



RURAL MARKET TOWN GROUP



RMTG Clerks Advisory Panel meeting
Online via Zoom
10:30am-12pm, Monday, 30th November 2020

Agenda

We apologise for the fact that this agenda shares common items with the first RMTG meeting of representatives which took place on the 9th November 2020. The items outlined below are noted to facilitate first discussions, to engage with you on topics you deem most important and to receive your guidance on how this Group could work for you.

1. Welcome and introduction to Rural Services Network from Graham Biggs MBE, Chief Executive and David Inman, Director

2. Discussion on the intended brief of the RMTG

As a country England is more urban than the other home countries and most initiatives and policies have urban roots. The RSN's prime concern are Rural Services and we believe that rural matters must be thoroughly considered when building a strong national economy. We are forming this group because we believe that Rural Market Towns are a crucial part of the rural economy and of the way rural areas operate because they are its service hubs, hence why we seek to establish a national Rural Market Town network.

In addition to the above, we would also like to encourage members to share their best practice advice. We are currently running and have already requested input from all members by sending you link to the RMTG Good Practice Survey. We will seek to consult all members on these matters on a periodic basis and we will seek to share this information within the group.

[Please click here to view the RMTG Good Practice Survey.](#)

This agenda item looks to provide the opportunity for a preliminary discussion. Whilst we will introduce rural service topics into the RMTG agenda its essential that clerks consider and propose what other items they and their councils wish to discuss.

3. Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision campaign
Brief on the RSN campaign and its relation to RMTG.

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

Rural Services Network

Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, Devon, PL19 0BZ

Tel: 01822 813693

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It has been almost 20 years since Government considered rural issues in a white paper and it seems that the current Government is following the same pattern of not taking rural issues into account. What is also worrying is that the RSN is now the only organisation in England concerned with looking at rural issues.

Generally rural areas in England have been net beneficiaries from UK's membership within the European Union. Europe is more inclined towards some rural consideration. While we realise that 80% of England's population live in urban areas, we do believe that Government needs to consider rural areas. We have been pressing Government for a Rural Strategy and they have been reticent to consider this approach. In the light of this context and recent events we are developing our new campaign and document "Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision". The document presents an overview on rural matters, focusing on 16 topics and 'asks' for Government to consider when developing policies across rural England. The most relevant chapters to this group can be viewed and accessed by following the links below.

[Click here to read the Revitalising Rural chapters](#)

We would like to strongly advise for you to look in to two specific chapters most relevant to this group:

- **Parish Councils and Community Action**
- **Rural Town Centre and High Streets**

As the Clerks to the Rural Towns Authorities are you happy with this work. Are there any areas you might like to see emphasised or introduced as we seek to keep this document current?

4. The RMTG Initial Recruitment Process

Areas approached to join RMTG, seeking to establish the group across rural England.

Our initial aim has been to recruit parishes and towns with a population ranging from 3,000 to 30,000 into the Rural/Market Town Group. The larger of these Towns have been identified by Defra as Rural Hub Towns. The initial purpose of this initiative is to recruit a town from each of the c200 rural areas that Defra have identified as rural areas of reasonable size across England. Rural areas possess many diverse characteristics and the market towns serving these areas will often reflect these characteristics.

Some of the 200 Defra rural areas have no or few market 'towns' and in those cases, we have engaged in discussion with larger parishes. The current group is made up of 87% local councils named 'town' and 13% local councils named 'parish'.

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However, we appreciate there will be other market towns who may wish to join who are outside this formulaic approach. We are very happy for these towns to join.

5. RMTG Services

Clerks will undertake a short interactive poll exercise to assist in identifying and taking forward the service priorities.

6. Proposed RMTG online meeting schedule

9th November is our first RMTG meeting and the first RMTG Clerks Advisory Panel meeting will take place on Monday, 30th November. We would like to consult members on the current schedule and propose having the following meetings a year:

- **RMTG meeting** – would take place **twice a year** and to which all nominated RMTG representatives would be invited.
- **RMTG Clerks Advisory Panel meeting** – a meeting that would include those clerks from each member council who are prepared to be involved in this group.

7. Covid-19 Lockdowns

We recognise that Covid-19 lockdowns were and are a big part of your work and lives. Therefore, we would like to hear from you about the future and role of your local council. Is there anything specific the RMTG could do to assist you in your work?

8. Currently Active Town Council Local Networks

We are seeking to identify other currently operating local (County) level networks across England, to see how we can work together. Therefore, we would like to consult our current members on the questions below. Are there an independent local Grouping where Market Towns in your area come together of their own volition periodically? If so, how frequently does these groupings meet? Are there a County Council (or District Council) or other convened meeting where Towns meet independently of parishes? If that is the case how frequently does these meetings occur?

9. RMTG Information Page

We welcome any suggested changes and input from members.

[Please click here to view the RMTG page](#)

10. RSN's Parliamentary Activities and work with the Rural Coalition

We will discuss how the RSN is currently structured in terms of Parliamentary representation.

11. Any Other Business

An opportunity for members to offer their views on the group and discussed proposals.

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