



Independent

NORTH EAST RURAL AFFAIRS FORUM

Championing the interests of rural communities

Response to SNR consultation

Chapter 3

The north east is very dependent on rural communities and other rural assets. The combination of urban and rural communities and assets makes for a strong dynamic. Amongst rural stakeholders it is an issue (both a real and perceived) that RDA's do not adequately identify and meet the needs of their constituent communities. In the northeast rural mainstreaming is well advanced and this brings with it a requirement to provide a system of monitoring to ensure that the rural needs are identified and met. Rural proofing is the tool to use to ensure policy and performance meets planned delivery of equality of access to services, OneNE (and other principle partners) has so far engaged with NERAF to ensure that this happens.

Historically the region has been split clearly between urban and rural, the SNR process is an opportunity to heal this rift (and others) if the Local Authorities are open and inclusive. In a region dependent on rural activity and rural assets it would be advantageous to bring rural interests to the leaders' forum. The leaders' forum would do well to publicly adopt rural proofing as the means to ensure rural needs are taken into account in development of all policy and to underpin all operations. A similar position should be taken by the Regional Minister, and the RDA boards.

The accountability and scrutiny arrangements proposed need to show how they propose to take account of rural issues. Again rural proofing provides a convenient and accepted tool to do this.

Chapter 4

The elements listed as being the key components of the regional strategy appear to be complete, however the components themselves need to be operated differently to show that they provide proportional access for rural communities.

We support the devolved process; assuming that government does not subsequently prevent or hinder the process of rural inclusion and mainstreaming that the northeast RDA has already put in place.

The increased emphasis on community engagement and empowerment is an excellent goal, but effective consultation is proving ever harder to achieve as consultation fatigue increases alongside growing cynicism in the public sector. It cannot be achieved without investment in consultation and subsequent engagement.

North East Rural Affairs Forum
Citygate Gallowgate Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4WH
www.go-ne.gov.uk

Chair: David Stewart
Vice Chair: Ian Brown
Sec/Coordinator: Yvonne Greenlay



Independent

NORTH EAST RURAL AFFAIRS FORUM

Championing the interests of rural communities

Chapter 5

We would favour the option that ensures rural proofing is adopted.

There is a growing body of locally based evidence and aspirations in parish and community plans that has yet to find its way into local authority and RDA assessments, this evidence is not consistent in coverage or quality, consequently local authorities and others require encouragement to recognise and use this data.

NERAFs experience is that regional and sub-regional policy and delivery is enhanced by community or citizen involvement at the local level. We therefore advocate encouraging local authorities and RDAs to use rural proofing in the hands of local communities or citizens to enhance their assessments. This is already starting to happen through local area agreements, presumably the same can apply to MAAs?

It is important that government is able to show how regions make their contribution to PSAs and DSOs. The focus on the process of measuring outputs has sometimes taken over and may mask the delivery of the outcome. Joining-up of policy and activity still proves a laudable but illusive goal, the integrated regional strategy is an opportunity to re-invigorate joining-up. We suggest the following might help

- Regional Funding Allocation is rural proofed
- Outcomes should always accompany their contributory outputs
- Government's commitment to outcomes should be strengthened so that regions, sub regions and local communities work on outcomes in addition to the process to achieve them
- Integration should be the aim of the strategy, all the delivery processes and governance structures

North East Rural Affairs Forum
June 08

North East Rural Affairs Forum
Citygate Gallowgate Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4WH
www.go-ne.gov.uk

Chair: David Stewart
Vice Chair: Ian Brown
Sec/Coordinator: Yvonne Greenlay