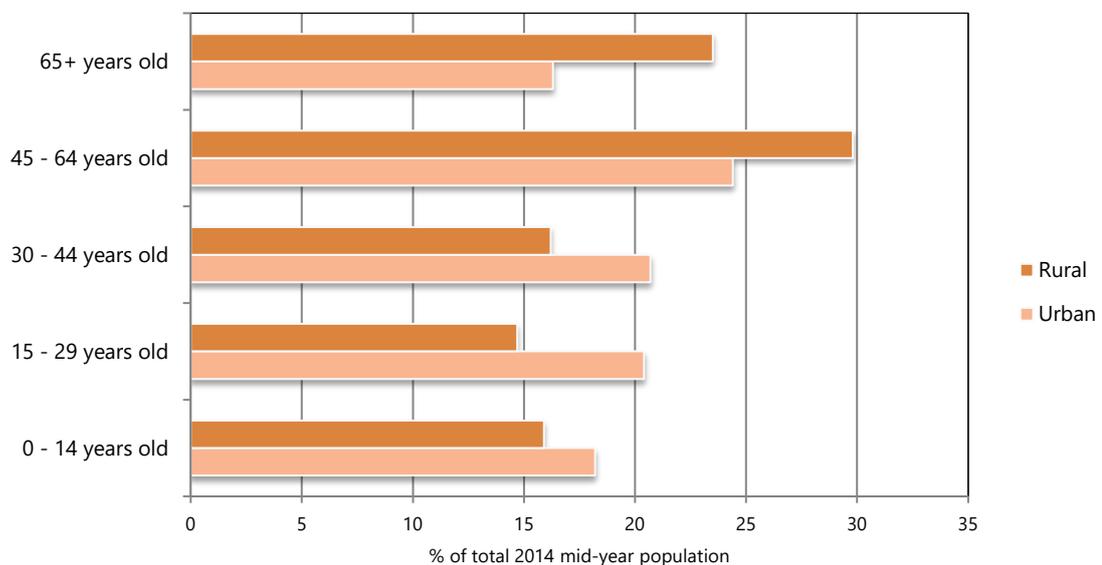
Draft template

Foreword

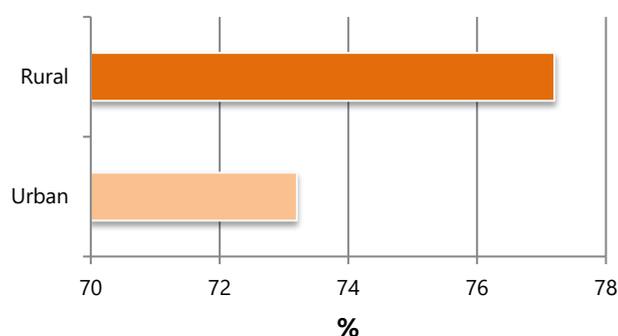
Rightly or wrongly, rural communities feel neglected by central government. Exiting the European Union provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to re-set the policy approach to rural areas, their communities, the economies which operate within them and environment, in a way which recognises and enables the potential contribution of rural England to be released and enhanced.

A few facts:

- 9.3 million people live in rural areas of England, 17.0% of the English population
- Higher proportions of older people live in rural areas

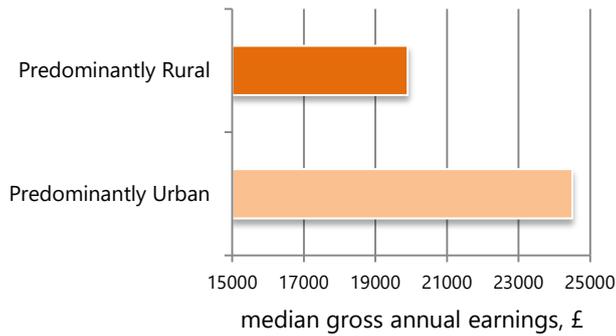


- Rural England has a higher proportion of working age population (16-64) who are employed

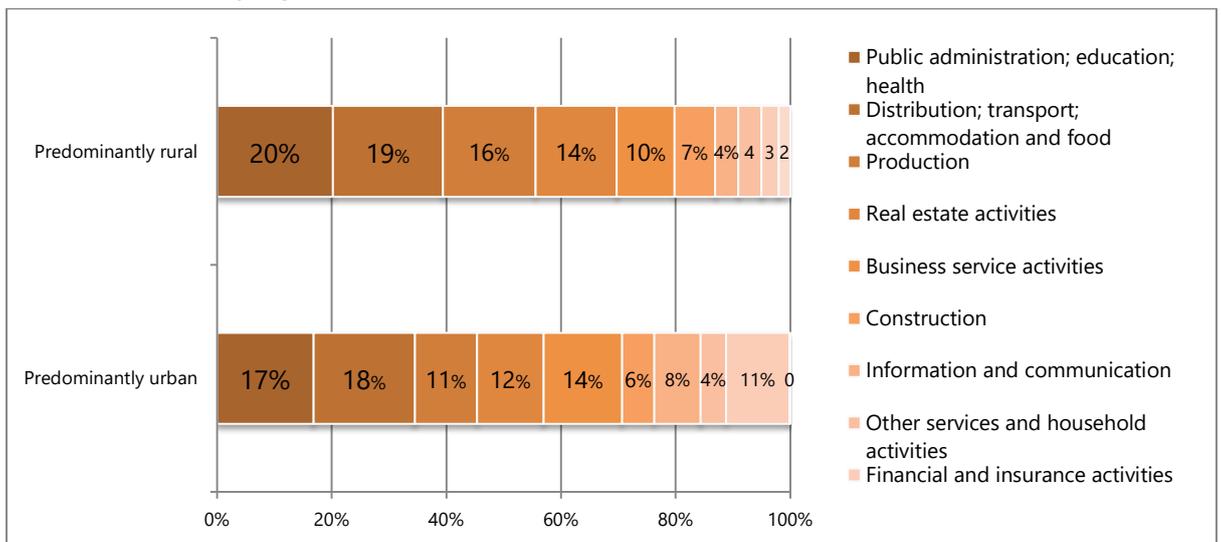


- However, the workplace based median annual earnings for predominantly rural areas is 18.8% lower than for predominantly urban areas

