



RURAL LENS REVIEW

The Queen's Speech

Presentation by Graham Biggs MBE, Chief Executive
Rural Services Network



Introduction

At the State Opening of Parliament on Tuesday 11 May, the Government, through the Queen's Speech, set out its **priorities and programme** for the coming session including the legislation it intends to pass. The Queen's Speech states the programme it sets out will **deliver** a pandemic recovery that makes the UK stronger, healthier and more prosperous.

Queen's Speech Content

Many of the measures in the Queen's Speech will impact on rural communities and businesses. It is essential that proper, effective and transparent rural proofing of the legislation and the delivery is in place across government and that policies are nuanced to ensure that rural areas can both benefit from the proposals and contribute to the recovery and well-being of the nation.

Local delivery to meet local needs is essential.

Areas in the Queen's Speech that are of particular interest to the RSN include:

- Public Finances
- Policing
- Health and Care
- Connectivity
- Transport
- Skills and Education
- Economy
- Housing
- Net Zero




Revitalising Rural

Realising the Vision



RURAL
SERVICES
NETWORK

We want a fairer distribution of national resources to rural areas and for more nuanced national policies that reflect rural circumstances.



Public Finances



Excerpt from the Queen's Speech, May 2021

“... ensuring everyone has access to excellent public services, **regardless of where they live**. A Levelling Up White Paper will set out **bold new policy** interventions to **improve livelihoods and opportunity** in all parts of the UK as we recover from the pandemic, grasping the opportunities of Brexit.”

RSN policy ask:

Public Sector Funding: Public services should be **fairly funded** to ensure that rural services are recognised and adequately funded to ensure that **rural areas are not left behind** in levelling up England.

Key Fact: Urban areas in 2021-2022 will receive some **61% (£107) more** per head in Settlement Funding Assessment grant **than their rural counterparts**.

Policing



Excerpt from the Queen's Speech, May 2021

“Protecting the public by **giving police the tools they need** to tackle crime and disorder, and ensuring justice and the protection of the public by extending the length of time spent in prison by serious and dangerous offenders.”

RSN policy ask:

Recognising rural need: Government should take full account of the needs of rural areas, their economies, and their communities and that the impacts of any measures flowing from it are both proportionate to rural areas and properly rural proofed.

Key Facts:

Fixed, non-staff **costs are higher amongst rural forces** which cannot benefit from economies of scale due to the need to serve more dispersed, low density populations. Resulting in **lower officer numbers** and **65% higher workloads** per officer compared to urban areas.

Health and Care



Excerpt from the Queen's Speech, May 2021

Health and Care Bill - *“Driving integration of health and care through the delivery of an Integrated Care System in **every part of the country**....Enabling the system to most effectively prevent illness,tackle health inequalities, **tailor support to the needs of local populations**, and enhance patient safety and quality...”*

Mental Health Act Reform - *“The Government remains committed to ambitions to.... **expand and transform mental health services in England** and to invest an additional £2.3 billion a year in mental health services by 2023-24, so that **two million more people will be able to access** support.”*

RSN Policy Ask

Both need **better resourcing** to become more accessible **in rural areas**. Historic funding allocations for public health cannot be justified and need **urgent overhaul** to even out provision. **Large disparities in numbers of mental health professionals** working in rural and urban areas need **resolving**.

Connectivity



Excerpt from the Queen's Speech, May 2021

Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill

*"This will **accelerate and improve the deployment** and use of digital communications networks. This will support the installation, maintenance, upgrading and sharing of apparatus that enables **better telecommunications coverage** and connectivity."*

RSN policy asks:

- Broadband USO upgrade
- Public investment in gigabit-capable connectivity
- Address roll-out workforce capacity issues
- Tackle mobile not spots
- Announce a fully funded digital skills and inclusion programme.

Key Facts:

274,000 rural households and businesses **cannot access** a decent fixed broadband connection of 10mbps. In **30%** of rural premises it is **not possible** to make an **indoor phone call** using a **mobile** phone.

