Final Regulatory Impact Assessment

1. TITLE OF PROPOSAL

Rural Strategy 2004 including Modernising Rural Delivery Programme

2. Purpose and intended effect of measure

(i) The Objective:

1. The Government first set out a vision for a living, working, protected and vibrant countryside in the Rural White Paper in 2000. This vision – of sustainable rural communities in which economic, social and environmental issues are all taken into account – remains at the heart of rural policy.

2. To meet the challenges we need a new approach to policy and delivery – based on targeting the greatest needs and working in partnership at national, regional and local level. The public – our customers – must come first.

3. Rural Strategy 2004 sets out the Government’s new approach. It identifies three key priorities for rural policy, and explains our modernised delivery arrangements.

4. The Government’s three priorities for rural policy are:

   1. Economic and Social Regeneration – supporting enterprise across rural England, but targeting greater resources at areas of greatest need.

   2. Social Justice for All – tackling rural social exclusion wherever it occurs and providing fair access to services and opportunities for all rural people.

   3. Enhancing the Value of Our Countryside – protecting the natural environment for this and future generations.

5. These priorities will inform the Government’s rural policy for the next 3 to 5 years and the modernised delivery arrangements that will drive progress forward. This Strategy sets out the specific action that will be taken.

6. In each case, the Strategy explains the modernised delivery arrangements that will drive progress forward and the specific programmes that will be implemented.

7. The Strategy applies to England only.
(ii) The Background:

8. The Rural White Paper was published at a time of rapid change for rural areas – change which was brought into sharp focus by the Foot and Mouth outbreak less than three months after the White Paper. Four years on, social and economic changes affecting rural communities continue apace.

9. In the light of the lessons learnt from the Foot and Mouth outbreak, and the creation of Defra in June 2001, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs commissioned a number of actions to improve the focus and delivery of rural policy through:

   • a review of the Rural White Paper;
   • steps to improve the rural evidence base; and
   • an independent review of rural delivery by Lord Haskins.

10. Considerable progress has been made with this work. The Government published a full review of the Rural White Paper in January 2004, alongside a report on Social and Economic Change and Diversity in Rural England - part of our ongoing research programme to develop the evidence base for rural policy.

11. Lord Haskins published the report of his Rural Delivery Review in November 2003. The Government made an initial response agreeing Lord Haskins’ analysis of our delivery structures as too confusing for customers and too bureaucratic and centralised to meet our future challenges. In making its initial response to the review in November 2003, the Government concluded that:

   • its first priority was an immediate full review of rural funding schemes, to provide a clearer and simpler framework for funding that ensures funds are targeted at the achievement of outcomes, and to achieve a reduction in bureaucratic procedures;
   • elements of the work done by English Nature, the Countryside Agency and the Rural Development Service should be brought together where those functions would enable a more cohesive approach to delivery, particularly in relation to biodiversity, natural resource protection, landscape, access and recreation and the agri-environment agenda;
   • there was still a need for a much smaller, more focused Countryside Agency, to provide strong and impartial advice to Government.

12. Since then the Government has been working with delivery bodies in the Modernising Rural Delivery Programme to develop workable and enduring delivery arrangements that achieve:

   • better targeting of resources and services on the rural communities and environmental areas that need them most, by establishing new delivery arrangements that are clear, radical and consistent;
• better experience for customers through streamlined services and schemes;
• better value for money by reducing overheads so that existing resources can be shifted into the front line;
• better accountability and clarity of roles among policy and delivery bodies; and
• adaptability to respond to policy change by establishing new delivery arrangements that allow for future changes to the policy framework, such as Common Agricultural Policy reform and the new Rural Development Regulation in 2007.

13. The Rural Strategy takes as its starting point the vision of sustainable development for rural areas, set out in the Rural White Paper, which remains the Government’s vision, and is based on the premise that policy delivery in rural areas must accord with the principles of sustainable development and involve the application of the principles of public service reform.\(^1\) However, the Strategy also builds on the findings of the Review of the Rural White Paper and in particular:

• that three years of experience in delivery have demonstrated the need for new methodology to be put in place to quantify targets and for new approaches to shared responsibility for meeting them, with clear accountabilities; and
• the main challenges include: clarifying objectives, achieving greater prioritisation and targeting need; improving governance and delivery arrangements; and continuing to develop a solid evidence base and evaluation framework.

