



COUNTY COUNCIL



thinking rural

your essential guide

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introduction

Cumbria is one of the country's most rural counties. The diverse landscape of the County ranges from the well-known lakes and fells to the more industrial coastline, it includes many of the most sparsely populated locations in England. This means Cumbria County Council is experienced in thinking about how best to meet the needs of its residents, and in particular meeting the needs of rural communities.

You may be involved in developing policies that could affect rural communities, or in deciding how services will be delivered in particular locations. The County Council is committed to considering how the impact of all its decisions might affect rural areas, this process is often referred to as **rural proofing**.

This guide has been developed to help you **think rural** and **rural proof** your decisions. It includes practical examples of what directorates are already doing well in the delivery of services to rural areas. It also aims to get you thinking about what **rural** really means. The guide invites you to look at the differences between rural and urban need and explore how you can meet all of these needs in an inclusive way.

Cumbria aims to be a leading Council in the support of rural communities and has developed an action plan that will make this a reality. Rural proofing is just one part of this plan, but it's something that you can do to ensure that we make the right decisions for the whole of the County.

this guide will...

- help you to **think rural** in making decisions
- provide case studies that show our successes and how you can learn from them
- share ideas with you to help you deliver well targeted services
- provide examples of the information you need to consider when making decisions
- point you towards additional information and help
- take you through the questions you need to ask yourself each time you make a decision that could affect the rural community.



what does rural mean to you?

Everyone has their own understanding of what **rural** means. But at present there is no standard definition for either urban or rural within the UK. The County Council uses different definitions and indicators according to the service it is delivering. It varies from the Education department considering schools with less than 50 pupils on roll as rural; to Social Services using sparsity of population; to the Fire Service referring to remoteness of risk. This complicates things, however it shouldn't stop you from being clear about what you mean by **rural** when you use the word.

A government-led project is currently underway to develop robust urban and rural definitions which will replace the Countryside Agency classification. This should be available in late Spring 2004.

www.countryside.gov.uk

The need for better documentation and understanding of existing definitions has been recognised. The Office for National Statistics has produced a user guide, aimed at non-experts. www.statistics.gov.uk It provides quick reference material for users to help them choose the appropriate definition.



There are various definitions of rural to consider:

- A definition based on land use and settlement size.
- Classification of administrative areas at local authority level or ward level. Office of National Statistics www.statistics.gov.uk
- Settlements with a population of less than 3,000 / 10,000 / 20,000 depending on whether you are referring to rural transport, services or housing respectively. Cabinet Office, Rural Report 2000 www.cabinet-office.gov.uk
- Those local authorities with a population density of less than one person per hectare. Scottish Parliament www.scotland.gov.uk
- Locations that are three miles or more from the nearest chemist, doctor or secondary school. Rural Net www.ruralnet.org.uk
- Everything that is not defined as urban. Rural Regeneration Cumbria www.ruralcumbria.co.uk

key messages

- Spend some time thinking about what you mean by rural if you are making decisions, particularly if you are targeting something that you are labelling as rural.
- Will people know and understand what you are referring to when you use the word **rural**?
- Are you being consistent in your reference to rural?

The following case studies highlight the flexible and creative approaches used by Cumbria County Council in developing policies and service delivery, ensuring the needs of rural communities are met

host homes case study





Susan Maughan of Age Concern talks about a revolutionary approach to day care which is helping people in rural communities.

Host Homes has been developed by Cumbria Social Services in partnership with Age Concern and the Alzheimer's Society.

It can be difficult for people living in rural areas to get to day care centres. Age Concern have been working in partnership with Cumbria Social Services to get volunteers to host activities in their own homes for elderly people, hence the name Host Homes. These activities include afternoon tea, playing games and providing a social afternoon.

Volunteers invite up to four or five elderly people from the community into their home. Many of the hosts are good cooks, and the day includes a home cooked lunch. The guests enjoy the benefits of being part of a family for the day and many valuable friendships are formed.

Often it isn't just support for the day. The guests can become part of the family. If the elderly person needs to go to the doctors or hospital, their host, who may become a close friend, could be the one to go with them. Many of the home day care hosts treat their guests like another grandparent in the family.

This initiative can strengthen local communities. The friendships built up through Host Homes extend much further, providing extra support for the guests. It also means the guests build up friendships with people in their own communities, someone on their own doorstep. They don't have to travel outside their community for support.

For those who are the day-to-day carers of the elderly, Host Homes provides a regular break and the peace of mind of knowing their loved one is within a safe environment and having a good time.

