

The Rural Challenge

Achieving sustainable rural communities for the 21st century

The Rural Coalition



This report

This report is about a future for rural England in which every rural community can thrive. It presents a shared policy agenda for rural communities, and its overriding objective is to help achieve a positive, lasting legacy of sustainable rural communities in which people enjoy living and working; which are vibrant, distinctive and in keeping with the character of their surroundings, with a full range of good-quality local services; and which enhance local landscapes, heritage and biodiversity while meeting the challenges of climate and economic change. It proposes urgent, implementable changes that pick up and respond to the concerns that the partners in the new Coalition Government have already stated they wish to address.

The Rural Coalition comprises the following organisations:

- Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE).
- Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).
- The Country Land and Business Association (CLA).
- The Local Government Group (LG Group).
- The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI).
- The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA).

The Commission for Rural Communities brought the Rural Coalition together in September 2008 and has supported the Rural Coalition Chair and its Members with the production of this report and with technical advice on its content.

The Rural Coalition has also been supported and advised by:

- Action for Market Towns (AMT).
- The Rural Services Network (RSN).
- The Carnegie UK Trust Rural Community Development Programme.
- The Plunkett Foundation.

Further helpful advice has been provided by:

- The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE).
- English Heritage (EH).
- National Association of Local Councils (NALC).
- The National Housing Federation (NHF).
- The English National Parks Authorities Association (ENPAA).

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Action with Communities in Rural England



Campaign to Protect Rural England



The National Housing Federation



The Plunkett Foundation

Introduction

By Matthew Taylor, Chair



This report is about a future for rural England in which every rural community can thrive.

In most rural towns and villages, community has always been more important than the state. Our report is not about central direction, the technicalities of new development, or the necessary size of investment in public services. In fact it is not about top-down rules and targets at all. To build the 'Big Society' in rural areas the greatest need is to answer the questions about how government at every level can empower rural communities – to manage and plan for business and residential growth in the countryside over time, to shape and take part in the delivery of services, and to meet the challenges of an age of austerity and climate change – in a way that is:

- more sustainable (to meet the challenges of the environment, climate change and community cohesion);
- more attractive (to address concerns about unattractive, badly planned developments gobbling up the green fields around historic rural communities); and
- more flexible (to tackle the diverse needs and the challenges of tailoring services to small rural communities spread across huge geographical areas).

So the rural challenge today includes supporting new, better-paid and diverse employment opportunities, providing the homes needed for those who live and work in rural areas on low incomes, and maintaining and evolving the services they rely on. The greater challenge is to achieve this while genuinely enhancing rural communities, increasing local and national sustainability in the context of climate change, and continuing to conserve the open countryside to ensure environmental security, food security, and access to open countryside for the enjoyment of all. And given the impacts of the credit crunch, the challenge is also how to deliver all this at less cost to the taxpayer than the existing – often ineffective – approach to these rural communities and rural environments.

The emphasis in this report is on empowering local people, entrepreneurs, community organisations and Parish Councils to achieve all this, supported and enabled by District, County and Unitary Councils. So our recommendations are often directed to local government, and we also make a number of promises of action that our own members will take too. Alongside these are some very important recommendations for necessary action by central government to unlock and enable initiative and community decision-making at the local level, so as to allow this all to happen.

The overriding objective of this report is to help achieve a positive, lasting legacy of sustainable rural communities in which people enjoy living and working; which are vibrant, distinctive and in keeping with the character of their surroundings, with a full range of good-quality local services; and which enhance local landscapes, heritage and biodiversity while meeting the challenges of climate and economic change.

The Rural Coalition

In September 2008 six leading national bodies (see the list of Coalition organisations on the back cover) concerned about the future of rural communities in England came together with the support of the Commission for Rural Communities to launch a prospectus setting out our shared views – *The Future is Rural Too*.¹ The prospectus set out our common concerns and initial proposals for a new approach to rural communities in the face of environmental challenges, financial and social pressures, and the reality of change.

We said that we would consult on our ideas, and engage in our own vigorous debate, to draw up and present a shared policy agenda for rural communities. This would propose urgent, implementable changes that pick up and respond to the concerns that the partners in the new Coalition Government have already stated they wish to address.