14. The Rural Strategy builds on all these conclusions and sets out how the Government will address the three main priorities for rural policy for the next 3 to 5 years.

**Economic and Social Regeneration**

15. The majority of rural areas have relatively strong economic performance. The strategy in these areas is to sustain prosperity by ensuring that national, regional and local policies that support economic development are suitably rural proofed so as to promote enterprise in rural as well as urban areas.

16. There are however structural economic weaknesses and associated poor social conditions in a minority of rural areas. To counter this is challenging and requires a more targeted area-based policy to maximise the benefits of mainstream public funding, to attract and foster business development, to improve skills and to build local institutional and community capacity. The

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\(^1\) *Reforming our Public Services – Principles into Practice*, Prime Minister’s Office of Public Services Reform, Cabinet Office (2002)
Government’s strategy will be to work with regional and local partners to focus resources on bringing benefits to these ‘lagging’ areas. Primarily this will involve increasing resources allocated for rural economic and social development via Regional Development Agencies, devolving decision-making and delivery to ensure that decisions are taken in better understanding of the needs of rural people, and working with local government and others to pilot innovative new joint approaches in rural areas.

**Social Justice for All**

17. People in all areas deserve access to high quality public services. For all rural areas our strategy is to ensure that communities benefit from the Government’s programmes to modernise and improve public services, by ensuring that intelligent service delivery solutions follow from rural proofing of service delivery strategies.

18. People living in rural areas do not expect the same nature of service that those in some urban areas receive (e.g. proximity to certain service outlets). Our aim is to ensure fair access to services and that no-one is seriously disadvantaged by living in a rural area.

19. Even in relatively affluent rural areas there is a small but disadvantaged minority, whose needs are not always easy or straightforward to meet. Those particularly affected include the unemployed, those in insecure or part-time employment, others on low incomes (including some self-employed) and many elderly people. Defra’s strategy for these areas is to work with other Government departments and delivery agents to ensure policies are appropriately rural proofed to meet the needs of these individuals. Access to affordable housing is a particular priority.

20. The Rural White Paper identified the importance of a healthy civic society and committed the Government to supporting voluntary, community and parish council contributions to building social capital. We will continue to develop our policy in this area, as set out in Defra’s September 2003 policy paper on Community Capacity Building and Voluntary Sector Infrastructure in Rural England. The objective of the programme is to enable everyone to play an active and full part in society by providing support for local volunteering, social capital, community action and voluntary sector provision of services in rural areas throughout England.

**Enhancing the Value of our Countryside**

21. The countryside provides many benefits. It is valued for its wildlife, landscape and cultural heritage and also tranquillity. Increasingly many enjoy a better quality of life living in the countryside. It also provides clean water, air and other resources, such as renewable energy, that benefit us all – urban and rural
inhabitants alike. For example, virtually all water reservoirs are in rural areas, and active floodplains reduce the risk of flooding in urban areas. For these reasons alone, improving the health of our countryside benefits everyone who lives in England, for now and for future generations.

22. The countryside has other unique qualities. Very large numbers visit the countryside each year due to the diverse recreational opportunities it offers for people of all ages in attractive surroundings.

23. There are significant public benefits to be gained from enabling more people to enjoy the countryside at first hand. Countryside recreation can, in particular, improve people’s health and general enjoyment of life. Visitors play a big part in sustaining many rural businesses. And learning about our natural heritage is part of life-long learning, and – for young socially disadvantaged people in particular – can provide a source of enjoyment and interest that can help in the campaign to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

24. The Government’s strategy is to enable more people from a wider range of backgrounds to enjoy the countryside at first hand, wherever they live or work. We aim to make the most of existing opportunities and of those provided by the creation of new access to open country and improved rights of way networks under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

25. The enjoyment of the countryside, marine heritage and also the urban environment depends on protecting and enhancing all aspects of our natural environment. While the protection of special sites is essential to improve the diversity of the natural species and wildlife that make England a rich and valued treasure, this must also be part of integrated management of our countryside. Agriculture and forestry have a particularly important part to play here: standards of agricultural management have a direct impact on the state of the rural environment and on its economic and social value. The Sustainable Food and Farming Strategy set out a vision under which farmers can be rewarded for sustaining and improving environmental assets - and thereby contributing to the economic future of the communities in which they live. The England Forestry Strategy sets out how woodlands and forests can contribute to the achievement of Government’s sustainable development objectives.