As one of our elderly people said to me, "day care is a good place to meet friends and you always have a laugh."



Why does it work? Because...

- we have identified the problem of providing day care services in rural areas and worked with other organisations to find a solution
- we have worked with locally based voluntary organisations
- we are using local volunteers with local knowledge
- we have a flexible approach to delivering services.

What can you learn from this?

Ask yourself:

- Will my decision work in rural areas? Be honest, and if it won't work the same way as in an urban area look at alternative means of making it work in the rural setting.
- Have I asked the right people what they need and taken this into consideration when making my decision?
- Are there existing voluntary or private sector providers who could work with me on this?
- Could I work with local groups to develop my policy or deliver services?
- Have I set up a way of checking that my policy is being delivered and meeting the needs of rural communities?

making a difference to the community



Host - **Margaret McCormick**

“Following my retirement, becoming a host was a reason to keep busy - especially since I love cooking. I enjoy the company of older people and we have fun.”

Host - **Dot Threlkeld**

“It’s very rewarding to see how much they’ve enjoyed their meal, what a change it makes having someone to share it with and have a chat... I enjoy it and so do the guests, three of them have been coming for the last nine years - so they must do! I hope to go on being a host for many more years.”

Guest - **Beulah Bleasdale**

“It (Community Home Day Care) does make a difference to our lives, we go home feeling refreshed after a day away from our own four walls.”

Guest - **Evelyn Chadwick**

“I don’t know what I would do if I didn’t have my days out to look forward to.”

Guest - **Dora Channell**

“It’s so good and the people who run it are wonderfully kind.”

Guest - **Evelyn Holmes**

“We enjoy it - it’s good to meet friends. The food is lovely ... she does look after us.”

Guest - **Gladys Horne**

“I enjoy it very much - it’s smashing, absolutely smashing. I look forward to it.”

rural wheels case study





Community Transport Officer Cheryl Cowperthwaite explains how Rural Wheels, a new transport scheme in the County, is reaching rural communities and tackling social exclusion.



Lack of good public transport is a real issue for people living in rural areas - sometimes people are unable to find a service that takes them where they want to go, when they want to go. There are areas in the County with few or no bus services and people are therefore unable to access essential services unless they have a car.

Rural Wheels is a unique transport scheme that addresses this issue, providing door-to-door transport for people, when they want it and at a reasonable cost. The aim is to make better use of the various forms of transport available. The scheme is one of the transport projects developed through the Rural Partnership Programme, which is funded by the Countryside Agency. The County Council has worked in partnership with many organisations to make this happen.

The idea for the scheme came from a project in Brittany called **Taxi tube**. We invited the French organisers of the project to share their experience with us. Their project provided transport on demand and used the providers already working in the area. It made us wonder if we could co-ordinate transport providers in a similar way.

The Rural Wheels scheme we developed allows people to travel at 30p a mile, Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm within the area it covers. Passengers need to apply to join the scheme to get a Smartcard, which is used instead of handing over money to the transport providers. The Smartcard can be topped up at local Post Offices, libraries, mobile libraries etc. Users need to give at least 24 hours notice of the journey they wish to take to enable the most cost-effective use of resources available.

Rural Wheels encourages more bespoke services using what is available in the community. Small commercial operators are used who already operate on contracts providing transport for the County Council. Voluntary car schemes and any other available transport is also included in the scheme.

To monitor and control our own project, we use information about the use of the Rural Wheels service direct from Smartcards. This technology also provides us with vital data regarding the need and funding of rural transport in the future.



The scheme helps people get from A to B and tackles social exclusion. We are working in partnership to provide a service that meets the needs of local people, reduces isolation and dependence on car ownership.

Why does it work? Because...

- by using existing transport providers we ensure they have an income during normally quiet periods of the day, ensuring the sustainability of their business
- by using existing outlets to top up Smartcards we are helping to support other vital rural amenities such as libraries, Post Offices and local shops
- information provided by users gives accurate details of the transport need in rural areas
- the service enables people to shop locally and therefore benefits the local economy
- it provides low cost transport to people in isolated rural areas
- the service is good for the environment as it only operates when required.

What can you learn from this?

