

CABINET

19th March 2019

RURAL STRATEGY

Report of the Chief Executive

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|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Strategic Aim: | All | |
| Key Decision: No | Forward Plan Reference: FP/080319 | |
| Exempt Information | No | |
| Cabinet Member(s) Responsible: | Mr O Hemsley, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Rutland One Public Estate & Growth, Tourism & Economic Development, Resources (other than Finance) | |
| Contact Officer(s): | Helen Briggs, Chief Executive | 01572 758201 hbriggs@rutland.gov.uk |
| Ward Councillors | All | |

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet approves Rutland County Council supporting the campaign for a Rural Strategy through the Rural Services Network.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable Cabinet to decide if Rutland County Council should support the campaign for a Rural Strategy led by the Rural Services Network.

2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 The Rural Services Network (RSN) is calling on the Government to take the lead, working with other interested organisations, to produce a comprehensive, long-term and funded Rural Strategy. Rutland are members of the RSN and have been regular and active contributors for many years.
- 2.2 The RSN suggests that the Strategy should include the following component parts:
- A thriving Rural Economy
 - A digitally connected countryside

- A place everyone can get around
- An affordable Place to live
- A fair deal on health and social care
- A place to learn and grow
- A settlement (including fair funding for rural services) to support local action
- A rural proofed policy framework

2.3 The RSN argues that rural communities are frequently overlooked in a policy environment dominated by (majority) urban thinking and by urban policy concerns. So called “rural mainstreaming” has often led to policies which are inappropriate in a sparsely populated or rural setting. The result is that communities miss out on the benefits, or experience unintended consequences from policies which are poorly thought through from a rural perspective.

2.4 The RSN also argues that rural economies are widely misunderstood, with their potential to grow and add value to the national economy overlooked. Too often they are conflated with agriculture and land-based industries. Whilst agriculture certainly remains an important consideration, it is today one element within broad-based and diverse rural economies.

2.5 As a consequence of this the RSN is arguing that it is time for a Rural Strategy which:

- raises rural opportunities and challenges the political agenda:
- which is forward looking and ambitious,
- recognises the contribution that rural areas make and those they could make to the wellbeing and prosperity of the nation as a whole.

2.6 The template Rural Strategy that sets out the evidence and rationale for the campaign can be found at https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/publications/rural-strategy-2019/rsn_rural_strategy_online.pdf

3 CONSULTATION

3.1 The purpose of this report is to consider if the Council should sign up to the campaign. Consultation would be undertaken by the Government should the campaign be successful.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 The Cabinet could choose not to sign up to the campaign.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report other than the officer time which will be spent in discussion with the RSN – this is likely to be minimal and will be absorbed within existing work plans and resources

6 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal or governance implications arising directly from this report.

7 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 A data protection impact assessment has not been completed as there are no data protection implications.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Not relevant for a progress report.

9 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None

10 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 None

11 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

A fully funded Rural Strategy of the type proposed could provide significant benefits to the County as a whole and ensure that issues of the type that effect Rutland feature more prominently in deliberations by Government when setting policy.

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 None

13 APPENDICES

- 13.1 None

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