

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE ON THE AGENDAS OF THE RURAL ASSEMBLY.

As seen from accompanying reports we are likely to achieve an overall Rural Assembly of just short of 150 principal authorities. This will comprise over 120 Sparse Rural authorities and some 30 authorities termed as Rural Assembly members. Obviously all those authorities will not come to meetings but meetings are likely to be larger and certainly it is important that we make sure that they have a firm structure.

The meetings will take place in the afternoon following SPARSE Rural meetings. These sessions have previously been effectively 'The Business of the Day' but it is now important they are in format structured meetings of their own volition and of course regarded highly.

To open the debate on this we feel we should perhaps be looking along the following lines.

1. To have at most meetings an address from a member authority on what they perceive as illustrative best practice.
2. For the meeting to normally receive an address from a large national body. (The address at the last meeting from senior officers at the Post Office and the Arts Council were we think illustrations of this.)
3. At each meeting there would normally be a presentation on a topic from one of the RSP service groups (i.e. Crime, Housing, Health, Transport) through a prominent member of that group.
4. That we attempt to have a presentation from a Minister, Opposition Minister, or leading Civil Servant on an issue of the day at least twice a year.

It is suggested that if such a programme is agreed that the Agenda should be titled to show and illustrate the importance of the presentations.

It has to be recognised that there is a little bit of a conflict time wise between making the afternoon session important and the inevitable consideration about train departures for members. It is suggested that we agree with members the time by which it is intended the meeting should end. The present 2-30pm time 'practice' probably needs to be revisited to make an 'independent' meeting of stand-alone importance but members need to give guidance perhaps whether the end time should now be 3pm or 3-30pm or 4pm. It might be helpful for the intended meeting duration to be published on the agenda? One option might be start the SPARSE Rural Meeting at 11-15am in future allowing a 12-45pm start for the Rural Assembly meeting which we would publicise at having a 15-15pm end time.