Ask yourself:

- What effect will my decision have on the local economy?
- What existing outlets could I use to help deliver my policy or service to rural areas?
- What is the existing public transport network in the area I'm looking at?
- Are there existing providers who I could work with?
- What effect will my decision have on the environment?
- Have I thought about sustainability - for the community, economy and environment?
- How can I measure how successful my policy is at delivering services to meet local needs?
- Who will take a lead in the partnership?
- What examples of good practice can I learn from?
- Have I used local information in developing my project structure?
- How can I use new technology to make services easier for people to use?

making a difference to the community

Rural Wheels Customer - Ruth Kitchin

“I have used the service on a regular basis, sometimes weekly, since it began. I have been truly grateful as this scheme has allowed me to visit a relative in a nursing home with ease, compared to the difficult all day affair which was necessary after three local bus services were discontinued.

I am most appreciative of the Rural Wheels scheme and thank all concerned for making it possible.”

community safety case study





Chief Fire Officer and Corporate Director of Public Protection, Mick Elliott explains how joint working between the Fire Service and Police is providing a one-stop shop for community safety.

Residents in Shap are the first in the County to benefit from a brand new approach regarding the local fire station. Traditionally the sole domain of the fire fighter - this building has been given a new lease of life through creative, partnership working and a better understanding of the needs of the local community. This new approach involves Cumbria County Council's Fire Service and Cumbria Constabulary.

We are now sharing the Fire Service building to provide a one-stop shop for community safety in the area. Shap is a very rural location, often isolated in severe weather, and like many other communities, crime and its prevention is an important issue.

Anyone who needs advice or support about fire or personal safety can make enquiries at the fire station and we will make sure they get referred to the right service. It might be that some local residents are not aware of the range of support available from different agencies.



fire alarm testing

We can put them in touch with the right people, helping individuals access information and support they might not have been aware of. Because this advice is available under one roof, actually in the community, people don't need to make lots of visits or phone calls to get the information they need.

The Fire Service itself offers valuable resources to rural communities and this is being explored further. Firstly, our stations can be used for various purposes including community meetings, first aid training and access to life saving equipment on their doorstep. This makes good use of small rural stations.

Secondly, the retained firefighters who staff over 85% of the fire stations in Cumbria, provide an essential service for rural locations. These people live and work in the communities they serve, giving them a good understanding of local need. As well as having a full-time job, they respond to emergency calls, provide home safety checks and fit free smoke alarms. In return they are provided with an income, which has its own benefits for the local economy.

With the one-stop shop approach and our retained firefighters, we feel we are providing the community with a co-ordinated service, designed to meet rural need.

Why does it work? Because...

- by adding to current provision, we also safeguard existing services
- we use local people to deliver services to their own community
- by using the local knowledge of retained firefighters, those most in need of support can be reached
- we are thinking creatively about the use of our premises in rural areas, encouraging alternative ways of making services available.

What can you learn from this?

Ask yourself:

- How will the decision I make affect existing services in rural areas?
- Are there existing providers in an area that could help deliver my service or policy?
- Have I thought about sharing premises with other organisations or groups?
- How will my decision impact on people being able to access a service?
- Will my decision affect people's jobs or ability to make money in a rural community?
- Am I fully using the knowledge and experience of local people in the work they are doing?

making a difference to the community

Deputy Divisional Commander C Division - Simon Kelly

“The extended use of Shap Fire Station helps with the promotion of joint community safety initiatives and furthers inter-agency liaison between the emergency and other services.

We’re putting into place a co-ordinated service for the people of Shap - like a one-stop shop for enquiries about community safety. The firefighters are well known in the community - if members of the public have a query they can be referred to the right service.”

direct payments case study





Social Services Performance Manager Lesley Miller talks about how Direct Payments are giving people choices and more flexible services.

Direct Payments give people the choice of buying their own care rather than having Social Services make the arrangements. They can choose the way care is provided, better meeting their own needs and those of their family and friends around them.

Services such as day and respite care are mainly provided in urban areas, and often by home care provision from town or city based agencies. This can lead to difficulties for people accessing these services if they live in remote, rural areas. Cumbria has been at the forefront of not only introducing Direct Payments but also adapting the scheme to the circumstances of a rural county.

The scheme allows people to choose who they want to care for them and in rural areas this may be local people. Direct Payments enables people to receive care that they would not be able to otherwise access. People are assessed individually and a care package drawn up. This means that provision is not dictated by geography, but is needs led. Service delivery is dictated by the availability of local provision, this means a flexible approach is needed.

Cumbria has won a national award and has been successful in making the service work. On 8th March 2004, about 48% of adults and 32% of children who received Direct Payments lived in rural areas.

Direct Payments has been developed in partnership with disability groups who have been actively involved in saying what is needed to develop the service. Users have given positive feedback, stating that this scheme gives them exactly what they need.