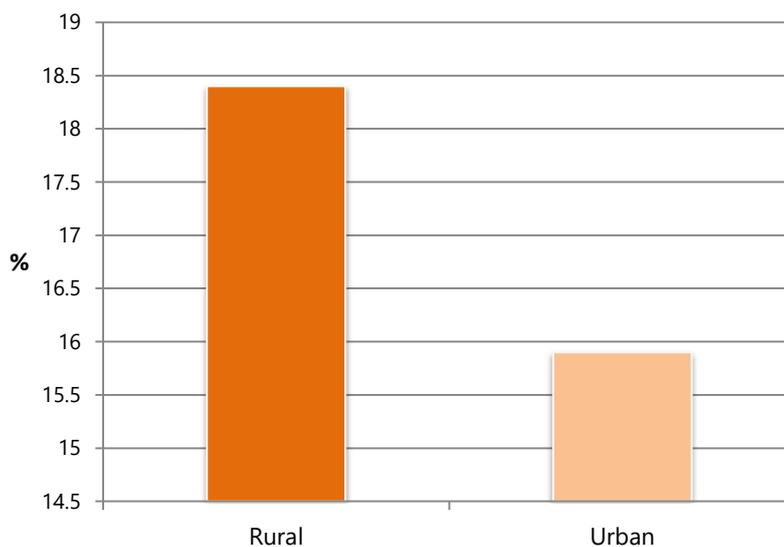
Attachment G



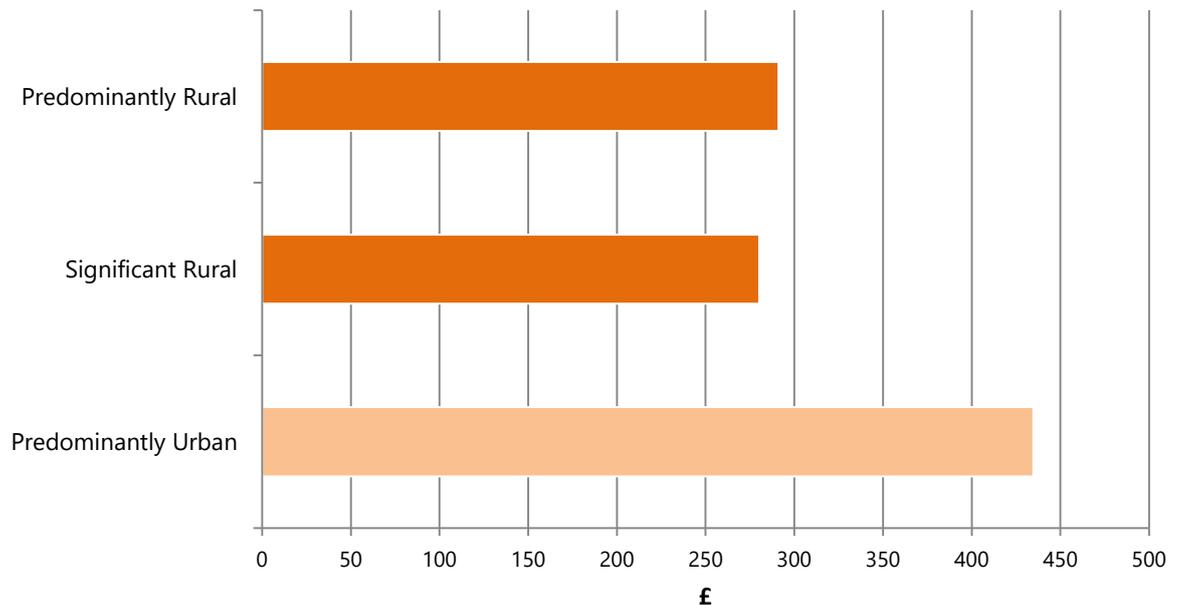
- In rural England many of those who are on low incomes are in work.
- The rural economy is just as diverse as that of urban areas



- In 2014, Gross Value Added (GVA) from Predominantly Rural areas contributed 17 per cent of England's GVA, and was worth an estimated £229 billion
- Rural England is home to 524,000 registered businesses employing 3.7 million people
- 22% of rural workers work from home (12% urban)
- More rural households are in fuel poverty than urban



- Rural local authorities receive significantly less government funding than urban (2016/17 final local government funding settlement – grant per head)



XX Add more XX

ADD HOUSING AFFORDABILITY, BROADBAND AND ACCESS

ADD VALUE OF EU FUNDS CURRENTLY COMING INTO RURAL AREAS ACROSS THE UK

ADD SOMETHING ABOUT FUTURE TRADE DEALS AND RURAL GOODS

‘Our Countryside, Our Future’

The Rural White Paper 2000 attempted to put in place a comprehensive policy framework for rural England under three themes:

- a Living Countryside
- a Working Countryside
- a Vibrant Countryside

Our analysis of this White Paper (see attached) shows that whilst a number of national announcements and actions followed, the desire for a coordinated approach to rural areas remains a significant challenge.

XX Insert summary of paper XX

A new National Rural Strategy

We are calling for a new long term Rural Strategy (for at least the next decade) in a post Brexit world should be developed and agreed between central and local government and other key rural stakeholders and properly resourced. This should enable the full potential of the economies of rural areas to be realised, further developed and sustained (to support the national economy). To realise the economic potential, market failures must be remedied

and serious attention must also be paid to “social and community” issue and a for there to be fair deal for rural residents and communities in the use of national resources.

It would require strong, visible and 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.

This strategy should focus on the following:

1. A thriving rural economy

Rural economies are incredibly diverse and make a significant contribution to national economic performance. There is no such thing as a single, homogeneous “rural economy” – indeed in most rural areas multiple economies operate with different needs and opportunities.

Farming and tourism are of critical importance but to pigeon-hole rural economies as being solely about these sectors is a mistake.

The environment is of pivotal significance to rural economies. Farming, forestry and land management sectors help to create the environment on which the tourism sector depends and to which a vast array of economic activities are attracted – from manufacturing and service industries to knowledge intensive and creative sectors.

Enterprise and opportunity are abundant with rural areas often providing a breeding ground for high growth / scale-up businesses which can migrate to more populated areas as expansion plans require.