This report is the result of that work. As we have developed this vision, our coalition has grown. We look forward to working with people in rural Britain, local Councils and the new Government to deliver an urgent policy shift that will secure the future of rural England.

The need for change

What we said in the prospectus:

‘Everyone in this country, wherever they may live and work, needs a strong, confident and sustainable countryside. It is of huge value to us all: environmentally, socially and economically, and will be instrumental in tackling climate change.

‘Yet it is all too easy for national governments to treat the nation they govern as a single, homogeneous unit. It may be simpler that way but it’s seldom sensible. For fifty years or more, policy has undervalued the countryside and failed to meet the needs of rural

communities – and therefore of the nation. In hindsight, the result is starkly apparent. Rural communities have slowly but relentlessly become less and less sustainable and less and less self-sufficient.

‘On its current course, with no change of policy and no commitment to action, much of the countryside is becoming part dormitory, part theme park and part retirement home. Only if people in rural communities have ready access to local schools, local jobs, local shops and pubs and affordable homes will they and their children thrive, and will the nation meet its environmental and economic needs. Sentimentality plays no part in all of this. A newly invigorated countryside is essential for hard-nosed reasons that affect our national future.

‘The Rural Coalition is united in our conviction that our countryside is in urgent need of a new vision, and made-to-measure policies distinguished by the fact that none is imposed blindly from distant places but all emerge democratically from rural communities themselves.

‘The plans outlined below are not discrete: they overlap because they have to. A vicious circle needs to be broken and replaced by a virtuous one. So local planning, community involvement, affordable housing, the encouragement of new business opportunities, the provision of good schools, shops, pubs and other leisure facilities need to be seen not as separate issues but as interdependent parts of the necessary whole.’

Since we published our prospectus in autumn 2009, it has become ever more apparent that the concerns we voiced are shared across rural communities, and across the political spectrum. The Taylor Review, *Living Working Countryside* (2008),² helped to crystallise a growing consensus about the future of rural England which emerged towards the end of the last decade:

- Living in the countryside is a popular choice for many, including those who do not work in the

1 *The Future is Rural Too*. Rural Coalition prospectus, 2009.

www.acre.org.uk/DOCUMENTS/Rural%20Coalition/The%20Future%20is%20Rural%20Too.pdf

2 *Living Working Countryside. The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing*. Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008. www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/livingworkingcountryside

local economy of rural communities. In 2008 alone the net migration from urban to rural areas was 92,000 people.³ This migratory trend has social, environmental and economic implications – not least that, as increasing numbers made the choice to move from urban to rural communities, with limited housing supply, house prices in many rural settlements were pushed up beyond the means of local people.

- The stock of affordable homes in rural areas has historically been proportionately lower than in urban areas. A slow rate of build, and a significant decline in the number of affordable homes as Right to Buy sales have not been replaced, has impacted disproportionately on the current rural stock of affordable housing. By 2008, 315,506 households in predominantly rural districts were on Local Authority housing waiting lists, but the proportion of affordable homes in rural areas is little more than half that in urban communities.⁴ Low local wages and a lack of affordable homes in our villages mean that the people who do the work in the countryside – on the farms, in the shops, in the huge diversity of local businesses – are increasingly priced out of housing near where they work. Already many rural workers are forced to commute from towns, and some businesses now fail to find employees or rely on migrant temporary labour. ONS (Office for National Statistics) figures show that in June 2010 there were 91,581 unfilled vacancies in rural England.⁵
- Rural economies provide millions of jobs, are home to half a million businesses, and are worth nearly £145,000 million to the national economy every year.⁶ They are critical for meeting the need for national sustainability in the context of climate change. The planning system has rightly played a decisive role in protecting the open countryside, historic towns and charming villages which are of themselves assets of significant environmental, social, cultural, and economic value. Too often, however, planning practice for rural areas has failed to meet the unique housing, work and services requirements of the people who live and work in these communities. With fewer young families and low-income households able to access housing in villages, services like schools, buses, and Post Offices become even less viable – and if lost altogether further threaten the sustainability of communities. From 1998 to 2009 there have been 285 rural primary school closures,⁷ and the pace of closures of village schools is rising once again, despite the presumption against the closure of village schools adopted by Government in 2009.⁸
- Rural England is actually more dependent on public sector jobs than is urban England. On average 33% of jobs in predominantly rural authorities are public sector, compared with 27% for other authorities. That means that as public spending is cut back, the economic, employment and service delivery impacts are potentially greatest across rural communities.⁹
- Rural services will be more vulnerable than most to public finance constraints since rural service delivery, even at its most effective, is more expensive per head of population than in urban areas.¹⁰ Pressures to deliver more for less money will inevitably lead to further loss of local services altogether – unless communities are empowered, as the term ‘Big Society’ suggests, to design appropriate local service levels and means of delivery, building on a rural culture of self-help that is already very high.

