

# REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE MONDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> JUNE 2015

## GOING FORWARD PART 2.

Members will recall that at their meeting on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January the Executive considered a report under this title which looked how we might approach the councils with rural areas which had declined to become involved with the Rural Services Network either through the Sparse Rural sub group or solely through the Rural Assembly sub group. The Executive sanctioned an approach to Councils to seek to get them involved in either of these sub groups but held back from the creation of a third category of a very limited agreement service at a lower 'service level' sum

After Dorset joined us on a one year trial basis in April we have now 150 members in RSN 126 in SPARSE and 24 in the Rural Assembly.

We have approached firstly the remaining 10 Counties (Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Herts, Kent, Leicestershire, Northants, Surrey, Warwickshire) who are not in membership (19 are in membership ) in the belief that if we can get nearer to total England coverage at County level it will assist us in an approach to the remaining 30 District and Unitary Councils who are at least Rural Assembly possibilities.

(These 30 authorities are Amber Valley, Arun, Basingstoke and Deane, Bedford, Carlisle, Central Beds, Chelmsford, Colchester, Copeland, Doncaster, Dover, East Dorset, East Staffs, Epping Forest, Kettering, Leeds, Maidstone, Milton Keynes, North Herts, Rushcliffe, South Glos, Staffs Moorlands, Swale, Test Valley, Tonbridge and Malling, Waverley, West Berks, West Lancashire, Wiltshire, Wyre.) Some of these have been members in the past but withdrew from membership – clearly they may be more difficult to get back.

These authorities we feel by the number of rural parishes they possess should be in the Rural Assembly if they are being true to their rural areas so it is in their case £2145+ or £495 or they will be not involved and neither will their rural areas. We will be writing to them in the summer.

We now have done further work in this area looking at the position in relation to rural output areas and consequentially the number of parishes who have rural areas within their boundaries.

We believe in total there are a further c.60 authorities who have parishes who have a rural interest. These authorities are unlikely in themselves to have a 'membership' interest in RSN

because they are so largely 'urban' orientated. I am not certain also whether we would necessarily want them in RSN either as their rural interest is so 'thin'.

The list of these authorities is as follows. The number in brackets is the number of their parishes which given the distribution of rural output areas have clearly got a rural interest.

Adur (2), Barrow (3), Blackburn with Darwen (5), Bolsover (11), Bolton (2), Bracknell Forest (5), Brentwood (9), Broxstowe (2), Burnley(5), Cannock Chase (5), Charnwood (19), Chelmsford (21), Cheltenham (1), Chesterfield (1), Christchurch (2), Chiltern (14), Dacorum (14), Darlington (15), Eastleigh (5), Erewash (4), Fylde (11), Gravesham (6), Great Yarmouth (19), Hart (17), Hartlepool (4), Hertsmere (4), High Peak (19), Knowsley (3), Kirklees (5), Manchester (1), Mansfield (1), Medway (11), Mole Valley (13), NE Derbyshire (20), NE Lincolnshire (15), Newcastle on Tyne (4), Newcastle under Lyme (10) Northampton (2), Oldham (2), Pendle (17), Preston (7), Redditch (1), Reigate and Banstead (2), Rochford (8), Sefton (5), Sheffield (3), South Bucks (10), St Albans (6), St Helens (4), Stockton on Tees (10), Surrey Heath (4), Thurrock (1), Trafford (2), Warrington (12), Welwyn Hatfield (5), Weymouth (1), Wigan (2), Windsor (2), Wokingham (13), Wyre (21)

It is suggested they are offered 'Associate' involvement on a fee scale of £25 per parish. (Therefore for example in the case of say the next to last on the list, Wokingham we would write asking them to be involved for the sake of their 13 rural parishes for the sum of 13x 25 £325.)

For these associate members we would merely give e bulletin service to their Economic Development Officer and his/her staff .and to their rural parishes. They would not get any service beyond the e bulletins, would not get agendas nor be entitled to attend the meetings or vote with regard to any issues.

Only the authorities listed above would be entitled to be associates so there cannot be the opportunity for other more rural members becoming involved with this group. (Even if they wished to pursue this route the charging scale being a £25 multiplier of their rural parishes would automatically arrive at a calculation in excess of the Assembly membership rate.

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Now that we are the sole organisation in England dealing with rural services and governance we have to find a way of potentially representing all English rural areas. Obviously we have to also have to do this based on a mechanism which seeks to lever in an equitable sum of money from local authorities across the country to support our activities.

We feel the proposals set out above achieve this.  
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