NEED TO ADD SOMETHING ABOUT THE NUMBER OF NON UK EU NATIONS WHO WORK IN KEY SERVICES SUCH AS SOCIAL CARE, CONSTRUCTION AND INDUSTRIES SUCH AS TOURISM, FOOD AND DRINK PRODUCTION AND HOSPITALITY

In order to thrive, rural economies need:

- Business support programmes which reach deep into rural areas
- Competitive broadband and mobile services
- **XX More XX SOMETHING ABOUT SKILLS**

NEED TO DETERMINE THE GROUPS POSITION IN RELATION TO THE SHARED PROSPERITY FUND IN ALLOCATING RESOURCES BETWEEN THE 4 NATIONS AND WITHIN ENGLAND

As said earlier, to realise the economic potential, market failures must be remedied attention must also be paid to “social and community” issue and a for there to be fair deal for rural residents and communities in the use of national resources.

The key social and community issues which should be addressed in a new National Rural Strategy in a post-Brexit world are: -

1. Delivery of affordable homes
XX To be developed XX

2. Support for transport solutions
XX To be developed XX

3. Revitalised village services
XX To be developed XX

4. A healthy population
XX To be developed XX

5. Enabling localism and social action
XX To be developed XX

6. Rural proofing
XX To be developed XX

NOTE:

This is intended as a simple prompt for discussion by the Rural Brexit Roundtable in order to facilitate the development of an initial draft Rural Strategy

The Future for Food, Farming and the Environment: Consultation

Paper for the RSN Rural Assembly, April 2018

Purpose of this paper

At the end of February 2018 Defra published a consultation document, the full title of which is *Health and Harmony: The Future for Food, Farming and the Environment in a Green Brexit*. It seeks to move the debate forward on a post-CAP domestic settlement for agriculture, which is designed for UK circumstances¹. The deadline for responding to the consultation is 8th May 2018.

This paper summarises the consultation document, highlights some points that are likely to be of interest to Rural Services Network (RSN) members and seeks views about what points the RSN should include in its response.

Outline of consultation document

In the foreword to the consultation document the Secretary of State writes that leaving the European Union presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reform agriculture and that support for the farming sector needs rethinking as we leave the CAP. He adds that in the period when the UK was subject to the CAP there has been considerable environmental damage to soil, to habitats and to wildlife. Also, that paying the largest subsidies to the largest landowners has kept land prices high, reducing the number of new entrants to the sector and reducing innovation.

At the heart of the proposals is a switch to focussing future public sector support to the funding of public goods and especially to improving the natural environment. This 'natural capital' based approach takes forward the Government's *25 Year Environment Plan*.

In summary the document:

- Acknowledges that the CAP has made progress e.g. by introducing agri-environment schemes, but adds that it "remains flawed". It views the CAP as having been poor value for taxpayers and bureaucratic for land managers;
- Seeks a future settlement that leaves the agricultural sector more dynamic and self-reliant, supplying products of the highest standards, competing internationally (exporting) and delivering a better natural environment;

¹ The paper recognises that Devolved Administrations beyond England may vary their approach.

- Proposes to incentivise farming methods which create habitats for wildlife, improve biodiversity, reduce flood risk, mitigate for climate change and improve air quality (by reducing agricultural emissions). Future public funding should be for public goods, like peat bog restoration, carbon sequestration, dry stone wall protection and animal health or welfare improvements;
- Commits to maintaining the same 'total cash' amount of public funding for the sector until the end of this Parliament. This commitment refers to funding coming from the EU and Exchequer under Pillars 1 and 2 of the CAP;
- Says that there will be a transition period from the CAP to any future domestic settlement and this will commence when the UK formally leaves the EU (expected March 2019). This will allow the sector to prepare for change;
- Proposes that over the transition Direct Payments to farmers will reduce, starting with those who receive the largest sums. The freed up cash will fund pilot schemes for environmental land management and sustainable farm production;
- Recognises that some parts of the sector could find adaptation difficult, such as those "located in the most remote, wild and beautiful parts of England". The uplands are specifically cited. The document says that Government will explore options to support such areas;
- Mentions seeking to simplify existing CAP schemes, such as the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, during the transition period. It flags the possibility of reducing the current greening requirements;
- Notes that, while environmental protection and enhancement would be the cornerstone of the new approach, other important issues are animal and plant health, animal welfare, public health, rural resilience and productivity. Government "could play a role in supporting" these too;
- On animal welfare it says the objective is safeguarding current UK "excellent standards". Rather than raising the baseline further, a possibility is piloting targeted schemes to improve certain sub-sectors;
- On regulation it proposes a new enforcement system for animal health, welfare and environmental standards. Whilst this should remain "robust", there will be a review of inspection regimes to see if any can be removed, reduced or improved, lessening the burden on farmers;
- On rural communities it recognises there are broader challenges, not just for agriculture. It cites physical and digital connectivity, noting initiatives to boost

broadband and mobile networks. It also commits to work with MHCLG² so the planned Shared Prosperity Fund can (post-Brexit) support rural businesses. This would help ensure the Industrial Strategy contributes to rural productivity;

- On international trade it states that access to new markets can help farmers export and competition could drive down food prices and improve consumer choice. It adds that consumer, worker and environmental protection will form part of trade agreements;
- On workforce skills it acknowledges the need for sufficient and suitably-skilled labour in the sector. It also highlights the scope for automation and (labour saving) innovative practices.

Agriculture Bill

An Agriculture Bill will be introduced in due course that enables the transition to a domestic policy on agriculture. The consultation paper suggests that the Bill could provide powers to:

- Continue making payments to farmers/land managers within certain criteria;
- Remove certain elements of bureaucracy in the current system;
- Create new schemes for purposes such as agricultural productivity, protecting the environment, **supporting rural communities**, improving plant and animal welfare, and improving public access [bold typeface added by RSN];
- Establish and new compliance and inspection regime;
- Enable emergency aid measures to be used during extreme events;
- Retain UK-wide frameworks where commonality is needed; and
- Provide continuity with elements of the CAP during the transition period.

Commentary

NFU has acknowledged the historic opportunity to reshape agricultural policy, but emphasised the importance of food production and stated that a future domestic policy must work for the whole industry. It is making the case that British food should be seen as a public good.

CLA has reacted with disappointment, saying that the consultation leaves too much uncertainty and too little transition time for adaptation. It urges caution about the rate at which money is taken out of the direct payment system and adds that no farmers should face sudden cuts in their payments.

CPRE has given a positive response to the consultation, welcoming the proposed shift to using public money for public goods and urging the Government to resist

² Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (formally DCLG).

calls for maintaining the status quo. It was disappointed, however, not to see more specific measures being proposed to support small farms.

