

Chairman's update: January 2008

I make no apology for returning yet again to the Local Strategic Partnership and Local Area Agreement process. The Forum meeting on February 12th at Selby will major on this subject. Besides having national thoughts from Crispin Moor of the Commission for Rural Communities, two forum members, Helen Wright and Dave Melling will give us some experience about how things are going on the ground. Dave from a very Urban LSP and Helen from a very rural one.

We have put a dedicated section on the website which gives most up to date references and sources of advice.

From our 15 LSP's there are three which are basically rural; North Yorks (with its seven districts), East Yorks and North Lincolnshire. A further five have over 15% rural residents, namely Barnsley, Wakefield, Calderdale, York and Doncaster. There are only two with less than 10%, namely Hull and Sheffield.

Table 1.A Rural urban classification of districts and their respective rural population, 2005

Name	Total Rural Population	Rural Percent	Classification
Barnsley	43,616	20.0	Significant Rural
Bradford	58,992	12.6	Major Urban
Calderdale	56,847	29.6	Significant Rural
Craven	46,328	86.5	Rural 80
Doncaster	48,834	17.0	Significant Rural
East Riding of Yorkshire	222,843	70.9	Rural 50
Hambleton	84,063	100	Rural 80
Harrogate	66,204	43.7	Significant Rural
Kingston upon Hull		0.0	Large Urban
Kirklees	49,875	12.8	Major Urban
Leeds	87,721	12.3	Major Urban
North East Lincolnshire	19,132	12.1	Other Urban
North Lincolnshire	80,031	52.4	Rural 50
Richmondshire	47,018	100	Rural 80
Rotherham	29,912	12.1	Large Urban
Ryedale	50,917	100	Rural 80
Scarborough	48,648	45.7	Significant Rural
Selby	76,486	100	Rural 80
Sheffield	9,429	1.8	Large Urban
Wakefield	94,446	30.0	Major Urban
York	31,204	17.2	Other Urban

The RAF being a rural forum is fairly well represented from North and East Yorks. It is less well represented from North Lincolnshire and I am visiting them soon to discuss this. I am concerned about how we will ensure that there are targets for delivery of services built into LAA's in the five LSP's with significant rural populations. I would welcome contact from these areas.

The original LSP's were very much officer led. In their new role they need to become a much wider partnership and Government in particular needs to emphasize engagement with Councillors (including Parish Councillors), businessmen and a list of agencies including Natural England, Parks, English Heritage, Environment Agency and Learning

and Skills Councils. All of these bodies are on the RAF so please go out and promote rural embedding in new LAA's.

The LSP's are being restructured see for example the North Yorks website. Many are revisiting their Sustainable Community Strategies. They are being put onto the websites we have listed. Look at these please and think rural.

We are having a special RAF Steering Group meeting to try to thrash out some simplified crib sheets for your use in highlighting rural needs and aspirations. They should be available at the Forum.

For many years local opinions have not had a route into local policy, this process reverses that trend. It is not a revolution, rather a slow evolution but if "we" do not use the new openings and tell our district/ward councillors/business/specialist agencies that we know they can help us then we will lose out from apathy and the process will be reversed.

It needs a grass roots up approach to grasp the opportunity; do not expect those who hold influence at this moment to tell you how to take some of it away from them!!!