(iii) Risk assessment

26. A minority of rural areas experience significant economic failure and poor social conditions, especially those in remote or sparsely populated areas:

- productivity indicators show the average productivity for the bottom quartile of rural districts is around 18% lower than the English median, and there are 2.7m (3m) people in rural areas within the poorest 25% of English Local Authorities;
• there is a reduced contribution of the land based sector with a 30% reduction in employees in the last 20 years;

• more widely, a minority suffer poverty and disadvantage, with affected families or individuals scattered amongst wider affluence. 2.1m residents (15% of the adult population) in rural areas receive income related benefits;

• under the new Index of Multiple Deprivation (ODPM, 2004), nearly 50% of areas in the bottom 10% in relation to access to housing and services are rural.

27. The radical agenda of devolution and streamlining represented by the Modernising Rural Delivery Programme is addressing the risks of:

• ineffective targeting of resources and services on the rural communities and environmental areas that need them most;

• no significant improvements to customer service, and that particularly communities and rural businesses will continue to be confused by the complexity of the delivery arrangements;

• changes not optimising value for money;

• accountability and roles among policy and delivery bodies being unclear;

• the delivery arrangements not having sufficient adaptability to respond to policy change by allowing for future changes to the policy framework such as CAP reform and the new Rural Development Regulation;

• policy and delivery not being sufficiently joined-up across the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development;

• small businesses in rural areas not receiving the support they need to function effectively, hindering their ability to participate competitively in national and international markets; and

• disallowance action may be taken against the Government if the EU money provided for rural development under the England Rural Development Programme is not implemented correctly as a result of any changes to the delivery arrangements.

28. Targeted economic and community policies are needed to tackle rural deprivation and social exclusion. Without targeted policies and modernisation of the rural delivery arrangements, there will not be effective action to address these issues.

29. Furthermore, the English countryside provides essential benefits, including economic and social ones as well as the essentials of life, and measures are needed to protect and enhance it for us now and for future generations. It is also important that activities to protect and enhance the natural environment should
promote opportunities to encourage economic growth and assist in building community capacity.

30. Much work is already underway in these areas but a strategic framework for rural policy delivery is needed which covers a range of aspects of Defra’s work.

**iv) Businesses affected**

31. The Strategy is not introducing any regulatory burden on businesses, charities or voluntary bodies. On the contrary, all businesses will benefit from a more simplified and coherent support service structure in rural areas that is relevant to them and to the area in which they work and live. The review of rural funding streams and modernising their delivery arrangements will also simplify access to services, providing a customer focussed interface for advice and support and streamlining the applications process to remove unnecessary burdens on rural businesses (through simpler forms and simplified administrative systems).

32. Businesses and the public more widely, including those in more urban areas, will benefit from the increased contribution rural businesses will be able to make to regional and national economies.

**v) Issues of equity**

33. This Strategy is founded on the equity principle with the goal for rural policy to achieve fair treatment for rural areas. In doing so it will take into account the differences between rural areas. It is for this reason, because rural England is not homogeneous, that the Strategy provides for the devolution of decision making, to allow local circumstances and conditions to be taken into account. The Strategy also has a specific focus on those individuals and areas most at need, and includes mechanisms to ensure that there is a strong customer voice into the policy and decision-making process. The Strategy also provides for the establishment of the New Countryside Agency with a more focused advocacy role on behalf of rural communities, especially the most vulnerable groups. Issues of race are tackled in the access to the countryside issues.