RSN response

There are other representative bodies which can claim to represent the farming sector e.g. NFU, CLA. However, the RSN clearly has an interest since:

- Farming remains a notable part of rural economies and labour markets, as well as having links to other sectors;
- On farm diversification has been a means of broadening the rural economic base;
- The most remote and vulnerable rural communities tend to be those relying most heavily upon agriculture; and
- The consultation proposals extend beyond the agricultural sector to wider rural community needs (albeit this is a small part of the document).

The RSN therefore intends to make a targeted response to the consultation, focussing its comments on issues where it has some expertise and a clear interest, rather than trying to answer every question. The consultation questions which are considered most relevant to RSN are the six listed in italics below. The various questions which it is not proposed to answer are in an annex at the end of this note.

Of the other [than environmental] options listed below, which do you consider to be the most important public goods that government should support? Please rank your top three options by order of importance: a) World-class animal welfare b) High animal health standards c) Protection of crops, tree, plant and bee health d) Improved productivity and competitiveness e) Preserving rural resilience and traditional farming and landscapes in the uplands f) Public access to the countryside.

Are there any other public goods which you think the government should support?

How should farming, land management and rural communities continue to be supported to deliver environmental, social and cultural benefits in the uplands?

There are a number of challenges facing rural communities and businesses. Please rank your top three options by order of importance: a) Broadband coverage b) Mobile phone coverage c) Access to finance d) Affordable housing e) Availability of suitable business accommodation f) Access to skilled labour g) Transport connectivity h) Other, please specify. NB It would be useful to have a steer on the top three.

With reference to the way you have ranked your answer to the previous question, what should government do to address the challenges faced by rural communities and businesses post-EU Exit?

How far do you agree with the proposed powers of the Agriculture Bill? What other measures might we need in the Agriculture Bill to achieve our objectives?

The RSN Rural Assembly is asked:

- 1. What points it thinks we should emphasise when responding to the six consultation questions highlighted above;**
- 2. In particular, what three rural challenges it ranks highest in the fourth of the questions listed above; and**
- 3. Whether there are further consultation questions (in the annex) that it thinks we should respond to. If so, what points should be made?**

Brian Wilson
March 2018

Consultation questions which it is not proposed to respond to (unless the Rural Assembly concludes otherwise):

Reform whilst within the CAP

Please rank the following ideas for simplification of the current CAP, indicating the three options which are most appealing to you: a) Develop further simplified packages b) Simplify the application form c) Expand the online offer d) Reduce evidence requirements in the rest of the scheme

How can we improve the delivery of the current Countryside Stewardship scheme and increase uptake by farmers and land managers to help achieve valuable environmental outcomes?

The transition period

*What is the best way of applying reductions to Direct Payments? Please select your preferred option from the following: a) Apply progressive reductions, with higher percentage reductions applied to amounts in higher payment bands * b) Apply a cap to the largest payments c) Other (please specify) * please provide views on the payment bands and percentage reductions we should apply.*

What conditions should be attached to Direct Payments during the 'agricultural transition'? Please select your preferred options from the following: a) Retain and simplify the current requirements by removing all of the greening rules b) Retain and simplify cross compliance rules and their enforcement c) Make payments to current recipients, who are allowed to leave the land, using the payment to help them do so d) Other (please specify)

What are the factors that should drive the profile for reducing Direct Payments during the 'agricultural transition'?

How long should the 'agricultural transition' period be?

Farming excellence and profitability

How can we improve the take-up of knowledge and advice by farmers and land managers? Please rank your top three options by order of preference: a) Encouraging benchmarking and farmer-to-farmer learning b) Working with industry to improve standards and coordination c) Better access to skills providers and resources d) Developing formal incentives to encourage training and career development e) Making Continuing Professional Development (CPD) a condition of any future grants or loans f) Other (please specify).

What are the main barriers to new capital investment that can boost profitability and improve animal and plant health on-farm? Please rank your top three options by order of the biggest issues: a) Insufficient access to support and advice b) Uncertainty about the future and where to target new investment c) Difficulties with securing finance from private lenders d) Investments in buildings, innovation or new equipment are prohibitively expensive e) Underlying profitability of the business f) 'Social' issues (such as lack of succession or security of tenure) g) Other (please specify).

What are the most effective ways to support new entrants and encourage more young people into a career in farming and land management?

Does existing tenancy law present barriers to new entrants, productivity and investment?

Agricultural technology and research

What are the priority research topics that industry and government should focus on to drive improvements in productivity and resource efficiency? Please rank your top three options by order of importance: a) Plant and animal breeding and genetics b) Crop and livestock health and animal welfare c) Data driven smart and precision agriculture d) Managing resources sustainably, including agro-chemicals e) Improving environmental performance, including soil health f) Safety and trust in the supply chain g) Other (please specify).

How can industry and government put farmers in the driving seat to ensure that agricultural R&D delivers what they need? Please rank your top three options by order of importance: a) Encouraging a stronger focus on near-market applied agricultural R&D b) Bringing groups of farms together in research syndicates to deliver practical solutions c) Accelerating the 'proof of concept' testing of novel approaches to agricultural constraints d) Giving the farming industry a greater say in setting the strategic direction for research funding e) Other (please specify).

What are the main barriers to adopting new technology and ideas on-farm, and how can we overcome them?

Workforce skills

What are the priority skills gaps across UK agriculture? Please rank your top three options by order of importance: a) Business / financial b) Risk management c) Leadership d) Engineering e) Manufacturing f) Research g) Other (please specify).

What can industry do to help make agriculture and land management a great career choice?

How can government support industry to build the resilience of the agricultural sector to meet labour demand?

Public goods

Which of the environmental outcomes listed below do you consider to be the most important public goods that government should support? Please rank your top three options by order of importance: a) Improved soil health b) Improved water quality c) Better air quality d) Increased biodiversity e) Climate change mitigation f) Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment.

Enhancing the environment

From the list below, please select which outcomes would be best achieved by incentivising action across a number of farms or other land parcels in a future environmental land management system: a) Recreation b) Water quality c) Flood mitigation d) Habitat restoration e) Species recovery f) Soil quality g) Cultural heritage h) Carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas reduction i) Air quality j) Woodlands and forestry k) Other (please specify).

What role should outcome based payments have in a new environmental land management system?

How can an approach to a new environmental land management system be developed that balances national and local priorities for environmental outcomes?

