

Yorkshire and The Humber Rural Affairs Forum

12th May 2010, FERA, Sand Hutton, York.

Notes from Discussion Forum

1. Housing

Context: Social housing accounts for 13% of the housing stock in rural areas, compared with 22% in urban. CRC analysis shows that between 2006-2031 demand for new housing as a result of projected household change will grow by 35% in rural districts – more than in urban districts (which will grow by 27%)

Gaps:

Solutions:

CRC Recommendations:

To deliver more affordable housing

Appropriate rural proofing to identify land for housing within rural areas where a need has been identified

Planners to take a flexible and creative approach

2. Employment and Skills

Context: At the end of June 2009, 40% of 16-24 year olds in rural areas were unemployed (107,000) or economically inactive (267,000)

Gaps: Lack of job creation and barriers to employment faced by many young people due in part to:

Many rural business employ <50 employees (in most cases average employment 7-8)

Need for a wide range of skills in rural business – skill shortage and training opportunities

High costs for rural business – cost of salaries, transport, planning restrictions, potential customer base, access to training locally, for employees and business support. Lower expectations and aspirations from young people in rural areas

Challenges in retaining and building real growth in rural business

Need for enhanced transport links to specialist colleges such as Askham Bryan and Bishop Burton from rural area.

Cuts in courses being run in traditional rural skills

Move towards “mix and match” type accredited courses, breakfast and early evening “specific” training sessions. The new farm enterprise initiative.

“Rural Fairness” – Opportunities to recruit young people locally to apprenticeship schemes

Solutions:

Continued promotion of good news stories and case studies need to be accessible and reported.

Sharing resources, best practise

Developing strong links with colleges and partner organisations

Broadening the scope of skills/training available outside agriculture to strengthen the rural economy

Realistic aspirations across the age ranges – training for jobs locally with real jobs at the end.

CRC Recommendations:

New ways must be found to give better access to support those seeking jobs and training.

The support infrastructure needs to be strengthened to reach those in smaller more rural areas.

To work with the partners such as the Princes Trust to raise young peoples aspirations from an early age.

Further and higher education intuitions to follow best practise examples of some of the new universities in reaching into schools and local communities to break down educational barriers

3. Communications

Context: Almost 60% of urban areas are able to receive a cable-based broadband service – in villages and hamlets this drops to 1.5%

Gaps:**Solutions:****CRC Recommendations:****4. Transport**

Context: 52% of 11-16 year olds in urban areas are a car passenger for social and sports trips, that figure rises to 70% in rural villages and hamlets. For journeyers on foot, 22% for urban children and just 7% for those children in rural villages and hamlets.

Gaps:**Solutions:****CRC Recommendations:**

Local authorities should take the opportunity offered by the 2010 review of local transport plans to set out explicitly how they are seeking to meet the needs of rural communities

5. Poverty and Low Incomes/Isolation and Exclusion

Context: in 2008/09 only 7% of the Department of Work and Pensions' Growth Fund to improve the availability of appropriate affordable credit to those who are financially excluded or on low incomes went to rural areas. The DWP have recognised this and are taking steps to redress the balance.

Gaps: The rural idyll, the two income/car household reduced to one coupled with negative equity has seen the rise in a different sort of rural deprivation in some rural areas in part due to;

Lack of affordable child care, extended schools provision

Higher petrol costs

Reduced public transport flexibility, evenings and weekends

Less disposal income after child care costs and household expenditure

Reduced opportunities for employment for high wage earners

Lack of support and advice – resulting in self blaming

Difficulties in access to support, CAB, counselling services etc

Still have drug, alcohol and antisocial behaviour issues in rural villages and hamlets

Solutions:

Sure Start Family Services, now available more widely offering support, child care and extended provision for training and employment advice.

Farming in Crisis Support Service available to those in the industry

Rural Support Network have a booklet available "Farming and Health"

How rural areas can access better training and skills seminars to rebuild self belief

How can cross cutting with rural partners aid retraining and education skills, enabling a wider knowledge across the age ranges.

CRC Recommendations:

Policymakers at all levels should demonstrate that they have taken account of rural needs and circumstances when arriving at decisions