34. Under the new delivery arrangements, support will be better targeted where it is needed most and made easier for all to access. This will improve the equity and fairness of the delivery arrangements. Whilst the review of funding streams may result in change in the profile of organisations benefiting from funding, implementation of the new arrangements will not directly impose any new costs on those benefiting from the rural delivery arrangements. There is, therefore, no question of some groups benefiting while others having new costs imposed.
3. Options

**Option 1: Do nothing**

35. Work on rural policy and delivery would continue but with no coherent strategy and inadequate structures for prioritising and co-ordinating Government activity in rural areas. Action would therefore be unco-ordinated and less likely to achieve the vision of sustainable rural communities set out compellingly in the 2000 Rural White Paper. New areas of work, such as implementing the reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy, are introducing additional pressures and it is the more important to have clarity of role and to remove duplication. Doing nothing would contradict the desire to establish a new policy framework, and the recommendations of the Rural White Paper review, which suggested such a strategy was necessary.

36. As for our delivery mechanisms, the Government has already indicated that there will be change. Doing nothing is not an option. The Rural Delivery Review established the need to urgently modernise rural delivery arrangements to be fit for purpose and adaptable to respond to future challenges, while providing better value for money and a better experience for our customers. The Government has already announced that:

- it finds the analysis of the Rural Delivery Review compelling;
- it would undertake a review of rural funding streams;
- it sees the need for a smaller more focused Countryside Agency; and
- that a new Integrated Agency for land management should be established as an executive Non-Departmental Public Body.

37. Change has therefore already been signaled. Change has also been signaled more generally across government, with a greater drive for devolution of decision-making and delivery - principles that are core to Modernising Rural Delivery.

**Option 2: Develop and implement Rural Strategy with delivery partners**

38. The Strategy will integrate a variety of current Government activities in rural areas and guide policy development for the future. It provides the policy framework, the tools and the evidence base to help all Government Departments, regional and local partners work together in a collaborative way over the next 3 to 5 years to deliver more sustainable rural communities and an enhanced and enriched countryside. The Strategy itself will not introduce any new regulation or legislative burdens (indeed it may reduce them for certain land based businesses), but some of the organisational changes will require primary legislation if we are to fully deliver the overall benefits resulting from the Modernising Rural Delivery Programme. The Strategy will also help to provide a cohesive framework for activities that are already in place or will be undertaken.
under the three priorities.

**Economic and Social Regeneration**

*Sustaining prosperity*

39. On **skills**, Defra is taking forward with partners, including the Small Business Service, Regional Development Agencies, Sector Skills Councils and the Learning and Skills Council, a series of actions under the Learning, Skills and Knowledge Programme intended to help businesses in rural areas improve their performance through increased take-up of learning opportunities. The new initiatives focus on three key goals:

- making the supply of learning provision consistently relevant to rural business requirements and improving its delivery;
- driving up demand for learning;
- putting in place the learning measures needed to deliver the Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food.

40. On **business support**, Defra is working in particular with the DTI, the Small Business Service, Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and Business Links to improve the business advisory service available to business in rural areas.

41. The Government’s aim is that small businesses, social as well as commercial enterprises - from someone wanting to expand the local community shop to a farmer wanting to diversify and expand the farm business – will have advice that is relevant to them and to the area in which they work and live, and that such advice should be simple and easy to access. As well as providing extra investment this year (see paragraph 44), Defra is working with the Small Business Service and partners to develop a pathfinder project for 2005 that will join-up access to a wide range of publicly funded services, such as tax advice, skills training, and national, regional and local funding schemes.

42. For its part, Defra is professionalising and simplifying the information services which it provides on the services and grants it makes available. This improved information service will bring together the services available from all Defra agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies, into a simple to navigate and understand web-based reference guide. It will be available both to Business Links, to help sign-post customers or applicants to the most appropriate source of business or technical help, and direct to all members of the public. The Government’s intention is that information about the changes to Defra’s business support and funding will be available through a single, user-friendly portal from 1 April 2005 (also accessible through [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)), and that the reference guide will be developed rapidly thereafter to provide a comprehensive service.
On broadband, the Government will ensure that the full potential of broadband for delivering public services and increasing the productivity of businesses can be realised in rural areas. This work is being led by the joint Defra/DTI Rural Broadband Unit working closely with the RDAs and others. Priorities include:

- making best use of public funding to ensure that by 2006 all primary and secondary schools, and all GP surgeries, hospitals, primary care trusts and health authorities, are connected to broadband, gaining the widest possible public benefit for rural areas from this public investment; and
- working closely with rural stakeholders to promote the social and economic benefits of gaining access to and take-up of broadband for rural communities.

