

HEALTH AND HARMONY: THE FUTURE FOR FOOD, FARMING AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN A GREEN BREXIT - Defra

May 2018

Extracts from the Community First Yorkshire response to the consultation

Community First Yorkshire is part of the national network of 38 ACRE members (Action with Communities in Rural England). In preparing this feedback views have been taken from the VCS community and also noting the feedback shared among colleagues within the ACRE network.

Section 8 Supporting rural communities and remote farming How should farming, land management and rural communities continue to be supported to deliver environmental, social and cultural benefits in the uplands?

It is our view that support to deliver social, environmental and cultural benefits is to ensure there is cross departmental policies and plans which ensure coherence and optimise investment.

One measure we suggest to help deliver the agriculture policy, is to have an integrated rural community development investment programme which recognises the importance and funding for collaborative and community-led projects, and provides funded for capacity-building.

Future programmes should include revenue and capital expenditure (in part to support capacity-building for community, economic and environmental gain) with combined investment to support both human and physical assets, in development and enhancement activities. It will allow for example, village halls to be developed to accommodate local activities such as pre-school groups, which intern enable people to set up businesses, be self-employed or maintain employment locally or further afield.

Post CAP planning and development should enable continued learning and inspiration to come from inter-territorial or trans-national project work. As the pattern of farming, land management and the make-up of rural communities change, it is important that opportunities to learn from others and new innovations are stimulated and not stifled by the new approach.

There are a number of challenges facing rural communities and businesses, the most important three (from a list of eight) are:

- Broadband and Mobile phone coverage, lack of ICT coverage and capacity is hampering many aspects of modern business management and growth, it holds back the expansion of knowledge and learning and restricts access to employment and self-employment in rural areas and in particular the sparsely populated rural areas.
- Transport is essential for work, learning and social interaction for health benefits. Jobs, learning and apprenticeship opportunities are currently inaccessible. Connectivity of people essential for businesses to access a skilled labour force.
- Affordable housing, should include those working in social care, hospitality and food and farming, as essential workers.

In addition rural-proofing is important for planning and investment and is not reflected in the consultation document.

Responding to the challenges calls for a rethink of rural sparsity, output measures currently mitigates against reach and investment into deeply rural areas.

There is no 'England Rural Community Policy' and government should develop such a policy to contribute to providing a framework for investment in farming, land management and rural communities and as a cross-cutting theme for investment across government departments and statutory strategies.

An integrated community-led rural development programme to succeed LEADER, with the emphasis on a rural initiative is required.

Section 15 Legislation

How far do you agree with the proposed powers of the Agriculture Bill?

What other measures might we need in the Agriculture Bill to achieve our objectives?

The Bill should make reference to all rural communities and provide comprehensive and consistent support.

The Bill should require planners, funders and procurement bodies to undertake a Rural Proofing exercise on their plans, reach and impact of funds and openness and reach of procurement exercises.