How can farmers and land managers work together or with third parties to deliver environmental outcomes?

Animal welfare

Do you think there is a strong case for government funding pilots and other schemes which incentivise and deliver improved welfare?

*Should government set further standards to ensure greater consistency and understanding of welfare information at the point of purchase? Please indicate a single preference of the below options: a) Yes b) Yes, as long as it does not present an unreasonable burden to farmers c) Perhaps in some areas d) No, it should be up to retailers and consumers e) Other (please specify) *if you answered 'perhaps in some areas', please elaborate.*

What type of action do you feel is most likely to have the biggest impact on improving animal health on farms? Please rank your top three choices from the below list, in order of importance: a) Use of regulation to ensure action is taken b) Use of financial incentives to support action c) Supporting vets to provide targeted animal health advice on farm d) Making it easier for retailers and other parts of the supply chain to recognise and reward higher standards of animal health e) An industry body with responsibility for promoting animal health f) Research and knowledge exchange g) Transparent and easily accessible data h) An understanding of animal health standards on comparable farms i) Other (please specify) j) N/A – Cannot rank as they are all equally important.

How can the government best support industry to develop an ambitious plan to tackle endemic diseases and drive up animal health standards?

Regulation

How can we improve inspections for environmental, animal health and welfare standards? Please indicate any of your preferred options below. a) Greater use of risk-based targeting b) Greater use of earned recognition, for instance for membership of assurance schemes c) Increased remote sensing d) Increased options for self-reporting e) Better data sharing amongst government agencies f) Other (please specify).

Which parts of the regulatory baseline could be improved, and how?

How can we deliver a more targeted and proportionate enforcement system?

Risk management and resilience

What factors most affect farm businesses' decisions on whether to buy agricultural insurance? Please rank your top three options by order of importance: a) Desire to protect themselves from general risks (e.g. – revenue protection) b) Desire to protect themselves

from specific risks (e.g. – flooding, pests or disease) c) Provision of government compensation for some risks d) Cost of insurance e) Complexity and administrative burden of insurance f) Availability of relevant insurance products g) Other (please specify).

What additional skills, data and tools would help better manage volatility in agricultural production and revenues for (a) farm businesses and (b) insurance providers?

How can current arrangements for managing market crises and providing crisis support be improved?

Crop, tree, plant and bee health

Where there are insufficient commercial drivers, how far do you agree or disagree that government should play a role in supporting: a) Industry, woodland owners and others to respond collaboratively and swiftly to outbreaks of priority pests and diseases in trees? b) Landscape recovery following pest and disease outbreaks, and the development of more resilient trees? c) The development of a bio-secure supply chain across the forestry, horticulture and beekeeping sectors?

Where there are insufficient commercial drivers, what role should government play in: a) Supporting industry, woodland owners and others to respond collaboratively and swiftly to outbreaks of priority pests and diseases in trees? b) Promoting landscape recovery following pest and disease outbreaks, and the development of more resilient trees?

What support, if any, can the government offer to promote the development of a bio-secure supply chain across the forestry, horticulture and beekeeping sectors?

Fairness in supply chain

How can we improve transparency and relationships across the food supply chain? Please rank your top three options by order of importance: a) Promoting Producer Organisations and other formal structures? b) Introducing statutory codes of conduct? c) Improving the provision of data on volumes, stocks and prices etc.? d) Other (please specify)?

What are the biggest barriers to collaboration amongst farmers?

What are the most important benefits that collaboration between farmers and other parts of the supply chain can bring? How could government help to enable this?

Devolution (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland)

With reference to the principles set out by JMC(EN) above, what are the agriculture and land management policy areas where a common approach across the UK is necessary?

What are the likely impacts on cross-border farms if each administration can tailor its own agriculture and land management policy?

International trade

How far do you agree or disagree with the broad priorities set out in the trade chapter?

How can government and industry work together to open up new markets?

Attachment H

How can we best protect and promote our brand, remaining global leaders in environmental protection, food safety, and in standards of production and animal welfare?

Headline Briefing Note on implications of revised draft NPPF for delivery of rural affordable housing.

On Monday 5th March the Government published a raft of documents that set out proposed changes to national planning policy and guidance. This briefing note is an initial assessment of those revisions in the NPPF that are likely to have the most impact on delivery of rural affordable housing. A fuller Briefing Note will follow in the next few weeks.

1. The revisions to the thresholds for taking an affordable housing contribution will have little impact on improving the supply of rural affordable housing.

Paragraph 64 sets the threshold for affordable housing at 10 dwellings (the glossary definition of a major site), other than in designated rural areas where the policies may set a lower threshold of 5 dwellings or fewer.

This does not address the concerns raised at the lack of rural responsiveness in applying a 10 dwelling threshold in rural areas. Whilst it is a nod in the right direction its impact is likely to be minimal. The draft NPPF still does not allow for affordable housing contributions to be taken on sites of between 6 - 9 units. As written the text appears to be making the policy even more restrictive by not even allowing an off-site contribution to be taken from these sites. Moreover, it was common practice when no national threshold applied that on smaller sites, usually 3 units or less the contribution was taken as a commuted sum.

The NPPF does not define a designated rural area. This may be helpful in giving local flexibility, but equally without definition there is a danger that S157 (Right to Buy) designations will be used.

2. The requirement that 20% of sites should be of 0.5 of a hectare or less is not helpful without a change to the thresholds to allow for on site affordable housing contributions to be taken from these sites when they are in a designated rural areas.

Paragraph 69 places a requirement on LPAs that 20% of their site allocation should be of sites of less than 0.5 hectares. This is generally the size of a 10 dwelling scheme.

3. The introduction of entry level exception sites for provision of homes suitable for first time buyers and renters could be helpful but could also undermine release of rural exception sites and provision of a wider range of affordable housing in rural communities.

Paragraph 72 - requires LPAs to support the development of entry level exception sites where these needs are not being met within the authority's area. This opens the door for larger exception sites to come forward and could be appropriate for larger rural settlements. However there are also dangers in this approach.

- i. It could undermine the release of RES sites. These sites do not have a prescribed affordable housing contribution and could therefore include up to 50% market housing - this would push up land value leading to landowners choosing this route rather than RES.
- ii. In itself this may not be a problem unless the affordable homes provided on these sites are available to those already housed, but needing alternative accommodation e.g. older people wishing to downsize.