**Tackling Areas with economic and social disadvantage**

This year Defra is putting an additional £2million into the Business Link network to increase their delivery capacity, which should improve support for economically lagging rural areas.

Social enterprise - businesses where the surplus is reinvested for primarily social purposes in the business or the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profits for shareholders and owners – has an important contribution to make in rural areas. We are working with the social enterprise sector and other partners to identify more precisely how this potential can be used to the full, particularly in economically lagging rural areas, and what Government can do to facilitate that.

The RDAs have responsibility for economic regeneration across England, in both urban and rural areas. The Countryside Agency has had the powers to carry out measures to further social and economic development in rural areas. But Lord Haskins found in his Rural Delivery Review that overlapping responsibilities and accountability can weaken the link with the customer, make it more difficult to hold delivery organisations to account and introduce inefficiencies.

The Government has decided to build on the RDAs’ existing responsibility for economic regeneration and sustainable development across England, in both urban and rural areas. It will devolve regional decision-making on the delivery of economic and social regeneration policies to RDAs, working in close partnership with local authorities and others. It will expect the RDAs to ensure that the needs of rural people identified through regional prioritisation work are addressed in regional-level strategies and delivery plans, in active partnership with local government and other partners at the regional and sub-regional level, within an overall sustainable development framework; this will provide greater flexibility in how our funding is used to address disadvantage. As part of new tasking
arrangements for RDAs, it will hold the RDAs accountable for delivery of its PSA targets on rural productivity and services within a clear sustainable development context. Specific new elements of this devolved approach include the following:

- Defra’s PSA1 – to promote sustainable development across government and the country as a whole as measured by achieving a positive trend in the Government’s headline indicators of sustainable development - will be a key target for RDAs. This reflects the centrality of sustainable development to RDA activity, in line with their statutory duty to contribute towards securing sustainable development;

- Defra and the RDAs have also agreed that as part of the RDA Tasking Framework:

  all RDAs will ensure that action on regional productivity also supports Defra’s PSA target to reduce the gap in productivity between the least well performing quartile of rural areas and the median. Improving productivity is also a key factor in achieving the outcomes of the national Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food, both within and beyond rural communities, and RDAs should ensure their work in the regions contributes to delivering a customer-focused, competitive and sustainable farming and food industry, in line with Defra’s PSA target. In addition, RDAs will contribute to securing Defra’s target to improve the accessibility of services for rural people.

  Defra will be negotiating region-specific outcome measures to deliver against this and that support each region’s Regional Economic Strategy;

- to provide the necessary flexibility to allow funding to be allocated by RDAs to those communities and people within each region that most need it, Defra will, from 1 April 2005, streamline existing funding streams aimed at socio-economic interventions in rural areas into a single Rural Regeneration Funding Programme to be devolved to the RDAs and distributed through their Single Pot;

- Defra will also streamline schemes to help make the farming and food industries more sustainable, competitive and customer-focused - simplifying the number of rules and restrictions and thereby making things simpler for the customer;

- to ensure freedom and flexibility to address local need, Defra will set broad outcomes required from the Rural Regeneration and Agriculture and Food Industry Funding Programmes, and regional and local delivery organisations will be empowered with the authority to decide how best to use the funding. No longer will the rules be set by Whitehall, remote from rural areas. In future, Defra will concentrate on setting the strategy, agreeing the delivery framework, and holding deliverers to account. Scheme design will be done by those who have to deliver through the schemes, and be held to account for their delivery. Applicants will no longer have to fight their way through an array of schemes each with their
own rules and application procedures.

48. To ensure that decisions on rural requirements and funding are taken in a joined-up manner, including with spatial and other regional strategies, but reflect the particular regional circumstances, the Government is empowering the Government Offices to broker and bring forward proposals for arrangements for the regional level that meet its policy principles. Key to these new arrangements will be the adoption of mechanisms to provide the 'Rural Priorities Board' prioritisation function envisaged by Lord Haskins; and the strengthening of the Regional Rural Affairs Forums to provide a voice into the regional decision-making process from the customer perspective – for example on the quality of support provided to rural businesses. Also important will be the engagement of key delivery partners such as local authorities in the regional decision-making process. And – in order to provide streamlining and free up time for getting on with delivery - the processes put in place should build on existing mechanisms, and build on good practice in relationship-building and partnership ways of working.