3 *State of the Countryside 2010*. CRC 119. Commission for Rural Communities, July 2010. <http://ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/sotc/sotc2010.pdf>

4 *State of the Countryside Update: Housing demand and supply*. CRC Web 42. Commission for Rural Communities, February 2010. www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/CRC%20Web%2042.pdf

5 Jobcentre Plus, Unfilled vacancies data. Office for National Statistics, June 2010

6 *State of the Countryside 2010*. CRC 119. Commission for Rural Communities, July 2010. <http://ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/sotc/sotc2010.pdf>

7 *State of the Countryside Update: Children and educational services*. CRC Web 43. Commission for Rural Communities, March 2010. http://ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/CRC%20WEB43%20SOTC%20Update_TAGGED180310.pdf

8 See www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/publications/documents/laeruralschoolclosures/

9 See www.roseregeneration.co.uk/media/Cameron%20County%20Press%20Release%20Background.pdf

10 In 2004 Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) commissioned Secta to review published evidence that supports (or contradicts) the Rural Premium. Secta found that collectively the studies reviewed concluded that ‘rural areas face greater difficulties in providing services to the same standard of effectiveness at the same levels of costs as in urban areas and that as a result either cost is higher (in rural areas) or performance (response times, access and so on) is lower’

Summary of key propositions

We have argued that the needs for change described above are paramount. But what form should those changes take? In this report we set out in some detail, across several policy areas, what needs to happen and who needs to do it.

Much, if not most, of the actions needed must come from local government and agencies, together with the voluntary and community sectors – including of course members of the Rural Coalition itself. ‘Community-led’ planning is the key to this approach. In other words, the solutions will need to come from the bottom up as well as, if not more than, from the top down. National Government will, however, clearly have a key role to play in articulating the vision and direction of change.

These solutions are summarised below in a series of **key propositions**. These propositions are set out in much more detail in the main report, and references to the recommendations and associated text are given wherever appropriate.

1 Creating and maintaining sustainable rural communities lies at the heart of the Rural Coalition’s message – a consensus about the need for a more positive and balanced approach to achieving social, economic and environmental well-being in our rural communities, shaped and delivered by community-led planning. This will call for:

1.1 Local Planning Authorities to draw up **local plans and strategies** which are based on a thorough **understanding of local rural economies and society**, a **comprehensive assessment of the social, economic and environmental criteria which determine sustainable development**, and a **genuine incorporation of community-led plans and aspirations**. These must not assume that rural communities are inherently ‘unsustainable’, even the smaller ones.

See Recommendations 1 and 3

1.2 Very short but clear messages in the new, reduced national planning policy framework which support and reflect the overriding objectives of **building and maintaining thriving sustainable rural communities** with the **genuine engagement and involvement of local people**.

See Recommendation 2

1.3 Rural communities which take advantage of the opportunities to instigate and complete **community-led planning** activities – helping the community to decide on local priorities and take responsibility for making things happen, working jointly with other communities where necessary and appropriate.

See Recommendations 1, 3 and 33

1.4 Members of the Rural Coalition and others to provide **advice and support** for the above, through **good practice** which demonstrates, inspires and disseminates ways by which community-led sustainable planning can be implemented.

See the websites of the Rural Coalition members, on the back cover of this report.

2 Meeting the affordable housing needs of rural communities remains an urgent priority. In order to generate a step-change in provision we propose that existing mechanisms such as Exceptions Sites and Developer Agreements should be augmented by new ways to generate affordable housing ‘from the bottom up’. We support the principle of local involvement contained in the ‘Community Right to Build’ announced on 23 July. It must be right to offer local people a clear deal in which they can progress schemes which are based on local needs and ambitions, with a very high degree of assurance that they will have an unbureaucratic and straightforward response from the planning system. This Right to Build should remain within the framework of the current planning system. National planning policy should include a presumption that

local plans will include such an approach. We would see local plans setting out clear criteria along the lines set out in the following paragraph (although the precise terms should be determined locally), with an assurance that if these criteria are met, permission will be granted.

