

Notes of last SPARSE Rural Special Interest Group meeting

Title:	SPARSE Rural Meeting Rural Services Network Special Interest Group
Date:	Monday, 21 st June 2021
Venue:	Hosted Online via Zoom

Attendance

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

Item Decisions and actions

1 Attendance and Apologies

Cllr Cecilia Motley (Chair, Rural Services Network and Shropshire Council) welcomed members with apologies that she would have to leave halfway through for another engagement. Mr Graham Biggs agreed to take over as Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Apologies were noted and taken as read.

2 Notes from the previous SPARSE Rural Meeting 25.01.2021

The Minutes from the SPARSE Rural meeting on 25 January 2021 were approved.

3 Notes from the previous RSN Executive Meeting held 17.05.2021

The Minutes from the RSN Executive meeting on 17 May 2021 were noted.

4 Assessing Costs associated with Remoteness

Cllr Motley welcomed Adrian Jenkins (Pixel Financial Management). Members received a presentation with an interim report which was seeking to identify additional rural costs of remoteness.

Please note that full notes and presentation outlining what was discussed in this item are available only to [SPARSE members of the RSN](#). If you are a SPARSE member of RSN and would like to view the full notes, please email us at admin@sparse.gov.uk with the title of this meeting and date and a request for full notes and presentation, and we will forward you this information.

Mr Biggs recognised constraints around Government input given the current issues arising from the pandemic. He said that there are some very big policy issues to be handled through the spending review – social care, levelling up, reorganisation and devolution and because of these, there is always a danger that some other major

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issues will be dropped.

He went on to inform colleagues that work on comparisons is being undertaken by the RSN in respect of spending on discretionary services between rural and urban. Members continued discussion on ways used to incentivise small local companies to bid for smaller developments.

Mr Biggs said that he felt that identification of each councils own rural costs needs to come directly from them and offered to help with any issues in setting this up.

Colleagues were encouraged to submit any suggestions they might have to enable greater evidence. This would help in producing a briefing paper for MPs in the Fair Share Group as it was felt that the newer intake of MPs may not be aware of the issues. Although the group recognised the unlikelihood of anything moving forward until 2023-24, they agreed that briefing rural constituency MPs at an early opportunity will raise awareness and hopefully lead them to raise issues whenever the opportunity arises.

Mr Jenkins referred to the Bidding for the Levelling Up Fund – an example where colleagues had been told that there would be a second round but to date have not been told when this would be. Members agreed that issues such as these provide difficulty around planning.

Mr Biggs suggested a survey might be useful and agreed to look into taking this forward.

5 Any Other Business

Mr Biggs thanked Adrian Jenkins for his work and the informative presentation. Colleagues were thanked for attending the meeting and were reminded to login separately for the Rural Economy Sub Group meeting in the afternoon.

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Appendix A

Attendance & Apologies

Attendance

Full Name	Organisation
CLlr Giles Archibald	South Lakeland District Council
CLlr Steve Arnold	Ryedale District Council
CLlr Edward Baines	Rutland County Council
Graham Biggs MBE	Rural Services Network
Kerry Booth	Rural Services Network
Martin Collett	English Rural HA
Abi Culley	Warwickshire County Council
Fatima de Abreu	Local Government Association
Christopher Edmonds	West Devon Borough Council
CLlr John Evans	Uttlesford District Council
CLlr Richard Good	Richmondshire District Council
Lucy Hume	North Norfolk District Council
David Inman	Rural Services Network
Adrian Jenkins	Pixel Finance
Peter Lappin	Devon County Council
Clive Mason	Harborough District Council
Alice Mason	Wychavon District Council
Toby Matthews	Norfolk County Council
CLlr Cecilia Motley (Chair)	Rural Services Network / Shropshire Council
CLlr Yvonne Peacock	Richmondshire District Council
CLlr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
CLlr Leigh Rawlins	South Oxfordshire District Council
CLlr Sue Sanderson	Cumbria County Council
CLlr Jeremy Savage	South Norfolk District Council
CLlr Richard Sherras	Ribble Valley Borough Council
CLlr Margaret Squires	Mid Devon District Council
CLlr Harry St John	West Oxfordshire District Council
CLlr Peter Stevens	West Suffolk Council
Dr CLlr Virginia Taylor	Eden District Council
Anthony Thomas	Lichfield District Council
CLlr Peter Thornton	Cumbria County Council
Nadine Trout	Rural Services Network
Andrew Wallace	West Northamptonshire Council

Apologies

Full Name	Organisation
CLlr Philip Atkins	Staffordshire County Council
CLlr Owen Bierley	West Lindsey District Council
Lisa Buckle	South Hams and West Devon Councils

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Cllr Sarah Butikofer	North Norfolk District Council
Michelle Drewery	Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Cllr Alex Hall	Lincolnshire County Councillor
Helen Harris	Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Michael Harris	New Forest District Council
Nik Harwood	Young Somerset
Cllr Robert Heseltine	North Yorkshire County Council
Cllr Chris Kettle	Stratford District Council
Gary Powell	Teignbridge District Council
Cllr Helen Reeve	South Hams District Council
Cllr Sue Tucker	Scarborough Borough Council

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