49. The Government will also be looking at building on the best mechanisms to devolve delivery even closer to rural communities, and ensuring that all those organisations – governmental, local authority and non-governmental – operate to best effect in partnership. In addition to tasking and financing RDAs, it will also through the leadership role provided by the Government Offices be investigating the scope for innovative joint ventures and ways of working at sub-regional and local level:

- Defra will support the consideration of the application of Local Area Agreements by carrying out a number of pathfinders during 2004/5, aimed at testing mechanisms at sub-regional level to deal with social and environmental issues in lagging rural areas;

- this piloting will be used to tease out the issues around non-competitive partnership working, with the aim of embedding and extending the application of the ‘lead delivery agent’ concept – where a number of partners agree on which of their number is best placed to deal with particular problems or sets of customers, on all their behalf.

50. The Government has also decided to create from the Countryside Agency a small and re-focused organisation to provide strong and impartial advice to Government. This will be a new and distinctive role, building on the successes of the Countryside Agency and the Rural Advocate in rural proofing and challenging Government. The new organisation, unfettered by delivery functions, will become the watchdog and advocate for rural communities and people. Its priority will be to look at rural disadvantage. But its remit will also need to fit within the sustainable development umbrella, to ensure that in championing people, the relationship between people, their communities and their environment is enhanced not weakened.
Social Justice for all

51. Securing fair access to public services and affordable housing is a major challenge. The outcome should be accessible and good quality public services that meet the needs of a majority of rural residents; and better targeting that meets the particular needs of those with limited mobility and low incomes.

52. On public services, among the actions that the Government will take are to:

- continue to improve the ‘rural proofing’ of policies and programmes of government departments and others;
- work with Government Offices and the Local Government Association to help local authorities develop Public Service Agreements that benefit rural communities and support the delivery of sustainable development;
- work with those responsible for performance management of public services – the Audit Commission, the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection etc – to ensure that the needs of rural people are considered appropriately;
- task RDAs to work with Local Authorities and other regional, sub-regional and local partners to contribute to securing Defra’s target to improve access to services; and
- support development of social enterprise as a regeneration tool in disadvantaged areas, and as a means of sustaining services in more prosperous areas for which the commercial market is weak.

53. As part of considering the future for the Countryside Agency, Defra has reviewed its social and community programmes and decided to bring them together into a single funding programme to allow greater scope to respond to particular local needs. It expects Rural Community Councils to play an important part in these future programmes, which it plans to run through Government Offices for the Regions.

Enhancing the Value of our Countryside

54. Our strategy is twofold. First, to continue to take action to protect and enhance the rural and urban environments. Second, to enhance the value and natural beauty of the countryside for rural communities and for the benefit of society in general – through making the countryside more accessible to all and promoting sustainable tourism, to contribute to the economic and social well-being of the nation.

55. To meet these twin, mutually reinforcing objectives, the Government will establish an Integrated Agency comprising all of English Nature, the access and landscape elements of the Countryside Agency, and the functions of the Rural Development Service focused on improving environmental land management,
including through the disbursement of EU grants. The benefits of an Integrated Agency will include:

- a stronger unified voice at regional and local level, so that the conservation aspects of decisions are considered at the very earliest stages of decision-making and natural resource protection and sustainable land management issues are reflected in broader regional strategies and frameworks;
- a stronger, more coherent evidence-base for informing policy and influencing land managers;
- increased opportunities for everyone to understand, enjoy and benefit from the natural environment, in parallel with the implementation of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act;
- better sustainable management of the environment at the landscape-scale, moving away from a silo-based approach to a more flexible, integrated, sustainable approach to management of the natural environment, and improvement in the long-term health and functionality of natural systems on land and sea;
- coherent promotion of the wider social benefits of the environment across rural, urban, urban fringe and coastal areas, for example, through developing links to education, health, community development and the combating of crime and anti-social behaviour;
- better opportunities to promote and exploit the part that a high quality environment plays in delivering social and environmental benefits e.g. tourism, resource productivity and inward investment;
- more effective and simpler relationships with land managers, through the development of a single ‘shop window’ for customers for environmental schemes and advice;
- efficiency savings through shared corporate services and operational synergies.