- iii. There are no perpetuity requirements on these sites or requirement that they meet a local need. Again this may undermine release of RES where such requirements exist to retain a stock of affordable homes in the specific community.
- iv. These sites may not come forward even though there is a need in a particular rural community/cluster of communities if the need is being met elsewhere in the Plan area.
- v. It is not clear whether delivery on these sites should be counted as contributing to the housing target.

4. The provisions for rural affordable housing are welcome, but without a change in the thresholds they will place continuing reliance on the rural exception site policy which although bringing forward some excellent schemes does not deliver the number of homes needed in rural areas.

Paragraph 79 - encourages LPAs to support rural exception sites to provide affordable homes to meet local needs and for consideration to be given for the use of cross-subsidy to facilitate the provision of affordable homes. Interestingly the Glossary that defines rural exception sites links the use of this cross-subsidy to where it is essential to the delivery of affordable homes without grant funding.

Paragraph 80 - requires LPAs to promote sustainable development in rural areas by locating housing where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of communities. Plans should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a nearby village.

These paragraphs are helpful, but fail to respond to the fact that so much development in rural areas is on sites of 10 units or less and therefore it is essential that the LPA are able to take an on-site affordable housing contribution from these sites. This may be a heightened concern if given the nature of land supply in rural areas, much of the requirement for 20% of allocated sites to be of less than 0.5 are located in rural communities. Not only will these not deliver affordable homes, but could also result in landowners holding on to possible exception sites in the hope they will be allocated in the near future.

5. The ability to designate Local Green spaces could help retain open space in rural communities, but without some strengthening of the criteria for designation it could result in the loss of potential sites for housing development in rural communities.

Paragraph 100 introduces the ability to designate Local Green Spaces that are locally important. The policy is set in the context of promoting sustainable development and that any designations are consistent with policies for providing homes and jobs. It states they should only be designated at the point of plan preparation or when it is being updated. Some further safeguards require that designations should only be made when: the land is in close proximity to the community being served; demonstrably special to the local community because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of wildlife; and local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

Whilst the value of open green space is important even in rural communities, these criteria could be applied to sites that could also be appropriate as a rural exception site. It would be helpful if the criteria for Local Green Space designation were more stringent and there was guidance that enabled the LPA to withstand requests from those who were using this process to prevent development of affordable housing.

7. The revised definition of affordable housing presents three concerns for the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas.

- i) it does not restate the statutory discretion available for LPAs not to allow Starter Homes on rural exception sites**
- ii) it leaves the door open for low cost sale housing without any long term affordability requirements**
- iii) it would restrict delivery of affordable rented housing to registered partners, debarring others such as CLTs from providing such housing.**

The Glossary sets out the definition of affordable housing. This represents a significant departure from the current definition. There is no mention of social rent, but it does give flexibility for rents to have a discount of more than 20% of open market rent

It confines development of affordable rented housing to registered providers or homes built through a Build to Rent scheme. Potentially this would debar development of affordable rented homes by CLTs if they are not a registered provider or working in partnership with a RP. It is not clear whether this would also debar local authorities from developing homes for affordable rent.

There is no mention of LPAs having the discretion to not allow Starter Homes on exception sites or allowance of local connection conditions/obligations. The house price caps are far above rural wages so if allowed it is unlikely that these homes will not address local housing needs.

The products defined under “Other affordable routes to home ownership” are very broad. This is helpful in encouraging innovation/new products , however, perpetuity arrangements to retain affordability will only apply where there is public grant going into the scheme. Potentially this could mean that affordable sale housing provided as part of the affordable housing requirement, on both rural exception sites and market led sites, could only be of short term benefit in meeting local housing needs.

Prepared by: Jo. Lavis
Rural Housing Solutions
14th March 2018

	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	
32											
33	Contras re RCN@						1895				
34	Recharges to Rural England Back Office Support £1200)						1200	1200	1200		
35	RE recharge re Amazon Contract						3500	3500			
36	RE recharge re Elec NW Commission						1375	1375	1000		
37	Coastal Communities Alliance Gross)						4150	4149	4149		
38	Contributions to RHA Website Development/Maintenance						3280	3580			
39	Miscellaneous										
40	Contras						15089				
41	CCN Contrib to Brexit Costs							2000	700		
42	VAT										
43	VAT Refund						10983				
44	VAT Received						10996				
45	TOTAL INCOME						375522	348882	357622		

	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
46							ACTUAL	ESTIMATE	EST	
47							END FIN YEAR	2017/18	2018/19	
48	EXPENDITURE						£	£	£	
49	VAT Paid on Goods & Services						18255			
50	VAT Paid to HMRC						178			
51	General Provision for Inflation								1000	
52	CONTRACTS FOR SERVICES									
53	Corporate Management				DI,GB,AD 100%	KB 40%	74531	74530	63114	
54	Finance/Performance and Data Analysis				, DW, 100%,	KB 20%	29456	29457	30510	
55	Communications (incl Seminars)				RoseR,JT,,AD3	100%	6503	7529	7529	
56	Additional Comms Activity by RuralCity Media						4003	5763	5763	
57	Administrative and Technical Support				RI, WI,WC,BA,MB	100%	53902	51500	50311	
58	Research and Monitoring				BW, JH,	100%	10238	10238	10238	
59	Service Group Networking				KB40%		8432	8432	8432	
60	Economic Development Service				AD5	100%	5100	5100	5100	
61	Coastal Communities Contract						3650	3650	3650	
62	Rural Communities Housing Group				AD2	100%	6630	6630	6630	
63	Rural Transport Group				AD6	100%	2040	2040	2040	
64	Provision for Inflation on Contracts (2% p.a.)									2100
65	OTHER EXPENDITURE									
66	Budget for Brexit Project						1421	7000		
67	Rural Fair Shares/Business Rates "Campaigns"									
68	Rural Fair Shares Campaign etc.						9646	12500	6500	
69	Pixell Financial Service (core Annual Service)							12500	9500	
70	Fair Shares and Other Campaign Media Relations							0	2500	
71	SPEND FROM VOLCONTRIBS (BUSINESS RATES)							8500	8500	
72	Conferences/Seminars									
73	Rural Conference 2017						9329			
74	Rural Conference Drinks Reception						1300	1300	1000	



Affordable Housing Sounding Board Survey March 2018

The RSN Rural Sounding Board was recently contacted to explore views on Affordable Housing in rural areas. The survey was sent to both the Local Authority Sounding Board which includes representatives from all classifications of Local Authority and the Parish Councillor Sounding Board.

