



A RURAL/MARKET TOWN GROUPING OF THE RSN.

Why do we need a rural market town grouping?

The RSN believes that Rural Communities are frequently overlooked in a policy environment dominated by urban thinking and policy concerns. This often means communities either miss out on the benefits or experience unintended consequences from policies which are poorly thought through from a rural perspective. This means that government policy currently neglects the many hundreds of important rural towns across England.

We believe these towns play a vital role not only in the lives of their inhabitants but also in both the local and national economy. That is why we want them to receive more focus.

Rural areas and their intricate network of rural communities should be able to realise their potential within the national economy and need to be appropriately recognised and supported in government thinking and actions.

What is the Rural/ Market Town Group?

To underline the importance of these English towns, the role they play and their potential going forward, The Rural Services Network have developed a new initiative to develop a Rural/Market Town Grouping within the Rural Services Network. This new Grouping will work to add to our Call on Government for a Rural Strategy.

We have begun this initiative by approaching one town or the largest village in each of the 200+ rural areas across England which has been identified by Defra for their distinctive characteristic. This process will be expanded in time to ensure that all those that wish to be involved are fully engaged.

Whilst we appreciate and celebrate the diversity of our rural areas, we seek to create a universal voice to represent all different types of rural areas across England ensuring that no form of rural area is excluded.

Up to until now 80 Towns and large Parishes have already agreed to commence the group and we look forward to hearing from the remainder of the councils currently being approached. We are currently on target for the 120 + members we seek.



The group currently comprises: -

Ackworth, (Wakefield), Alcester (Stratford on Avon), Alvechurch (Bromsgrove), Atherstone (North Warwickshire), Alnwick (Northumberland) , Amphill (Bedfordshire), Arundel Town (Arundel District) Balsall (Solihull) tbc, Belper (Amber Valley), Brampton (Carlisle), Bourne (South Kesteven), Bovey Tracey (Teignbridge) Buckingham (Aylesbury Vale), Burnham on Sea (Sedgemoor) Burscough (West Lancs), Caistor (West Lindsey), Carnforth (Lancaster), Chalfont St Giles (Chiltern), Church Stretton (Shropshire) Cirencester (Cotswolds) Cleator Moor (Copeland), Clitheroe (Ribble Valley), Cranleigh (Waverley) , (Crediton (Mid Devon) Dalton in Furness (Barrow in Furness) , Downham Market (Kings Lynn), Earl Shilton (Hinckley and Bosworth), Faversham (Swale), Finedon (Wellingborough),Frodsham (Chester and Cheshire West), Great Torrington (Torridge), Hadleigh, (Babergh), Hartley Witney (Hart),Hexham (Northumberland), Kendal (South Lakeland) Launceston (Cornwall), Ledbury (Herefordshire) Leominster (Herefordshire), Longridge (Ribble Valley), Lutterworth (Harborough), Lymm (Warrington), Mablethorpe and Sutton (East Lindsey),Marlborough (Wiltshire),Market Rasen (West Lindsey), Midsomer Norton (Bath and NE Somerset) Minster (Thanet) ,Normandy(Guildford D.), Olney(tbc) (Milton Keynes) Penrith (Eden) Penzance (Cornwall) City of Ripon (Harrogate),Petersfield (East Hants) (tbc), Rothwell (Kettering), Rye (Rother), Saffron Walden (Uttlesford), Sandy, (Central Bedfordshire) Saxmundham East Suffolk, Seaton (East Devon), Shildon (Co Durham) Skipton (Craven), Sleaford (North Kesteven), Sodbury (South Gloucestershire) , Solam (East Cambridgeshire), Stowmarket (Mid Suffolk) Swanley (Dartford area) Tavistock (West Devon), Tenbury (Malvern Hills), Tenterden (Ashford), Thetford (Breckland), Thornbury (South Gloucestershire), Uckfield (Wealden), Uppingham (Rutland), Uttoxeter (East Staffs) Verwood (Dorset), Wallingford (South Oxfordshire) Wells City of (tbc) (Mendip) West Chiltington (Horsham), Wheathampstead (St Albans) Whitby((Scarborough), and Wotton-under-Edge (Stroud).

Services provided to the group will include:

- Engagement in Rural Strategy campaign to ensure feedback from Rural/Market Group is included within consultation
- Development of some good practice and learning material related to the key policy areas and delivery challenges or opportunities for rural/market towns
- Receiving the Rural Bulletin, a weekly newsletter provided by the Rural Services Network highlighting rural news, issues affecting rural communities, and highlighting the work of the Rural Services Network
- Provision of a dedicated newsletter highlighting relevant latest policy developments, showcasing interesting member practice and flagging relevant initiatives or funding opportunities
- Periodic online surveys of the members of rural/market towns, to gather comparative information about topics of interest to this grouping