

# Defra Monitoring: RCAN Contract

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## Background

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- **The Rural Community Action Network (RCAN) is made up of Rural Community Councils across England (37).**
- **The RCAN network has recently been contracted by Defra to be its ‘grassroots’ eyes and ears.**
- **This represents a shift away from ‘advocacy’ on rural issues in favour of direct evidence and information gathering.**
- **Local-level data and evidence is being sought by Defra to inform their understanding and activities.**
- **This information is being fed into the new Rural Policy Unit at Defra – fulfilling CRC role.**

7 June, 2011

## Reporting

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- **4 main themes have been identified as priorities:**
  - ✱ Housing
  - ✱ Transport and Services
  - ✱ Broadband
  - ✱ Fuel Poverty & Energy generation
- **2 additional themes are also of relevance: Community-led Planning & Community-owned Assets.**
- **Each RCAN member is required to provide information on a quarterly basis.**
- **The reporting focuses on AirS strategic involvement on the theme and its activities with communities.**
- **A key element, however, is other organisations activity on the issue.**

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## Proposal

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- Tie in evidence gathering on the 4 key RCAN themes as part of the Rural Partnership function.
- This represents an opportunity to ensure that key issues are relayed to central government - both problems and successes.
- This could form a standing item on the agenda.
- This would ensure that these key issues are discussed and key evidence gathered and shared.
- *“The quality of the intelligence-gathering mechanisms will be crucial to identification and sharing of good practice across the country and the ability to highlight where national policy interventions may be needed.”*

7 June, 2011

## Proposal

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- **Currently Rural Partnership meetings occur a calendar month before the quarterly reports are due.**
- **The first quarterly report will be submitted in early July.**
- **Information and evidence regarding organisational activities in relation to these issues would be useful.**
- **This can relate to any public, private and voluntary sector activity. Community-led schemes will be of particular interest.**
- **All information and updates gratefully received – an information template will be distributed amongst members.**

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## Contact details

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