A summary of the results is provided below with comparisons between the two sets of respondents.

Q1 Do you agree that there is an issue with a lack of affordable housing in your local authority?

Response	Local Authority	Parish Councillors
Strongly Agree	63%	44%
Agree	21%	32%
Neither agree nor disagree	8%	9%
Disagree	0%	10%
Strongly Disagree	4%	4%
Don't Know	4%	1%

As you can see, a greater % of Local Authority Councillors responded that there was an issue with a lack of affordable housing in their local authority, 84% compared to 76% Parish Councillors. Both of these high figures however demonstrate that this is a key issue across both sets of respondents.

Comments in relation to this question from Local Authority Councillors included:

- Mainly caused by right to buy
- Relatively high property prices in relation to relatively low wages... means many people can't afford to buy and have to rent (deposit is often a factor because mortgage repayments are often less than rent). Therefore, there is a high demand for rental properties and this is reflected in high market rents (usually hard to heat traditional rural properties which are often expensive to run) so the waiting list for affordable or social housing on the choice based letting system is long.
- The term affordable is misleading for example for the purpose of housing determined by section 106 as part of a larger development the 80% of actual value is still out of the price range for many home seekers

Attachment K

Parish Councillors included the following comments:

- Especially for older people aged 60+ and single people of ALL ages
- As a rural area even at prices less than market rates properties are not affordable.
- Definition of affordable housing is very wide. Very few local young people stay because lack of local jobs or university. The low wage economy makes housing difficult for many as they can only afford to rent.
- We formed a steering group from parish council members who are now a CLT and they are trying to build some community housing.
- At present there is nobody on the housing list, a few months ago to fill a vacant affordable house the Housing Association had to go outside of our parish in order to allocate it.
- There are too many compromises based on the idea of “viability” leading to a lack of either affordable or social housing, particularly for young people.

Q2 – Respondents were asked to note which factors were contributing to a lack of affordable housing in their area. Respondents were able to choose as many factors as they felt relevant.

FACTOR	Local Authority Councillors	Parish Councillors
Lack of suitable land for development	46%	32%
Too many second homes	13%	16%
House prices are high	71%	65%
Community opposition to housing development	46%	22%
No issue locally	8%	12%
Other issue	46%	33%

It is interesting that considerably more Local Authority Councillors felt that community opposition to housing development contributed to a lack of affordable housing in a local area compared to lower figures from Parish Councillors.

The other issues raised by Local Authority Councillors included:

- Housing Needs Survey now out of date and didn't reflect true demand at that time
- Developers holding onto land forcing house prices up when they do develop, new affordable housing is slow to come through
- Rental properties high cost
- Price of land with planning permission, no powers for LAs to compel those sites with planning permission to be actually built on

The other issues raised by Parish Councillors included:

- Lack of development of existing sites that have already acquired planning permission. Lack of developers available and willing to fund develop small to medium sized developments

Attachment K

- Maybe some opposition to housing development depending upon proposal
- Wages have vastly lagged behind housing price increases, including rental properties.
- Anyone living here would have to commute for work and amenities exacerbating problems on single track local roads.
- Developers argue that affordable housing makes large housing developments unviable
- Houses bought as Buy To Rent investments. Rents are very high and hard to find suitable property.
- A considerable part of our parish lies in the conservation area, whilst it is important to preserve this as much as possible, careful planning, supported by the infrastructure, has to be considered if communities are to remain vibrant.

Q3 – In your local area, do you think that there is a need for any of the following housing:

	Local Authority Councillor	Parish Councillor
Starter Homes	67%	65%
Shared Ownership	79%	46%
Affordable Housing – Rent	88%	67%
Others	50%	24%

Others that were specified by Local Authority Councillors included:

- Extra Care Provision
- Social Rent Housing
- Homes for people to downsize to
- Family Homes
- Homes for Life

Other options identified by Parish Councillors included:

- The need is mainly for rented accommodation for those who would find "affordable" rents too high. So, a return to "fair rents" which exclude scarcity would be beneficial. There is also a need for "supported" housing for the elderly or disabled who have specific needs.
- Affordable housing for older residents looking to downsize.
- It has proved difficult to get people to rent or buy affordable homes built in a neighbouring village presumably because of lack of nearby employment and high costs of accessing work or services
- Assisted living units
- At the moment there is a good mixture of properties to rent and shared ownership if required.
- Social housing at 50% commercial rents
- Smaller properties or bungalows for older people to downsize to. They want to stay in the area & downsizing would free up their larger properties for families & so reduce the need to build more larger properties
- ExtraCare housing

Q4 - If second home ownership is an issue in your area, has your local authority taken any steps to reduce the impact on your local community?

	Local Authority Councillors	Parish Councillors
Yes	27%	4%
No	9%	24%
Don't Know	5%	18%
Not relevant	59%	53%

Responses to this question would indicate that 2nd Homes are not a widespread issue but are focussed in particular pockets of rural England.

Several of the comments from Local Authority Councillors included the increase in council tax to full levels for 2nd Homes. One had lobbied Parliament about the issue and one respondent highlighted the difficulty if a home was owned by a business as that meant they couldn't charge the full council tax requirement.

Parish Councillors made the following points:

- It is not such a problem as in some other areas, but Council tax should be greatly increased for second homes and holiday homes. These properties contribute hardly anything to the local community.
- Second Homes Council Tax partially distributed via grant fund, partnership highways funds and discretionary County Council members budgets. Though the future of this fund is not secure as the County Council is considering retaining this entirely. The Grant fund has also failed to reach every community and mitigate the impacts of second homes.
- Raising council tax for those second homes that remain vacant.

Q5 - Do you agree that housing developments in your local area have been supported by the relevant infrastructure needed for the growing community? (for example, public transport, schools, access to health services)

	Local Authority Councillors	Parish Councillors
Strongly Agree	4%	0%
Agree	21%	6%
Neither agree nor disagree	17%	11%

Attachment K

Fairly Disagree	33%	54%
Strongly Disagree	25%	28%

58% indicated that they disagree that housing developments have been supported by the relevant infrastructure needed for a growing community which could have serious implications for the residents of those areas. At Parish Council level this increased significantly to 82%.