Transport



Excerpt from the Queen's Speech, May 2021

Rail and Bus Reform

*"The Government will publish a White Paper containing proposals that will **transform the railways and deliver for passengers**... The National Bus Strategy...transform buses outside London... these reforms will be a major part of levelling up..."*

RSN policy asks:

- Bus route provision to better serve rural communities
- Zero emission buses refuelling solutions for rural areas
- Community Transport investment and promotion
- Cycling and walking infrastructure improvements

Key Fact:

In 2019/20 **£39.41** was spent on **subsidised bus routes in urban** areas compared to just **£7.53 in rural areas**.

Skills and Education

Excerpt from the Queen's Speech, May 2021



Skills and Post 16 Education Bill

*“will put **employers at the heart of the post-16 skills** system ...ensuring **local skills** provision **meets local needs**. It will introduce the **Lifelong Loan Entitlement**...It will strengthen accountability by extending existing powers for the Secretary of State for Education to **intervene where colleges have failed to meet local needs**...”*

Education Recovery Plan

*“...to ensure **no child is left behind**... a long-term plan that **builds back a better and fairer** education system in England... **all schools will receive more money** for every pupil. The Government will also progress towards a **single national funding formula**....so that schools see greater consistency and fairness in their funding.*

RSN policy asks:

That the revised national funding formula helps to **compensate rural schools** which face **higher costs and reduced staffing** levels.

Economy



Excerpt from the Queen's Speech, May 2021

Levelling Up

*"Government will publish a **landmark Levelling Up White Paper** setting out bold new policy interventions to **improve livelihoods and opportunity** in **all parts of the UK**...to enable more people to **get on in life**, without feeling they have to leave **their local area**....Levelling up means creating new **good jobs, boosting training** and **growing productivity** in places that have seen economic decline...not through a one-size-fits-all approach, but **nurturing different types of economic growth** and building on strengths that **different places have**."*

RSN policy asks:

Ring fenced, dedicated rural funding, proportionate in size within the overall UK, managed at a local level within a realistic timeframe.

Click on these Rural Lens Reviews for more info.



Housing



Excerpt from the Queen's Speech, May 2021

Planning Bill, Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Bill

“Laws to **modernise the planning system**, so that **more homes can be built**....measures to **end ground rents** for new leasehold properties...**change local plans** so that they provide **more certainty over the type, scale and design** of development permitted...**decrease the time** it takes for developments to **go through the planning system**.....replace the existing systems for **funding affordable housing**..... a **new more transparent levy**.....**simplify and enhance** the framework for **environmental assessments** for developments.....reform **locally led development corporations** to ensure local areas have access to appropriate delivery vehicles to **support growth and regeneration**.”

RSN policy asks:

- 🌱 Affordable housing quotas below 10 dwellings
- 🌱 Grant funding increased to match the population living in rural areas
- 🌱 Community-led housing which is broader in scope
- 🌱 Exception sites first homes should not be at expense of affordable homes
- 🌱 Sale of affordable homes should allow 100% retention of right to buy receipts

Net Zero



Excerpt from the Queen's Speech, May 2021

Environment Bill

*“Legislation to **reduce greenhouse gas emissions** by **78 per cent by 2035**...the **most ambitious in the world**...Ten Point Plan for a green industrial revolution...to **create highly-skilled green jobs, build back a greener economy and level up opportunity across the country**....new offshore wind ports ...transition to low carbon heating, and **helping tens of thousands of households to upgrade the energy efficiency of their homes**...”*

RSN policy asks:

- 🌱 Economic growth programmes with explicit objectives to support low carbon growth
- 🌱 Housing and renewables incentives for housebuilders, homeowners and landlords
- 🌱 Housing energy efficiency rural new build pilots
- 🌱 Electricity network capacity improvements
- 🌱 Local Energy Network funding
- 🌱 Local service retention to reduce the need to travel

[Click](#) on our Rural Lens Review of the Ten Point Plan for more info.



Thank you

To access the full Rural Lens Review of the Queen's Speech 2021, including RSN's detailed policy asks, click on the image below