The scheme has further benefits. It is hard to keep care staff in rural areas, as the tourism industry can offer better-paid jobs. The Direct Payments scheme offers individuals the option to either look to agencies for services or, if they find there are no agencies working in their area, to employ personal care assistants. This provides consistent care, as well as creating jobs locally.

Why does it work? Because...

- we work with both voluntary and private sector providers
- we work with disability groups who are working locally to assess need and develop services
- we listen to feedback from users to review the progress of the scheme
- we have a flexible approach to delivering services
- the individual's choice is important to us.



What can you learn from this?

Ask yourself:

- Am I clear about what I mean by rural in this case?
- Have I asked the right people what they need and taken this into consideration when making my decision?
- Are there existing voluntary or private sector providers who could work with me on this?
- Could I work with local groups to develop my policy or deliver services?
- Have I set up a way of checking that my policy is being delivered and meeting the needs of rural communities?

making a difference to the community

Claire Harper, 27 receives Direct Payments. Claire has moderate learning disabilities and lives with her parents, Sue and Peter. They can pay for respite care that meets Claire's needs and pay for outdoor activities that she enjoys, such as walking and swimming.

Sue says:

“Claire gets three days a week day care and respite care for one evening a week and one overnight a month. Claire didn't like the care available through Social Services, but with Direct Payments we are able to pay people to care for her in her own home. We can ask friends and relatives and are able to pay them.

Claire now has two full days at the Chrysalis Centre in Wigton. She also has a full day with a cousin who has two children. She does activities with Claire, such as cooking and shopping. I feel I couldn't have asked her to do this regularly without paying. She also provides respite care for Claire.

As Claire develops, her needs change. Direct Payments provides the flexibility to meet her specific needs. The help and advice is also a great support. If I want to check I've used the Direct Payments right, I can just give them a call and ask. There's always someone there to provide support.

Direct Payments is the best thing that ever happened to us as a family.”

accessing education case study





Satterthwaite and Rusland
C. E. School

Client Services and Property Unit Manager Jim Mitchell explains how rural communities are accessing education.



In one of the most sparsely populated areas in Cumbria, there has been a debate about educational provision for children with special educational needs. Many of these children have extremely long journeys to make to schools in larger local towns, some making an 80 mile round trip each day. This has illustrated the need for more provision in rural areas.

To address this issue, a cluster of schools in a rural district was chosen to be part of a network of specialised provision. Consultation took place with many groups ranging from governors and staff to parents and the health authority. They were all encouraged to express their views to make sure an informed decision would be made.

The result has been that primary school children with special educational needs and disabilities in various rural locations, now have access to education within their own community. This is because of the development of key facilities, which opened in two of the schools within the cluster. The whole approach makes more provision and education accessible to children in rural areas.

The County Council recognises the need for and importance of rural schools. It has a clear policy to support small schools wherever possible. A decision was made to fund rural schools to protect them from closure. Since making each school responsible for its own budget, specific action has been taken to finance rural schools, with an extra allowance being given to those with fewer than 100 pupils.



Why does it work? Because...

- we have thought about access to transport and how this might impact on pupils
- the policy of local provision in education has been delivered through existing service outlets
- the policy creates extra employment within rural areas
- full consultation with all the relevant local parties took place, ensuring the real needs were identified and could be met.

What can you learn from this?

Ask yourself:

- What effect will my decision have for people trying to access the transport network?
- Can we work with anyone else in partnership on this?
- What effect will my decision have on the local economy?
- Have I spoken to the people who will be affected by my decision?

making a difference to the community

Special Needs Co-ordinator at Appleby Primary School - Linda Rider

“We are trying to avoid the need to transport children unreasonable distances to school. One of our pupils would have previously had an 80 mile round trip to a school in Carlisle. Now she can go to her local school. The children’s educational needs are now being met in their own community.”



rural proofing at a glance

Here's a quick reminder of the key things you need to consider.

Remember - **rural proofing** is not an exact science, but following these steps will ensure your decisions are, as far as possible:

- transparent
- well-informed
- take account of rural issues

1 Consider what you mean by rural.

As we've already said, there is a lack of consensus about how to define **rural** and what constitutes a **rural area**. It's not a simple task, as within the County there are varying degrees of rurality, from the rural hinterlands just outside an urban district, to the deepest rural communities on the fells.

It is not the purpose of this guide to provide a single definition of **rural**, but the section called **What does rural mean to you?** gives you an idea of what to consider. We have given you several definitions you may wish to think about when making decisions.