2.1 National Government and Local Planning Authorities should promote and support planning policies – including site allocations – that favour granting consent where local communities bring forward small schemes to meet locally-identified needs that meet the following criteria:

- Parish Council support as part of a community-led plan backed by the principal authority councillors from that community.
- Sound evidence of need.
- The scheme is affordable in perpetuity.
- A suitable, viable site.
- Appropriate scale.
- Good design.

See Recommendation 4

2.2 The ‘Community Right to Build’ and local policies giving effect to it should enable schemes to include one or more of the following elements, dependent on the needs identified by the community: market housing, affordable housing, workspace, retail space, recreational space, community facilities, and sites for renewable energy production. Approval of such schemes should reflect the same criteria offered under 2.1, above.

See Recommendations 4 and 5

2.3 The Rural Coalition and other bodies will offer more detailed advice, experience and an enabling role on how the recommendations in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 above can be implemented most effectively.

2.4 The Government should explore and develop with the HCA (the Homes and Communities Agency), Housing Associations and Local Authorities **options for intermediate affordable housing** to deliver more affordable homes with less grant to meet local needs.

See Recommendation 8

2.5 The Government should give Councils the freedom to manage the finances of their own housing, through **reform of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) system**, and the power to **keep all income from selling existing Council homes**.

See Recommendation 6

2.6 The Government should bring forward advice and incentives to **encourage landowners** to provide low-cost land and/or affordable housing.

See Recommendation 9

2.7 The forthcoming Decentralisation and Localism Bill should **rule out clearly vexatious or trivial village green applications** blocking community development.

See Recommendation 7

2.8 The Government’s proposals for a ‘Green Deal’ to finance and deliver energy-efficiency improvements to existing housing should take account of the **particular issues facing much rural housing**.

See Recommendation 11

3 Building thriving rural communities

is not just about addressing rural economic problems. Even more it is about exploring and developing the huge potential which rural areas contain for providing essential resources of food, water and energy; for developing the green economy; and for embracing a much wider range of economic activities – especially those linked to IT and home-working. We propose that:

3.1 Where they have significant rural territory **Local Enterprise Partnerships** should ensure that people in rural areas (**including sparsely populated and peripheral areas**) have a strong voice, and that there are specific strategies and programmes for enterprise and employment in rural areas.

See Recommendation 12

3.2 The Government should consult on how any redesigned **business support services can best meet the needs of businesses located in rural areas**.

See Recommendation 13

3.3 The CLA (Country Land and Business Association) and the LG Group (Local Government Group)

commit to work together to encourage the adoption of **innovative and distinctly rural approaches to employment and enterprise in rural areas**.

- 3.4** Local government should promote, protect and maintain a **good supply of appropriate sites and premises for all kinds of businesses in smaller rural communities**, including new build and conversion of farm buildings and farm diversification.

[See Recommendations 14 and 15](#)

- 3.5** The new Government should ensure that national planning policy and guidance supports **alterations or extensions to the home to encourage appropriate local business growth** (by making appropriate changes to Part 1 of the General Permitted Development Order).

[See Recommendation 16](#)

- 3.6** The Government should conduct a **review of the tax regime in relation to work-based home extensions and small-scale premises**.

[See Recommendation 17](#)

- 3.7** The RTPI (Royal Town Planning Institute), the TCPA (Town and Country Planning Association) and the LG Group will work together to explore model Local Development Orders which could **remove need for formal change of use, alteration or extension planning permissions to enable people to work or run a business from their home**.

- 3.8** The Government proposals on broadband should encourage **the most appropriate means by which communities can obtain high-speed broadband access, whether through commercial supply or community-led initiatives**.

[See Recommendation 18](#)

- 3.9** New national policy on renewable energy should steer local plans to **permit acceptable small-scale renewable energy developments in the countryside**, supported by the RTPI, the TCPA and the LG Group working together to advise and encourage such schemes.

