



## RURAL SERVICES NETWORK

### **Perceptions of the Urban Fringe – An Integrated Vision?**

**11 October 2012**  
**The Nave at St Mary's Church, Sheffield**

#### **Breakout Sessions**

The morning session included two presentations:

David Collier (Chief Rural Affairs Advisor, NFU) - *The rural urban fringe: a new opportunity for agriculture?*

Lucy Atkins (Peak District National Park Authority) – *Villages and Communities Together Project: a case study of supporting rural-urban fringe communities.*

The first Breakout Session covered:

#### **What are the current issues facing urban rural fringe communities?**

- Definitions – what/where is the urban fringe?
- Governance and Engagement (e.g. Worth Valley parish planning)
- Commissioning models.
- City region focus on rural hinterlands?
- Pockets of deprivation
- Poor access to services
- Lack of support around neighbourhood planning and localism
- Impact of rural affluent and wealthy on communities
- Move away from top down policy making and agendas - who instead?
- The impact of the recession and economic downturn
- Economic growth – what is the best way forward?

#### **What are the opportunities facing rural urban fringe communities?**

- Engaging people/communities (capacity - a Lottery of capacity and skills in communities?)
- Enterprising communities – community to community learning, community mapping which takes in rural and urban places (e.g. Tees Valley)
- Rural and Farming Network – local food, Yorkshire & Humber foodscapes
- Tourism
- Small rural businesses and entrepreneurship
- Mapping rural assets
- Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)

### **How can we work with communities to fully realise these opportunities and make the fringe an attractive and valued asset?**

- Awareness raising of rural issues – talking to policymakers
- Building a resilient community
- Local capacity model and investment
- Sharing examples of success
- Access free, usable data = build an evidence base
- Multiple organisations providing a well-rounded offer to communities

The afternoon session included two presentations:

Mark Turner (Programme & Operations Director, Pennine Prospects) – *Regeneration between the cities: the South Pennines experience.*

Robert Brough (Airedale Partnership, Bradford Council) – *Urban/rural fringes, a SURF perspective.*

The second Breakout Session covered:

### **How can we get policy and decision makers at regional, national and European levels to take the rural urban fringe seriously?**

- Identity and sense of ownership – thinking about governance arrangements
- Driving sustainability – formulating long term visions
- Creating policies that explicitly recognise the needs of the urban rural fringe
- Participatory budgeting – building dialogue/relationships between communities, stakeholders, decision and policy makers and funders
- Documenting urban fringe uses

### **Where next for the rural urban fringe? What are the emerging issues over the next 3-5 years?**

- Paths for Communities (P4C), NEWP, Local Nature Partnerships – Defra and Natural England
- Access to services – transport
- How to improve the economy – tourism, farm diversification
- Localism and planning
- Divided communities (the haves and the have nots)
- Organic growth?
- Austerity measures and explaining value-for-money in hard times.