2 Use information and intelligence.

Ensuring your decision will meet the needs of both rural and urban communities means doing your research and there are plenty of sources of intelligence and data available to help you in this search.

Here is a quick guide to types of useful information you could consider when making a decision.

- Maps of Cumbria showing information such as access to services, population densities, age of population and transport networks.
For details contact the Policy Unit on 01228 606510
Dan Bloomer - dan.bloomer@cumbriacc.gov.uk or
Paula Kennerley - paula.kennerley@cumbriacc.gov.uk
- Frequency and routes of bus or train services.
The Cumbria Journey Planner is on the internet at www.traveline.org.uk. Or for telephone enquiries call 0870 608 2 608
- Services already being delivered in an area.
Cumbria County Council can provide information at www.cumbria.gov.uk
- Community venues and support groups operating in an area. Voluntary Action Cumbria can signpost you to organisations - www.ruralcumbria.co.uk
- A list of wards classed as sparse or supersparse.
For details contact the Policy Unit on 01228 606510
Dan Bloomer - dan.bloomer@cumbriacc.gov.uk or
Paula Kennerley - paula.kennerley@cumbriacc.gov.uk
- Details of neighbourhood forums.
Cumbria County Council can provide information at www.cumbria.gov.uk
- Employment information for wards for example, type of employment such as tourism, public sector or retail.
For details contact the Policy Unit on 01228 606510
Dan Bloomer - dan.bloomer@cumbriacc.gov.uk or
Paula Kennerley - paula.kennerley@cumbriacc.gov.uk
- The Corporate Strategy, Community Strategies, the Sub Regional Strategy and Directorate Service Plans.
For details contact the Policy Unit on 01228 606510 or relevant directorate

3 Ask the people what they want and need

Finding out the facts about what is happening and what is needed in rural areas means speaking to local groups and organisations. You may wish to consider contacting the following:

- **DEFRA's Rural Affairs Forum**
email: ruralforum@defra.gsi.gov.uk Tel: 020 7238 5359
- **Voluntary Action Cumbria (VAC)**
www.ruralcumbria.co.uk Tel: 01768 242130
- **The Cumbria Rural Forum**
Contact VAC for details Tel: 01768 242130
- **Neighbourhood Forums** Contact the Community Division of Cumbria County Council Tel: 01228 606731
- **The relevant Local Strategic Partnerships**
(see reference and contact section)
- **The Cumbria Strategic Partnership**
Strategic Partnership Development Officer Tel: 01228 606686
- **Voluntary/religious organisations or charities**
Contact VAC for details Tel: 01768 242130

Consultation can take many forms, and advice can be sought from the Corporate Research Officer for the Cumbria County Council. Kieran Barr Tel: 01228 606308 or email: kieran.barr@cumbriacc.gov.uk

4 Linking with other policies

No policy is an island; it should link into other key documents. These include the Corporate Strategy, the Sub Regional Strategy (SRS) and the four Community Strategies that Local Strategic Partnerships have developed.

Cumbria County Council's Corporate Strategy contains a specific target to achieve rural proofing of decisions in 2003/04. The SRS has a strong focus on rural issues and regeneration.

The Council's approach to sustainability is another key area you need to consider as rural proofing falls within this wider approach. The County Council has a Sustainability Manager who can offer advice on this area of work. Alex McKenzie Tel: 01228 601057
email: alex.mckenzie@cumbriacc.gov.uk

5 Setting the benchmark and monitoring progress

Set achievable goals that are easily measured. Setting standards and indicators allows you to record and monitor your progress and success. This enables you to think about the impact you are having on rural communities. Think how you can identify whether or not your decision does have a positive impact.

