

Note of last SPARSE RURAL SubSIG Meeting

Title: SPARSE RURAL SUBSIG
Date: Monday 13 July 2015, 11.15am
Venue: Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

Name	Organisation
Graham Biggs	RSN
David Inman	RSN
Andy Dean	RSN
Brian Wilson	RSN
Cllr Cameron Clark	Sevenoaks DC
Cllr Owen Bierley	West Lindsey
Cllr David Ireton	North Yorkshire
Cllr Pam Posnett	Melton
Cllr Ann Carter	Daventry
Cllr Michael Hicks	South Hams
Cllr Nick Daubney	King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Cllr Hilary Carrick	Cumbria
Cllr Jeremy Savage	South Norfolk
Cllr Carole Clarke	South Northamptonshire

Apologies

Name	Organisation
Cllr Alan Rhodes	Notts County Council
Cllr Ablewhite	Huntingdonshire
Helen Briggs, Chief Executive	Rutland
Cllr Madge Shingleton	Shropshire
Cllr Jane Mortimer	Scarborough
Cllr Liz Sneath	South Holland
Cllr Michael Wassell	Breckland
Cllr Neil Butters	Bath & North East Somerset
Cllr Paul Diviani	East Devon
Cllr Colin Law	Waveney
John Ward, District Treasurer	Chichester
Ian Knowles, Director of Resources	West Lindsey
Adam Norburn, Executive Director	Rugby
Cllr Steven Pugsley	West Somerset
Cllr Peter Bedford	Boston
Karen Symonds	Cornwall
Cllr John Pollard	Cornwall
John Birtwistle, Head of Policy	First Group
Cllr Jane Mortimer	Scarborough
Cllr Philip Sanders	West Devon Borough Council
Cllr Jane March	Tunbridge Wells

Cllr Adam Paynter	Cornwall
Cllr Gordon Nicolson OBE	Eden
Jean Hunter, Chief Executive	South Cambridgeshire
Cllr David Worden	North Devon
Cllr Roger Begy	Rutland
Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire
Cllr Les Kew	Bath & North East Somerset

Item Decisions and actions

1 Minutes of Previous main Meeting held 13 April 2015

These were confirmed as a true record.

2 Minutes of Executive Meeting held 22 June 2015

Noted with the actions recommended supported.

3 Fairer Funding Campaign

The Sparse SIG discussed in considerable detail the approach to the Fair Shares campaign which seeks a fair deal for rural local authorities in relation to central government funding.

It was decided that RSN lobbying would focus on a simple ask for the new government to deliver the funding redistribution it has already agreed in 2012 but which largely disappeared due to the effects of 'damping'. This amounts to a sum of £130 million across rural local authorities. This was less than 0.7% of the overall Settlement Funding Assessment.

This was in effect the 'ask' which had been set out in the Manifesto. We would be using DCLG's own mechanisms and figures but the figures had been altered to take account of the subsequent austerity cuts.

The Rural Fair Share Campaign Group of MPs was meeting on the afternoon of the meeting and it was hoped they would agree that approach. Details will be sent out to member authorities of what this would mean to individual authorities if successful. It was recognised that this would be a short term position given the longer term likelihood of local authority funding models shifting away from "Revenue Support Grant" and towards business rate and other adjustments. RSN would investigate this and other potential changes, including any change to New Homes Bonus, in detail over the next 6 months to ensure the best distribution case for rural local authorities was in place. All local authority members were strongly encouraged to press their MPs to join – if they have not done so already -the Rural Fair Share Campaign Group within Parliament. A list would be provided. Members were asked take all opportunities to push the case for a fairer share of funding for rural areas – particularly via local MPs and at this autumn's party conferences.

It was decided where possible to try to present the case at the appropriate Party Conferences this year. It was suggested there was an opportunity at the Conservative Rural Affairs Fringe Meeting on Monday 5 October. Cllr Thornton would explore the position re the Lib Dem Conference.

4 Any other Business

RSN Rural Conference 2015

We are pleased to announce the launch of the Rural Conference 2015: Aspiration to Action...The Rural Manifesto. It is being held this year at Park Campus, Cheltenham on Tuesday 8 and Wednesday 9 September. For further details and to book your place at this prestigious conference please click on the link:

<http://www.rsonline.org.uk/rsn-rural-conference-2015/rsn-rural-conference-2015>

