

## **The Council's core aspirations for rural communities**

EDDC may adopt the following principles for the District which are largely drawn from the Rural Services Network Manifesto. EDDC will use these in formulating its own future policies and lobbying others.

### **General**

- A set of national minimum universal service and infrastructure obligations for all people whether living in rural or urban settlements. This will include social and health care facilities as well as community hubs such as village halls and/or churches.
- Recognition that real rural deprivation can be masked by the methods used to assess multiple deprived areas.
- Recognition that rural life is not just dispersed urban living. Rural living is distinct.
- A need for rural proofing of policies (local and national).  
Valuing difference and sense of place of rural locations.
- A need for government to meet the 'rural premium costs' associated with servicing rural areas.
- Sustainable construction.

### **Economy**

- National schemes to support key rural shops and pubs and the range of services (including mailing and banking) that they offer.
- Enabling local authorities to take positive action to procure locally.
- Valuing the particular type of contribution made by rural enterprises to the economy, as distinct from the urban contribution.
- Develop, value and support land based skills and environmental business.
- Recognition of food security issues and the need to protect food-growing opportunities.

### **Digital communities**

- Rural communities not to be bypassed (speed, timetable, bandwidth reliability) by the roll-out of future proofed digital infrastructure.
- Internet hubs in communal buildings and in schools.
- Mobile phone reception.

### **Transport**

- Concessionary fares for rail where this provides better access to urban centres.
- Central funding of community transport
- Demand responsive public transport
- Removal of fixed rates of remuneration for community transport issues.
- Everyone within 10 minutes walk of a bus stop serving a regular service.
- Retention, development, and maintenance of a footpath network.

### **Schools**

- No school closures except on education or safety grounds.  
Alternative models of managing schools as an alternative to closure (e.g. confederation)
- Schools to be available for community use outside school hours.
- Access to Children's services

### **Affordable housing**

- Parish Councils to have clear responsibilities to support and promote provision of affordable housing to meet established need.
- Financial support to a rural housing enabler.
- HCA need to be flexible in their formulae for affordable housing in rural areas where abnormal development costs are faced.  
Utility providers to be more accountable for delays to rural housing.  
Government pressure on lending institutions to fund affordable rural housing options.  
The need for affordable rental housing not to be bypassed.

### **Health & Social Care**

- No rural hospital closures except on safety grounds. A wide range of services to be retained.
- National funding of air ambulances.  
Innovation in health and care provision, designed specifically for rural locations.  
Multi-use medical/pharmacy centres in rural locations.  
Effective GP out of hours call system for rural visits for those with no private transport option.  
Outreach care into rural areas also.  
Health appointments to be bookable at times suitable for access by rural residents.

### **Rural fuel poverty**

- Innovative and appropriate insulation for rural homes through national grant schemes.
- Sustainable energy options appropriate to rural settings.

### **Flooding**

- Separate funding for rural flood defence and an end to “one size fits all” cost benefit analysis.

### **Emergency Services**

- Equality for emergency response times.

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