

## Rural Economy Sub Group meeting

**Date:** 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021  
**Subject:** Rural Economy  
**Chair:** Graham Biggs MBE  
**Host:** Online Event via Zoom

### Learning Outcomes Key Issues Highlighted by Speakers

#### Ivan Annibal – Social Value Engine

- [The Social Value Engine](#)<sup>1</sup> developed by Rose Regeneration and East Riding of Yorkshire Council provides a place focussed, online platform that assesses the potential economic benefit of non-commercial projects.
- The platform uses 220 peer reviewed financial proxies to generate a theoretical cost benefit for proposed schemes, is useful to a broad range of users from fire, police and local authorities to community groups and social enterprises and is accredited by Social Value UK.
- The outputs of the Social Value Engine are an invaluable source of information for engaging with the communities within which projects are proposed, and for securing financial backing to make action possible.

#### Graham Biggs MBE – Towards a Greener Green Book Process

- The Green Book is the government's processes on options appraisal and applies to all proposals that concern public spending, taxation, changes to regulations, and changes to the use of existing public assets and resources. It is mainly use on capital projects.
- The Green Book Review 2020 concluded that 'the current appraisal practice is likely to undermine the government's ambition to "level up" poorer regions'.
- Considering the review, the RSN (with Britain's Leading Edge, CPRE & English Rural HA) commissioned Pragmatix Advisory to report on the Green Book, the findings and Government's response to the Green Book Review 2020.
- The Pragmatix report, 'Towards a Greener Green Book Process', highlighted several areas where the appraisal system is failing rural communities and considered options for making Government decisions fairer for rural people.
- It was noted that reducing rural disadvantage must be part of the levelling up agenda, however 'levelling up' is currently poorly defined and seems to be a changing narrative.
- To ensure 'levelling up' is achieved across the country, including rural England, the metrics of success need to be defined, understood, and consistently applied.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.socialvalueengine.com](http://www.socialvalueengine.com)

It was found that capital expenditure was currently delivering fewer outputs in rural areas than would be found in urban.

- There is very little usable government research in rural/urban difference in costs, yet a simple cost per unit calculation which is the current norm will always favour urban investment, with no regard taken to social value, transformative outcomes or past overspending in a particular location.
- Greater need in rural areas is explicitly acknowledged in the UK funding to Wales, yet the Green Book appraisal process currently reinforces incrementalism and inertia due to its limited rural consideration.

### **Key Issues facing the Rural Economy discussed**

- The continued lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic is putting a wide range of rural businesses under intense pressure for survival, as well as having potentially long-term effects on community participation within the voluntary sectors.
- Business types that were noted as being particularly vulnerable were those relying on incoming visitor spend, those that generate much of their income during key periods of the year that have been lost, those that had premises too small for future social distancing requirements, and those that needed to generate reserves for future investment.
- Alongside the impact of Covid lockdowns, businesses are now having to adjust to the new trading relationship with the European Union. It is a moment of intense pressure for a great many rural businesses and service providers.
- Conversely, it was noted that some rural businesses are thriving because of the new appreciation of rural living in 'lockdown' England and the desire to live and work rurally. Adoption of online work, learning and leisure services has mitigated the effects of lockdown for a great many, but there are rural areas where good broadband is not possible and therefore the lockdown is causing a significant divide of opportunity. Lack of digital skills can also be a key issue.

**Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers**

#### **Rural Services Network**

Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, Devon, PL19 0BZ

Tel: 01822 813693

[www.rsonline.org.uk](http://www.rsonline.org.uk) email: [events@sparse.gov.uk](mailto:events@sparse.gov.uk) twitter: [@rsonline](https://twitter.com/rsonline)

