

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RURAL SERVICES PARTNERSHIP.

The Rural Services Partnership numbers have been slowly reducing in number over the past few years.

We hope with the establishment of the services working groups (Fire, Housing, Health, Transport) and introduction of functional specific newsletters (Health, Old People, Small Businesses, Young People, Transport, Broadband, Fuel Poverty) that this fall will gradually now bottom out.

We have also decided to undertake a recruitment drive particularly around national organisations to seek to rectify the position. In particular we wish to increase the number of national organisations we are working with. We had a target figure here for this year of ten national organisations which is contained in the budget.

To date we have been going in the right direction but as always there is a little more work to do.

The following have now joined as a result of this recruitment drive:-

- National Federation of Women's Institutes
- Age UK
- The Arts Council*
- Isles Scilly Council
- The Royal Mail
- Bus Users UK
- The Campaign for Better Transport
- UK Youth

We are currently specifically targeting:-

- The CLA
- The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
- The Association of National Parks
- The Association of AONBs
- The Post Office
- The CCRI
- The British Youth Council
- National Housing Federation

We intend over the next few months to approach:-

- NAVCA (Community Organisations)*
- Locality (Development Trusts)*
- Visit England
- Consumer Focus*
- University of the Third Age
- WIRE (Women in Rural Enterprise)
- The Royal Town Planning Institute
- The Forestry Commission*
- CPRE*
- Open University
- RVS*
- Shelter
- Keep Britain Tidy.

Some of this will hopefully be taking back ground we have lost over the last 7 years. The RSP was, at its inception, an organisation of some 180 organisations. At that time £495 was in real terms a lesser sum than it is to organisations now! The organisations shown with an * are in fact previous members. The membership now stands at 81 (including the 36 LANDEX Colleges) plus 10 in the Rural Communities Housing Group, 10 in the Infrastructure Group, and 13 core members in the Rural Health Network – 114 in total.

We do feel that that the organisation is now in a stronger place to be able to hold a strong grouping together.