key points

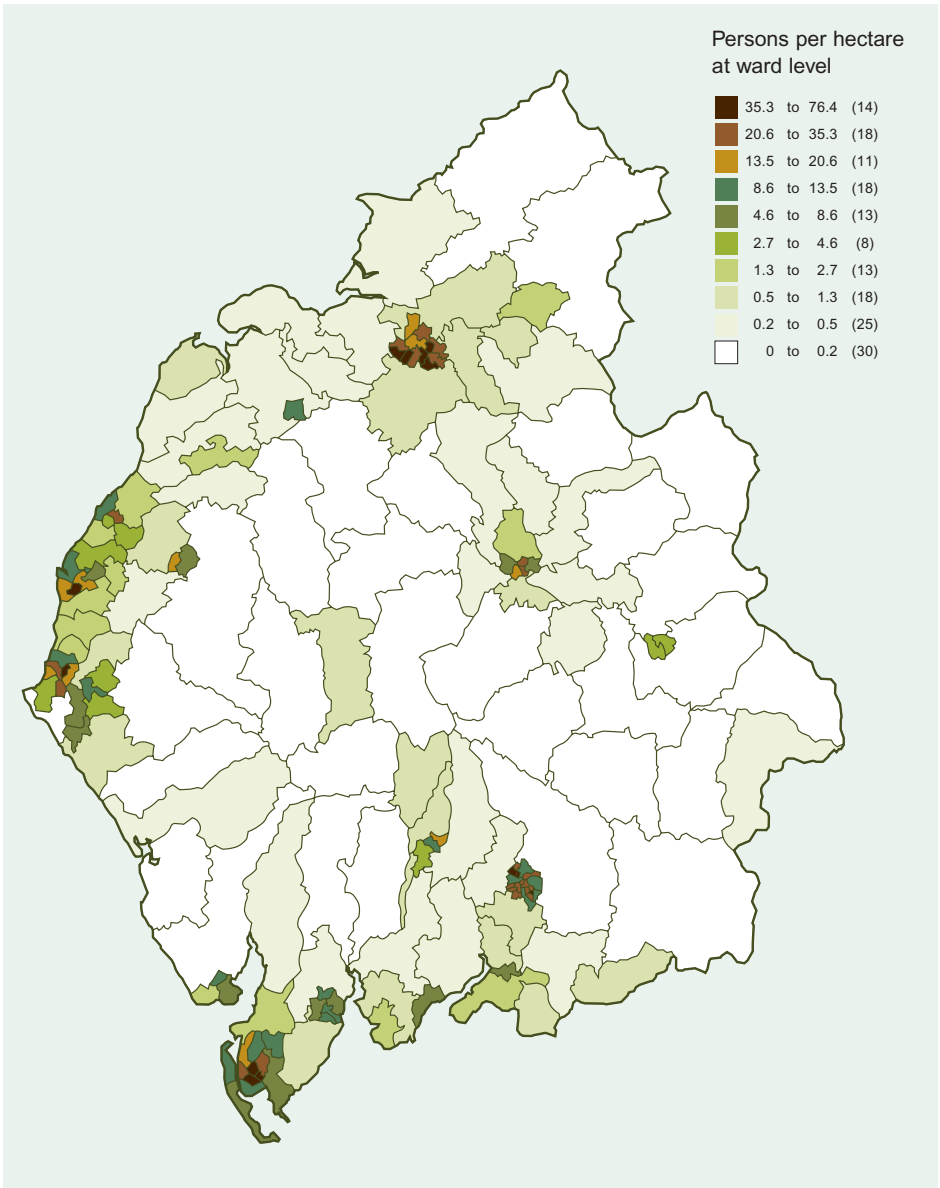
- Using the guide will help you consider rural need more systematically. However, it is up to you whether or not you act on what you learn
- Consider your own definition of rurality
- Ask people what they want and need, but make sure you are asking the right people
- Work with others to deliver the best services to rural areas
- Set performance indicators, record success and review your progress

Types of information you may want to consider when looking at policies or services for rural areas

cumbrian transport networks



cumbrian population density



thinking rural

applying a checklist

Having explored the principles of rural proofing, its now time for you to see whether or not you have managed to think rural in your decision-making

Work through this suggested checklist and see how well you have thought about how your decision might impact on a rural community.

It might challenge some of your thinking but should result in more informed decisions.

the checklist

1 Will your decision affect any other services in a rural area?

Think about all the services the Council provides, plus services offered by public and private bodies such as health authorities and transport providers.

- Consider if you could work together with others to provide a better service all-round.
- Could there be alternative shared funding available?
- Could you integrate the services and cut overheads?
- Could your service help support other rural services such as the village Post Office, village shop or pub?

2 Could you deliver the policy or service you are suggesting through existing service outlets?

Think about the different outlets there are: fire stations, mobile libraries, the local pub, health centres etc.

- Talk to the County Council's Neighbourhood Development Officer who could be a source of valuable local knowledge.
- Discuss the options for jointly delivering a package of services with partners.
- Look at cutting overheads and finding joint funding.
- Consider how you could help support vulnerable rural services such as Post Offices and village shops.
- Think how you are going to deliver your services to isolated users.
- If you need to set up a new network of provision, how much will it cost?
- Will the provision cover the whole area?