The following areas were highlighted in this question as important:

- Public Transport continues to be an issue for rural communities
- This is where the Govt HIF is so important in particular to pay up front for roads to minimise huge disruption for existing communities adjacent to new development which can then be recharged to developers instead of building half/two thirds of housing first. This would go a long way to ameliorating local loathing of any development on their doorstep despite the obvious local housing need. Viability issues threatening 25% affordable housing are a worry because we would like this to be higher (35% was our original aim for the district which proved to be unachievable). Anything Govt can do to help make more affordable housing viable would be welcome. Transport is always an issue in rural areas with a dwindling bus service and reliance on the car (community transport schemes work well but struggle to expand to fill the need with hand to mouth funding largely reliant on grants to develop though not necessarily to run).
- Infrastructure always lags the development where the development has to pay for that infrastructure. We need more 'rolling funds' to deliver infrastructure up front.

Parish Councillors highlighted the following points:

- Our bus service has been cancelled. We have no schools or medical services in the village and the villagers themselves set up a co-operative to run our own shop
- We have very restricted access to public transport - one bus service out of village on Mondays and Fridays leaving at 1025 am and arriving back in to village at 1425 virtually impossible for anyone requiring GP or hospital appointments. Also village school at full capacity!
- Lack of doctors, dentists and bus service
- The health and transport infrastructure problems have not been fully addressed.
- The school's are oversubscribed as are the doctors surgeries. The roads are not able to cope with increased traffic and the bus service is being cut.
- Last two developments were refused by LA and approved at appeal, so community did not receive any S106 money.
- We have a big challenge with school places - a new estate means that there is not enough room in the village school for children who live in the "catchment" and we cannot see how proposed new developments are sustainable. The Doctor and Dentist are also under pressure. Significant issues for the sewage system!

Q6 – Respondents were asked “what one action do you think Rural Services Network could take to help support the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas?”

The responses from the Local Authority Councillors can be grouped into the following areas:

- Awareness raising about affordable housing issues in rural areas
- Support for Community Land Trusts
- Encourage Central Govt to provide bigger grants to deliver affordable housing in rural areas
- Campaign to reverse decision on developments under 10 properties
- Campaign for funding for infrastructure to support developments
- Support to find and encourage funding for exception sites
- Encourage Government to help with a deposit scheme to allow people to get on property ladder
- Increase statistics available on affordable homes to improve understanding of situation

The responses from Parish Councillors can be grouped into the following areas:

- Ensure access to local facilities, infrastructure and suitable employment
- Campaign for greater % of Affordable Housing per development
- Support NALC's campaign for 2nd home council tax to be returned to the parish council
- Raise awareness of the Affordable Housing problems in rural areas
- Encourage building of new council homes and council tenants to form cooperatives to manage their own housing.
- Insist that % of housing is affordable before granting approval for new developments with no developer buy out allowed!
- Build housing near centres of employment or in rural settlements (not open countryside) which have good public transport links
- Keep parishes informed of current policy and trends
- Promotion of case studies and good practice
- Support Community Land Trusts
- Emphasis on rural employment, it's importance to the viability of the country, and to other economic sectors, and the need for housing to support rural workers
- Support for different types of building ie small builds, cooperatives etc

Rural Conference 2018

Tuesday 5th September 2018

Time	Duration	What	Who to organize?
11.30 – 11.50	20 mins	Arrival & Registration	-
11.50-12.00	10 mins	Welcome & Introduction	Graham
12.00-13.00	60 mins	Panel Discussion	Ivan
13.00-14.00	60 Mins	Lunch	-
14.00 – 14.45	45 mins	Lord Gardiner	Kerry
14.45-15.20	35 mins	Workshop 1	Kerry
15.20-15.55	35 mins	Workshop 2	Kerry
15.55-16.30	35 mins	Facilitated discussion with plenary about points learned from the day and what they hope to cover in day 2.	Ivan

Wednesday 6th September 2019

Time	Duration	What	Who to organize?
9.30 – 9.50	20 Mins	Arrival & Registration	-
9.50-10.00	10 Mins	Welcome & Introduction	Graham
10.00 – 11.00	60 Mins	Plenary – Tony Travers	Ivan
11.00– 11.30	35 Mins	Speaker	Ivan
11.30-11.45	15 Mins	Tea & Coffee	-
11.45-12.20	35 Mins	Workshop 3	Kerry
12.20-12.55	35 Mins	Workshop 4	Kerry
12.55-13.50	55 mins	Lunch	-
13.50 –14.30	40 Mins	Speaker	Ivan
14.30-15.00	30 Mins	Speaker	Ivan
15.00-15.30	30 Mins	Speaker	Ivan
15.30-15.50	20 Mins	Summing up of Conference and Key Themes	Ivan
15.50-16.00	10 Mins	Closing	Graham

Rural Conference 2018

DRAFT Workshop ideas

Tuesday 5th September

3 workshops to be repeated once

14.45-15.20	35 mins	Workshop 1	Kerry
15.20-15.55	35 mins	Workshop 2	Kerry

Workshop ideas:

Local Government Finance – Dan Bates

Have a session that delegates have to book on and limit to 15 (?) delegates so that he can tailor his presentation and figures to those authorities.

Setting up Community run services - Plunkett

(Jane mentioned seeing a presentation they did about how to support people to set up a community shop which could include other services like a post office etc. Could be a good option to have as a workshop about wider service delivery and not just local authority based)

Delivering services with a new model - West Devon & South Hams Council

(they have got rid of departments and work is sent to customer services or 'specialist' teams)

Wednesday 6th September

3 workshops to be repeated once

11.45-12.20	35 Mins	Workshop 3	Kerry
12.20-12.55	35 Mins	Workshop 4	Kerry

Merging 2 districts – Suffolk Coastal & Waveney

Given that Sajid Javid has approved this merger, could we ask them to do something on their lessons learned so far?

<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/yourcouncil/new-single-council/>

Rural Housing – does Andy have a contact we could use for this?

Housing is such a key issue in rural areas it seems logical that we would have a session on this, could be around delivery of exception sites?

Scrutiny of Rural Health – North Yorkshire?

Attachment L (b)

Whilst I appreciate we may not be their favourites at the moment, this is the council where I wrote the joint article with and they have done some scrutiny recently on workforce planning in health & social care. It may be something we could invite them to talk about? The contact is scrutiny often sends me information or updates on their work.