[See Recommendation 10](#)

4 Delivering great local services has always been a challenge for rural areas and will be even more so in an age of public funding austerity. We believe that the way forward is to adopt new 'smarter' approaches which are specifically tailored to rural circumstances and needs, rather than continuing with traditional (urban-based) models; and, crucially, to adopt approaches which tap local community energies and knowledge both to shape and deliver those services, in line with the Government's emphasis on the 'Big Society'. We propose that:

- 4.1 Before finalising the Comprehensive Spending Review, the Government should review the proportionate impact in rural areas and take proper account of the additional costs faced by those providing essential services across rural areas.**

[See Recommendation 19](#)

- 4.2** When using geographical data of any kind, government and public sector agencies should ensure that they have considered whether **small-area data more reflective of the rural context** exists, or can be obtained.

[See Recommendation 20](#)

- 4.3 Universal Service Obligations** are needed to ensure that companies do not use new opportunities introduced for competition to **'cherry-pick' urban areas at the cost of dispersed rural communities**.

[See Recommendation 21](#)

- 4.4** The Government should ensure **'rural proofing' of proposals, scaling back inspection frameworks and activity** to help public services and the third sector in rural areas to innovate in providing low-cost service delivery.

[See Recommendation 22](#)

- 4.5** The **'Community Right to Bid'** needs to encompass **community-led initiatives** that extend the reach of public services or provide **partial solutions to retaining local provision as well as 'like for like'** services via commissioning.

[See Recommendations 23 and 23a](#)

- 4.6** The Government should work with the Post Office to achieve a **full range of financial services through rural Post Office branches**.

[See Recommendation 24](#)

4.7 Public service providers should consider options for **shared or multi-purpose service outlets**, outreach and mobile services to serve small rural communities, before instituting cuts which leave them entirely or largely without certain local services.

See Recommendation 25

4.8 Government proposals to work with the private sector to develop IT infrastructure should seek to improve access and reduce the cost of providing public services in rural communities through **e-services**, including assessing the benefits of wiring up community facilities like village halls as a first step.

See Recommendation 26

4.9 Local and strategic **transport planning** should take greater account of **access issues for dispersed rural communities** and consider **innovative programmes supporting community solutions at less cost**.

See Recommendation 27

4.10 Some of the **savings made by withdrawing traditional services** should be provided to support communities offering to preserve services through **small-scale, lower-cost, community-led solutions**.

See Recommendations 25 and 34

5 Flourishing market towns are a mainstay of rural economic and social life. They also make a big impact on the rural living environment. But too often that impact has not been improved by new development over recent decades. We believe that the quality of new housing and supporting services needs to be radically improved – to be more distinctive and sensitive to local place, to be greener, and to engage the local community in ways which ensure that they genuinely meet local needs. We propose that:

5.1 The Government and the HCA should ensure that best practice know-how is available to Local Authorities/private sector partnerships to take a **whole community approach to development**, including jobs, services, mixed housing, and sustainable funding models for the **long-term management of green infrastructure** in new communities. Community developments should adopt the Natural England recommendation that people should have ‘an accessible natural green

space, of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes’ walk) from home’.

See Recommendations 30, 31 and 32

5.2 Local Authorities should always **involve the community in shaping sustainable proposals** through **effective participation** such as ‘Enquiry by Design’ and ‘Planning for Real’.

See Recommendation 29

5.3 The LG Group, the TCPA, the RTPI, CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England), and CABE (the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) will work together with other relevant bodies on **help and advice** to develop market towns in ways which produce **attractive and sustainable settlements**, building on the excellent standards set by the Eco-towns PPS.

See Recommendation 28

6 Empowering communities is a central tenet of the Rural Coalition’s vision for the future. It is also a fundamental part of the Coalition Government’s ‘Big Society’ agenda. Fortunately, rural communities enjoy a long history of innovative and sustained involvement in decisions and activities which affect their lives. This experience provides an excellent foundation for rural communities taking on an even bigger role in the drive towards more localised policy-making and action. However, community-led or ‘bottom-up’ planning will not just happen by itself. It will need very focused help and support. We propose that:

6.1 National and local government should recognise and **adopt community-led planning as ‘best practice’** as part of putting in place the mechanisms to underpin the ‘Big Society’.