3 Will there be an extra cost to delivering your policy or service to rural areas?

Think about the additional miles providers may need to travel, or how people will get to the service you are trying to offer.

- Consider developing a 'sparsity factor' to address this.
- Look at the potential for joint provision to share costs.
- If national funding allocation fails to recognise this issue talk to your Corporate Director and the Policy Unit to see if the Council can lobby on the issue nationally and regionally.



4 Will your decision affect travel needs or the cost of travel for rural communities?

Think about how far you might be asking people to travel and whether or not the road or rail network can support this.

- Look at the possibility of providing a mobile service, offering internet access or co-ordinating transport provision.

5 Does your policy rely on communication of information to clients?

Think about the various ways that information can be shared with people.

- Look at the cost implications of getting the message out to isolated areas.
- Consider using existing networks such as Post Offices, village halls, parish and town councils to reduce costs in rural areas.

6 Will you deliver your policy or service through a third-party?

Think about where such organisations are based and if delivering services in a rural area will be a problem for them.

- Consider if the organisation shares our commitment to thinking rural, or perhaps set them specific targets for delivery in rural areas.
- Some organisations can access extra funds for especially innovative projects. The Countryside Agency or VAC may be able to offer advice on this.

7 Does your policy or service rely on an infrastructure that may put rural communities at a disadvantage - is the framework there in rural areas?

Think about what already exists in these areas in terms of information systems, utilities etc; and consider the realities of what this will mean for your decision.

- Use the planning system to encourage provision and encourage demand to make the service viable.
- Provide alternative means of accessing the service.

8 Will your decision have an impact on rural businesses and the economy?

Think beyond the decision you are making as the economy is as important as the environment and community. All three elements are interlinked and changes to one may impact on the others.

- Work with local business groups and think about providing progressive guidelines.
- Can extra employment be generated for local people through the policy?

9 Will your decision have an impact on land-based industries, for example mining for minerals?

Think about the needs of these industries and how your decision might affect them.

- Look at how economic and environmental issues are affected by your policy.



10 Will your decision particularly affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment?

Think about the area and whether or not there is a high reliance on tourism or agriculture for income.

- Consider how rural deprivation can be masked by high employment.
- Consider greater sensitivity to wage levels as well as unemployment levels.

11 Will your decision target disadvantaged people?

Think about where those classed as disadvantaged live and how disadvantage is defined.

- Will your policy or service pick up those classed as disadvantaged living in rural areas?
- You may need to use smaller area statistics to demonstrate need.
- Think about targeting population groups rather than geographical areas if possible.

12 Does your policy or service rely on local organisations for delivery?

Think about the variety of organisations operating in rural areas.

- Consider whether or not rural organisations have the capacity to deliver the service and consider appropriate support for capacity building before implementation.





13 Is your policy or service likely to be restricted in its implementation or delivery by landscape or heritage protection which is more common in the countryside?

Think about the restrictions there are in the County - for example the National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

- Think about working with planning authorities early in the development process.
- Consider building in extra funding for implementation in rural areas.

14 Will your decision impact on people wishing to reach and use the countryside for recreation?

Think about any changes your decision may have to the way the countryside looks and what it offers visitors.

- Give proper acknowledgement in a cost-benefit analysis of such proposals to the value of tourism to Cumbria's economy.

Having worked through these questions you have systematically considered rural need and the impact your decision might have on the community. **Your decision has been rural proofed!**

conclusion

As leader of Cumbria County Council, I would encourage you all to use this good practice guide.

It has been specifically designed to help you think about, and help meet, the needs of rural communities.

We are committed to continually improving the way we make decisions about rural policies and service delivery. Rural proofing is one way of achieving this improvement. The aim is better services for the public.

We recognise that rural proofing is not just about applying a checklist to our council papers after a decision has been taken. We need to bring about real and sustained change to tackle the challenges the County faces. We see rural proofing as having several components – from learning to increase consultation with rural communities, to challenging ideas at an early stage if they don't take account of the impact they might have on an area.

The guide encourages you to think creatively to find solutions, work in partnership and learn from other examples of excellent practice. It complements the wider support programme for rural services the County Council is progressing, which includes specific projects addressing community, economic and environmental issues.

Seen from the outside, it may seem strange that we in Cumbria are putting so much effort into rural proofing. Surely, you might say, thinking rural is natural to us in such a rural county?

