

## Notes of last SPARSE Rural Special Interest Group meeting

---

**Title:** Rural Services Network Special Interest Group

- **SPARSE Rural Sub SIG meeting**

**Date:** Monday 29 January 2018

**Venue:** City of Westminster Archives Centre, 10 St Ann's Street, London SW1P 2DE

---

### Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions
------	-----------------------

**SPARSE Rural Sub SIG Meeting 1.15 to 2.30pm**

Members moved onto the meeting of the SPARSE Rural Sub SIG.

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were noted as read.

**2 Minutes of Last Meeting 20 November 2017**

The Minutes of meeting 20 November were noted and accepted.

**3 Minutes of Executive Meeting - 15 January 2018**

The note of the last Executive meeting was noted and accepted.

**4 Provisional Finance Settlement 2018/19**

Members noted an update on the Provisional Finance Settlement and details of the recently submitted RSN response to the consultation. The following key issues were noted:

- The transitional grant has been stopped.
- Inclusion of council tax In the calculation as to how government funding cuts should fall was unfair to rural areas
- Points had been raised with the Minister further to the last Executive meeting and it was felt that there he had a good understanding of the issues faced by rural communities. However, members noted that the Minister was adamant that all aspects of the new Needs Formula being developed should be backed by evidence. RSN had asked to should be contacted by government officials to give an indication of how they wished this to be collected and for which services.

**Action:**

RSN colleagues to remind Civil Service contacts that they are awaiting input as to what service costs they need captured and how evidence should be provided.

- Members raised concerns at the complexity of the formulas used and noted details of timelines for consultations.

## **5 Fair Funding Review**

Members noted the preliminary report from PIXEL on the Fair Funding Review.

Members were encouraged to respond individually to the consultation, although a national average position will be sent as a response from the SIG. They discussed the data set which was needed to warranty justification for funding and which is therefore a big part of the current consultation. Members noted that the formula will be simplified but that rural authorities, best placed to provide evidence of impact, must respond with individual examples.

Where previous issues had been raised, members noted some successes and changes to the consultation. The Consultation will close on 12 March and the RSN will circulate a draft response to members for comment before submission.

Members were encouraged to note that their own input will be vital to impacting and reinforcing the rural case.

### **Action:**

Members to individually respond on behalf of their own authorities and to ensure that their own individual finance officers follow the thread and are made aware of any issues.

## **6 Any other Business**

There was no other business and the meeting was closed.

**Attendance**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Graham Biggs	RSN
David Inman	RSN
Cllr Cecilia Motley	RSN
Andy Dean	RSN
Richard Quallington	ACRE
Cllr Les Kew	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Claire Walters	Bus Users UK
Cllr David Ireton	Craven District Council
Darren Peters, Staff Officers	Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue
Greg Macdonald, Head of Economic & Commercial Development	East Northamptonshire Council
Henry Lee, External Research & Policy Co- ordinator	Hastoe Housing Association
Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire County Council
Ashley Curzon	Isle of Wight Council
Helen Harris, Economic Growth Manager	Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Mark Whittington	Lincolnshire County Council
Heidi Turnbull	Maldon District Council
Alan Gray, Economic Development Manager	North Kesteven District Council
Steve Blatch, Chief Executive	North Norfolk District Council
Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick	North Norfolk District Council
Robert Heseltine	North Yorkshire Council
Janice Rose	Northumberland County Council

Malcolm Leading	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils
Cllr Yvonne Peacock	Richmondshire District Council
Cllr Cameron Clark	Sevenoaks District Council
Revd Richard Kirlew	Sherborne Deanery Rural Chaplaincy
Cllr Gwilym Butler	Shropshire Council
Gill Heath	Staffordshire County Council
Peter Stevens	St Edmundsbury Council
Matt Jones	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Philip Sanders	West Devon Borough Council
Ian Knowles, Director of Resources	West Lindsey District Council
Cllr Owen Bierley	West Lindsey District Council
Cllr Andrew Hadley	West Somerset Council
Gordon Dwyer, Senior Economic Development Officer	West Somerset Council
Cllr Janet Dunton	West Sussex County Council
Steve Brain, Programmes & Performance Manager	Worcestershire County Council
Katie Ainsworth, Project Manager – Worcestershire LEADER Programme	Worcestershire County Council