See Recommendation 33

6.2 To deliver the ‘Big Society’, localism and empowering communities, the Government needs to start by **building local capacity** for delivery – for example through support for local enablers and activists, advice and training, and modest funding opportunities.

See Recommendation 37

6.3 Parish and Town Councils should become the **guardian’ of the community-led plan**, monitoring progress and regularly refreshing the priorities in the light of changing circumstances.

See Recommendations 35 and 36

6.4 Local Authorities should recognise that there will often be a very strong case for individual **communities obtaining visible benefits, community facilities and community-led services from accepting more development in their area**, to support community facilities and community-led services. The forthcoming Decentralisation and Localism Bill should ensure that there are straightforward mechanisms to enable this.

See Recommendation 38

We need to act now

These measures will not only improve economic, social and environmental sustainability; they will create a virtuous cycle. If more affordable housing, better services and a more vibrant economy means people on a broader range of incomes can afford to live in rural communities, it may increase their social diversity and sustainability. If they support a broader range of community services, shops and work, then people will need to travel less, not more.

In terms of housing, jobs or services, existing or new development, or stretching increasingly limited government funding further, we need to move away from asking 'Is this settlement sustainable?' – which too often leads to a decision to prevent any development, cut back services, and refuse any change. Rather, we must ask how can we enhance the sustainability of this community, taking account of social, economic and environmental concerns – which means embracing the right sort of change. And the people we need to ask first are the communities themselves.

Finally, **the Rural Coalition itself is committed to building on this report by continuing to work together to influence the thinking and behaviour of national and local politicians and planning professionals.**

Facilitators, advisers and supporters

The Rural Coalition has been supported and advised by the following organisations:



Action for Market Towns

Action for Market Towns is an independent, national, membership organisation dedicated to maintaining vibrant and viable small towns. AMT is a not-for-profit company and a registered charity which offers training, consultancy, a range of member services and national advocacy for the policies needed to help our towns.

Contact: Action for Market Towns, 5 Baxter Court, Higher Baxter Street, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 1ES
t: 01284 756567 f: 01284 761816 e: info@towns.org.uk w: <http://towns.org.uk/>



Rural Services Network (RSN)

The RSN is a group of over 200 service providers and local authorities working to establish best practice across the spectrum of rural service provision and to represent the collective concerns of rural service providers and the communities they serve, to Government and its agencies. The RSN exists to ensure services delivered to the communities of predominantly rural England are as strong and as effective as possible.

Contact: Graham Biggs, Chief Executive, Rural Services Network and SPARSE-Rural
t: 01588674922 (mobile 07966 790197) w: www.rsnonline.org.uk/



Carnegie UK Trust Rural Community Development Programme

The Carnegie UK Trust Rural Community Development Programme examines and promotes ways in which rural communities across the UK and Ireland can be empowered to shape and influence change and work to ensure that rural priorities are fully recognised by decision-makers.

Contact: Carnegie UK Trust, Head office, Comely Park House, 80 New Row, Dunfermline KY 12 7 EJ
t: 01383 721445 e: kirsty@carnegieuk.org w: www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk



Plunkett Foundation

The Plunkett Foundation is a national organisation based in Woodstock, Oxfordshire that helps rural communities to take control of the issues important to them through social enterprise, co-operatives and community-ownership.

Contact: www.plunkett.co.uk

Further helpful advice has been provided by:



Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) is the Government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space in England. CABE offers expert advice and practical support to people making decisions about the design of buildings and places.

Contact: CABE, 1 Kemble Street, London WC2B 4AN
t: 020 7070 6700 f: 020 7070 6777 e: info@cabe.org.uk w: www.cabe.org.uk/

English Heritage (EH)

EH is the Government's statutory adviser on the historic environment. It exists to protect and promote England's spectacular historic environment and ensure that its past is researched and understood.

Contact: Stephen Trow, Head of National Rural and Environmental Advice, English Heritage, 1 Waterhouse Square, 138-142 Holborn, London EC1N 2ST
t: 020 7973 3018 f: 020 7973 3001 e: steve.trow@english-heritage.org.uk
w: www.english-heritage.org.uk/



National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

NALC is the nationally recognised membership body representing the interests of around 9,000 local councils and their 80,000 local councillors in England. Local councils serve electorates ranging from small rural communities to major cities; all are independently elected and raise a precept from the local community. Together, they can be identified as among the nation's most influential grouping of grassroots opinion-formers.