This guide clearly illustrates there are many examples of good practice in the County. However we must not be complacent. We need to use these examples, highlighting where we have thought creatively and sensitively about rural need, helping to ensure that we meet our rural responsibilities.

key points

- Build on your existing good practice
- Learn from others – look at the good practice elsewhere in the County and from other rural shires
- Make thinking rural a key element of the culture of your directorate
- Keep the checklist in mind when planning services or making decisions
- Get recognition for what you do already and share your good news
- Embrace the mutual benefits of working in partnership to deliver services
- Challenge the view that ‘we just have to accept it because we are a rural county’
- Ask Members to lobby the government at both a national and regional level when their policies don’t fit a rural county
- Grasp the opportunity to make Cumbria County Council a leading authority on how it can be done.



Rex Toft

Leader of Cumbria County Council

glossary of terms

Community Strategies

The government requires all Local Authorities to produce a community strategy, which outlines local priorities and how they will be addressed through working together. In Cumbria there are 5 strategies in various stages of development - the county wide Sub Regional Strategy (SRS) and four Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) strategies.

Corporate Strategy

The County Council's strategy outlining its priorities with its action plan to achieve these.

CSP

Cumbria Strategic Partnership - a partnership comprising mainly countywide organisations, who are working together to support the whole of the County in terms of economic, community and environmental well-being.

LSP

Local Strategic Partnerships - partnerships of organisations who work together to produce a local community strategy, which prioritises local issues and actions needed to achieve shared goals. There are four LSPs in Cumbria - Carlisle and Eden, Furness, South Lakeland and West Cumbria.

Neighbourhood Forums

Neighbourhood Forums are informal meetings for residents to meet with councillors. There is a network of over 50 forums in the county. The local County Councillor usually chairs these informal meetings and ensures that vital matters are reported back to Local Committees or the District Council so that the necessary actions can be taken.

Rural Affairs Forum

The Rural Affairs Forum for England represents all aspects of rural opinion in all English regions. It is an important element of the Government's strategy to engage with and support the 14 million people in England who live and work in the countryside, villages and rural towns.

Rural Proofing

Making sure that you have considered the impact your decision will have on rural communities - this covers impact on the community, economy and environment.

RAZ

The Rural Action Zone - a broad programme of activity to maximise existing rural programmes and harness new funding, developed in response to Foot and Mouth.

RRC

Rural Regeneration Cumbria - the country's first rural regeneration company which provides funding and support to rural communities and businesses.

SRS

Sub Regional Strategy - a strategy and action plan developed by the Cumbria Strategic Partnership for the whole of the County. The strategy draws on all the Community Strategies of the Local Strategic Partnerships.

Sustainability

Making sure that projects or decisions you make can be continued or sustained in the community and by the environment - for example that funding won't run out and stop an initiative from running, or that the quality of the environment is maintained.

references and contacts

Barrow and District CVS

Tel: 01229 823144

www.barrowcvs.org.uk

email: info@barrowcvs.org.uk

Carlisle CVS

Tel: 01228 512513

email: andre.cvs@globalnet.co.uk

Carlisle and Eden LSP

Cathy Connolly Tel: 01768 212265

Countryside Agency

Tel: 01242 521381

www.countryside.gov.uk

Cumbria County Council

Tel: 01228 606060

www.cumbria.gov.uk

Cumbria Strategic Partnership

Sue Stevenson Tel: 01228 606686

Defra

Tel: 08459 33 55 77

www.defra.gov.uk

Eden CVS

Tel: 01768 242138

email: mailroom@edencvs.co.uk

Furness Partnership

Phil Huck Tel: 01229 894259

Government Office North West

Tel: 0161 952 4000 or 0151 224 6300

www.go-nw.gov.uk

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Tel: 020 7944 4400

www.odpm.gov.uk

Office of National Statistics

Tel: 0845 601 3034
www.statistics.gov.uk

Rural Affairs Forum

Tel: 020 7238 5359
email: ruralforum@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Rural Forum

Contact VAC for details
Tel: 01768 242130

Rural Regeneration Cumbria

Tel: 01931 711130
www.ruralcumbria.co.uk

South Lakeland CVS

Tel: 01539 742627

South Lakeland LSP

John Dyer Tel: 01539 797574 or
David Stephens Tel: 01539 797575

Voluntary Action Cumbria

Tel: 01768 242130
www.ruralcumbria.org.uk

Voluntary or religious organisations

Contact VAC for details
Tel: 01768 242130

West Cumbria CVS

Tel: 01900 819191
email: cvs@westcumbriacvs.solis.co.uk

West Cumbria LSP

Mike Heaslip Tel: 01900 870555
email: mike@westcumbriacvs.solis.co.uk



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