## Attendance

<b>Full Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Vinia Abesamis	Herefordshire Council
Ivan Annibal	Rose Regeneration
Darren Arulvasagam	South West Mutual
Tess Ax	Cornwall Council
Amy Beckett	Stroud Council
Cllr Owen Bierley	West Lindsey District Council
Graham Biggs	Rural Services Network
Kerry Booth	Rural Services Network
Steve Capes	Derbyshire Dales District Council
Christine Clarke	Community Catalysts C.I.C
Amy Cobbett	NFU
Ben Colson	Bus Users
Jo Dixon	Action Hampshire & Hampshire Rural Forum
Richard Dowson	RAEC Ltd
James Elliott	South Northants Council
Cllr Roger Habgood	Somerset West and Taunton District Council
Duncan Hall	King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council
Helen Harris	Leicestershire County Council
Nik Harwood	Young Somerset
Lizzi Hearn	CPRE
Michael Hewitt	Cherwell District Council
Andrea Hines	Allerdale Borough Council
Claire Holt	Durham County Council
Lauren Hopson-Haw	Ryedale District Council
Nick Hubbard	Citizens Advice Sedgemoor
David Inman	Rural Services Network
Paul James	Cotswold District Council
Sonia Lambert	East Suffolk Council
Toby Matthews	Norfolk County Council
Claire Maxim	Arthur Rank Centre
Andrea McCallum	Hampshire County Council
Cllr Yvonne Peacock	Richmondshire District Council
Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
Cllr Ken Pollock	Worcestershire County Council
Toyubur Rahman	Chichester District Council
Michael Reynolds	North Yorkshire County Council
Cllr Mary Robinson	Eden District Council
David Rodda MBE	Cornwall Council
Janice Rose	Northumberland County Council
Melanie Sealey	Devon County Council
Kay Sentence	Thame cIt
Cllr Richard Sherras	Ribble Valley Borough Council
Liz Small	North Yorkshire County Council

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Cllr Virginia Taylor	Eden District Council
Mo Toft	Chichester College
John Tonge	Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Nadine Trout	Rural Services Network
Cllr Sue Tucker	Scarborough Borough Council
Mark Wathen	Somerset West and Taunton District Council
Cllr Amy Wheelton	South Derbyshire District Council
Cllr Mark Whittington	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Mark Winnington	Staffordshire County Council
Hattie Winter	Somerset West and Taunton District Council
Dan Worth	Rural Services Network

## Apologies

### Full Name

Martin Allman  
Rachel Baconnet  
Cllr Tim Ball  
Cllr Frances Beatty  
Mandie Berry  
John Birtwistle  
Chris Brooks  
Cllr Christine Byliss  
Cllr John Clark  
Beccy Coombs  
Bill Cullen  
Cllr Donald Davies  
Andrea Davis  
Fiona Duhamel  
Cllr Kevin Dukes  
Cllr Janet Duncton  
Georgina Edwards  
Helen Flynn  
Cllr Kevin Frea  
Cllr Anthony Gillias  
Ahmed Goga  
Alan Gray  
Jessie Hamshar  
Cllr Michael Harris  
Nik Harwood  
Cllr Paul Hayward  
Cllr Robert Heseltine  
Deborah Kemp  
Cllr Chris Kettle  
Cllr Phil King  
Louise Kite

### Organisation

Cumbria County Council  
Warwickshire County Council  
Bath and North East Somerset Council  
Stafford Borough Council  
North Somerset Council  
FirstGroup plc  
Wychavon District Council  
Rother District Council  
South Somerset District Council  
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council  
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council  
North Somerset Council  
Exmoor National Park  
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council  
Bassetlaw District Council  
West Sussex County Council  
Plunkett Foundation  
Nidderdale Plus Community Hub  
Lancaster City Council  
Rugby Borough Council  
Oxfordshire LEP  
North Kesteven District Council  
Cornwall Council  
New Forest District Council  
Young Somerset  
East Devon District Council  
North Yorkshire County Council  
Pub is The Hub  
Stratford District Council  
Harborough District Council  
Lancashire County Council

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Cllr Richard Leppington	Forest of Dean District Council
Martyne Manning	Stafford Borough Council
Cllr Chris Mapey	East Suffolk District Council
Brian Norris	Living Memories C.I.C
Brian Norris	Living Memories C.I.C.
Helen Parrott	Arts Council England
Jayne Pickering	Wychavon District Council
Gary Powell	Teignbridge District Council
Emily Preston	Hampshire County Council
Julia Raven	South Northamptonshire Council
Cllr Louise Richardson	Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Jacky Smith	South Kesteven District Council
Cllr Peter Stevens	West Suffolk Council
Cllr John Ward	Babergh District Council
John Ward	Chichester District Council
Sarah Welsh	Peak District National Park Authority
Cllr Wayne Whittle	Isle of Wight Council
Nigel Wilcock	iED (Institute of Economic Development)/Mickledore

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