Contact: Justin Griggs, Head of Policy and Development, NALC, 109 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LD

t: 020 7637 1865 e: justin.griggs@nalc.gov.uk w: www.nalc.gov.uk/



National Housing Federation (NHF)

The NHF represents 1,200 independent, not-for-profit housing associations in England and is the voice of affordable housing. Its mission is to support and promote the work that housing associations do and campaign for better housing and neighbourhoods.

Contact: National Housing Federation Head Office, Lion Court, 25 Procter Street, London WC1V 6NY

t: 020 7067 1010 f: 020 7067 1011 e: info@housing.org.uk w: www.housing.org.uk/

The English National Park Authorities Association (ENPAA)

ENPAA exists to promote and further the needs of the ten English National Park Authorities (NPA's) by providing a collective voice for their views, supporting the development and capacity of the NPAs to effect change and working in partnership with other bodies where this adds value.

Contact: English National Park Authorities Association, 1st Floor, 2-4 Great Eastern Street, London EC2A 3NW

t: 020 7655 4812 f: 020 7092 9970 e: enquiries@enpaa.org.uk w: www.enpaa.org.uk



The Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) brought the Rural Coalition together in September 2008 and has supported the Rural Coalition Chair and its Members with the production of this report and with technical advice on its content.

The CRC is a Non-Departmental Public Body whose statutory purpose is to promote awareness of the social and economic needs of people who live and work in rural areas and help decision-makers across and beyond government identify how those needs can best be addressed.

Contact: Commission for Rural Communities, John Dower House, Crescent Place, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 3RA

t: 01242 521381 f: 01242 584270 e: info@ruralcommunities.gov.uk
w: www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/

The Rural Coalition



The Rural Coalition comprises the following organisations:

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)

ACRE is the national body of the Rural Community Action Network (RCAN), whose local member organisations provide comprehensive support for rural communities throughout England to take action for themselves to achieve a vibrant and sustainable future.

Contact: ACRE, Somerford Court, Somerford Road, Cirencester,
Gloucestershire GL7 1TW

t: 01285 653477 e: acre@acre.org.uk w: www.acre.org.uk



Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)

CPRE is a charity with a network of over 200 district groups and a branch in every county that campaigns for a sustainable future for the English countryside. Through their work they aim to ensure a beautiful, tranquil and diverse countryside that everyone can value and enjoy.

Contact: CPRE, 128 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SW

t: 020 7981 2800 e: info@cpre.org.uk w: www.cpre.org.uk



Country Land and Business Association (CLA)

The CLA is the membership organisation for owners of land, property and businesses in rural England and Wales. It offers its members leadership and professional advice. It speaks for everyone who believes in a living and working countryside.

Contact: CLA, 16 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PQ

t: 020 7235 0511 f: +44 (0)20 7235 4696 e: mail@cla.org.uk
w: www.cla.org.uk/



The Local Government Group (LG Group)

The LG Group works on behalf of councils to support, promote and improve local government. Members of the LG Group (which includes the Local Government Association, LG Improvement and Development, LG Employers, LG Regulation, LG Local Leadership and Local Partnerships) are part of a strong collective voice that argues the case for local government at every opportunity.

Contact: LG Group, Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ

t: 020 7664 3000 e: info@local.gov.uk w: www.local.gov.uk/



Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)

The RTPI is a charity whose object, as stated in its Royal Charter, is to advance the science and art of town planning for the benefit of the public. The RTPI champions the role of spatial planning, which gives people a real say in shaping the places where they live and work, and ensures that sustainability is at the heart of all planning activity.

Contact: RTPI, 41 Botolph Lane, London EC3R 8DL

t: 020 7929 9494 f: 020 7929 9490 w: www.rtpi.org.uk



Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)

The TCPA is an independent charity working to improve the art and science of planning. The TCPA puts social justice and the environment at the heart of policy debate and inspires government, industry and campaigners to take a fresh perspective on major issues, including planning policy, housing, regeneration and climate change.

Contact: TCPA, 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AS

t: 020 7930 8903 f: 020 7930 3280 e: tcpa@tcpa.org.uk w: www.tcpa.org.uk