

NOTES 17/06/08

GW introduced the Agenda

Ron Scrutton DEFRA

Strong rural communities address the good things about rural England.

Farming is an integral part of the rural environment.

Mainstreaming – Rural areas sometimes have similar outcomes to urban areas.

No-one should be dis-advantaged, rural is for all, thinking rural should be 2nd nature.

There are still some departments where the message hasn't got across.

Ron will be sending a copy of his presentation

Q&A

Geraldine Carter, Calderdale

The Green/Amber regarding incomes would be useful if it is broken down, to incomes earned in rural areas and as a whole.

Everybody seems to use the income as a whole, but too much influence is brought to bear by people on high incomes who travel to urban areas for work. Local councillors are not involved in the local area agreement

Answer

Economic highlights and headlines look wonderful, but often hide reality. We need to find a way to look beyond the indicators.

Richard Ellison – NFU

The rural message is the same as the last 8 years but the problems are not the same

Answer

Key message is seeking the same outcomes. The Dept is looking as a whole, land use projects, food, fuel, security. We are not ignoring issues.

Helen Wright – East Yorkshire Council

We don't disagree with the principals of mainstreaming what concerns me is there a rural agenda/discipline. The environment is taken for granted. How are distinctive rural issues picked up and addressed. We still need a rural voice

Answer

Keeping rural is part of DEFRA and CRC role. Stuart Burgess & Matthew Taylors reports highlight this.

Chris Elton – RCC

Separate policy makers and deliverers can only work if there is effective communication between the two. Have you considered feedback from people on the ground?

Answer

I agree the key is for policy makers and deliverers to talk together There are feedback mechanisms between the departments.

Dorothy Fairburn – Country Land & Business Assoc

People get rewarded for meeting targets. It is a continuing uphill struggle if we are part of mainstreaming

Answer

Do we need specific rural targets? The Audit Commission has a part to play.

Carol Renhahan – NYCC

You have a role in influencing other Depts e.g. Immigration policy. Do you speak to other Depts?

Answer

There are 2 elements, colleagues on the farming side who have seasonal workers on the farm and DEFRA who try to get better rural statistics on immigration.

Marianne Blaauboer National Trust

Why is the delivery on 3 levels?

Answer

CRC/DEFRA have 2 challenges, Is it ambitious enough? Does that equate to strong rural communities.

DSO meet needs of disadvantaged rural communities. DEFRA looking beneath the green light

Helen Wright – East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Helen outlined and presented on East Ridings Pathfinder

Q&A**Geraldine Carter Calderdale**

East Riding is a large area with 2 LSPs, North Yorks has 1 LSP and West Yorks 5LAs & 5 LSPs. How do you see member involvement and how do you get the message across to LSPs

Answer

It's a big challenge you need to get LSPs and councils to focus on needs. Success depends on having a dedicated rural function and ensuring the rural profile is kept high on the agenda and the rural voice is embedded in the LSP

Graham Ward

How do we get the message across to LSPs

Tim Frennaeux – It depends what type of activity you want to lobby on.

Helen Wright – Part of the remit of the Pathfinder is to share information and best practice

Graham Ward

How do we use the pathfinder experience? How do we pass on information?

Answer

Rural interest is welcomed by LSP

Camilla Govan – Action for Market Towns

Gave a short insight into her work and how it offers support to Market towns in the area.

Rt Hon Rosie Winterton MP

RW asked if we as a forum had responded to the SNR review. GW said that we would be.

Tim Frenneaux gave a short presentation on the SNR

Q&A

Chris Pilkington - Bradford Council

The S D board is a good thing, there are no independent groupings. I feel we will lose something.

Answer

There will be an opportunity to contribute

CP – How would it be scrutinised. I am concerned that everyone will be clumped together within Yorkshire Forward.

Answer

There will be an independent chair.

Geraldine Carter - Calderdale

Local Government within Yorkshire and Humber is very diverse with Shire, County, Metropolitan areas and Districts. I represent the people in my constituency and in the bigger picture they often lose sight of what we are trying to achieve, to get a strategic sustainable economy into the area.

How do we sustain what is there?

How do we get engaged in the bigger arena? We seem to get lost in the ether, it doesn't apply to my small community.

GW- The problem is how does rural fight its patch and the people get a fair share.

Answer

It is very good to understand particular needs, it is the key to what we are talking about now. How do we make sure that in one strategy there are everyone's needs e.g. transport, skills etc. How you are involved in democratic accountability for overall strategy is an important part of the process.

Dorothy Fairburn - CLA

Major concerns about Yorkshire Forward, they will lose focus and become large and bureaucratic.

Answer

The idea is not to increase bureaucracy it is a matter of finding the most effective model. A lot of work has been done we mustn't lose sight of work done in rural areas

Sarah Tunnicliffe - English Heritage

SNR means economic dominance. It is necessary for future development to consider the environment. There is a worry about getting the balance between economic/environment.

Answer

I have visited the Yorkshire Dales and do understand the environmental issues. We need to safeguard the environment of the National Parks

Shelagh Marshall Vice Chair YHRAF

Do you envisage the rural select community taking over?

Answer

Parliament is yet to reach a decision. Lots of select committees. We need to decide what would be the most effective way Parliamentary.

Chris Elton - Rural Communities Council

We need to give power back to the people. Are you intending to hand back to people or through communities having a say in issues and actions to improve the quality of life.

Is it people or communities? In my experience the community role is built on good practice

Answer

Good practice is out there. Maybe your input is that if you are going to be serious about legislation it is a duty to follow best practice

CE – Stick to best practice or strengthen bill. There is a budgetary opportunity through Local Governance for Parish Councils, they need a mechanism to relate back to local authorities. Rural is difficult to get on the agenda in Government.

Answer

We want that to be best practice, should there be stronger legislation?

Howard Petch - CRC

Skill policy driven by Leach, main drivers to reward achievement of full qualifications, it is driven by large businesses, to some people in rural communities qualifications are meaningless. What is your advice re Rural Proofing & Mainstreaming to avoid unintended consequences?

Answer

Yorkshire Rural Academy have a very interesting approach, it is easy to assume people only want xyz but when pushed would like skills in other areas. It's about encouraging people to think wider. How will L.As cater for the requirements of people in rural areas?

Marianne Blaauboer – National Trust

We welcome skills but the environment seems to be taking a back seat to the economy

Answer

There is a climate change bill before Parliament at the moment. We are building up a programme of change in midst of gathering together information. I can reassure you that there is an emphasis on the environment.

Stephen Fox – Regional Forum

How is consultation done to make thing accessible? Should it matter what SNR means? How do we engage? There is a need for greater clarity. Hand back power to the people.

Answer

The key is what is the answer? Empowerment, individuals. New deal for communities, 52m over 10 years. You decide and meet objectives. You are right to keep trying, there is no easy answer, ponder on it and ask your communities.

GW thanked the Minister for her time.