56. Formal creation of the Integrated Agency as a statutory Non-Departmental Public Body will require primary legislation. The Government intends to bring forward legislation as soon as practicable and to publish a draft bill as an early step. This will be the subject of a further Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA). In the meantime, to maintain momentum towards the full Integrated Agency, the constituent parts will, on 1 April 2005, come together to create a purposeful and determined confederation of partners working jointly under a common overarching vision and purpose, but with each body responsible for fulfilling its own statutory duties within that partnership.

57. This formative period of the closest partnership working will, as well as bringing delivery benefits, allow the Government to test ideas for the statutory functions and powers required in the draft bill, to see if it might need to add to
existing powers, in order better to preserve and open up the natural heritage. Subject to parliamentary time and other considerations, the Government would look formally to vest the Integrated Agency by the beginning of 2007, to coincide with the introduction of the new EU Rural Development Regulation.

58. The Government will also bring together into a streamlined programme the funding schemes used to protect and enhance the countryside, woods and forests. The creation of the Integrated Agency, providing a strong partnership with the Forestry Commission, English Heritage and the Environment Agency, will allow this ‘natural resources’ funding programme to be used in a flexible and coordinated way to deliver outcomes on the ground, by all delivery bodies.

59. Further to this other actions will include:

- opening up access to mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land region-by-region, between September 2004 and the end of 2005;
- encouraging owners to dedicate other land for public access, including the dedication of the Forestry Commission freehold estate;
- integrating rights of way improvement plans into local transport plans in 2005; and
- promoting, through the Countryside Agency and then within the new Integrated Agency, a new Countryside Code, to make people more confident about how to behave in the countryside and themselves become guardians of the natural heritage.

4. Benefits

**Option 1 - Do nothing**

60. There are potential benefits associated with saving Government expenditure required to develop and implement the Strategy. There would be the avoidance of investment costs of changes in the numbers of staff, relocation, IT, any changes in terms and conditions, developing new ways of working and identity for the new organisations and staff training. However, existing delivery bodies would continue delivering in rural areas in current, non-integrated ways, with overlapping roles creating potential confusion and duplication. The wider benefits set out under option 2 below and the mitigation of the risks set out in section 2 above would be lost. And the opportunity to devolve decision-making and delivery closer to the customer would be lost.

**Option 2: Implement new delivery arrangements**

61. The Strategy will enable Government to take a strategic and targeted approach to its work in rural areas. It will help embed sustainable development at
all levels of decision-making and delivery in relation to rural England. There are benefits of the Strategy in terms of economic, social and environmental aspects. Within the overall aim of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development, the specific benefits that the programme will bring are as follows:

**Economic benefits**

62. Specific economic benefits include:

- the Strategy aims to benefit the regional and local economies through facilitating an increase in the quality of the delivery of services in rural areas. It should also benefit businesses through increasing the quality and co-ordination of services they are offered, and targeting economic interventions where they will have most impact taking account of local priorities;

- by targeting resources more effectively at economically lagging areas, and through aligning mainstream policies and programmes to help improve productivity in these areas, lagging rural areas will benefit, and make an increased economic contribution to regional and national economies. This will benefit these areas as well as reducing associated deprivation and social exclusion for individuals and communities;

- rural businessmen and women, including farmers and land managers, will benefit economically. In particular:
  - businesses seeking funding or advice will be helped through to sources of advice and assistance more quickly;
  - applicants will spend less time filling in forms;
  - they will be able to build better working relations with a smaller number of delivery organisations;
  - better targeting of social deprivation - in line with the Rural Strategy - means that funding will be weighted towards areas and people in need; and
  - an improved customer interface offering better information and advice should lead to fewer applications from ineligible candidates.

63. The programme will therefore, while not altering specific regulations, reduce the burdens on businesses.

64. Taxpayers will benefit from:

- spending decisions being taken locally where they are more likely to deliver the right outcome and people can really see the difference;
• more efficient delivery bodies, with streamlined processes and better partnership ways of working, making better use of accommodation and shared support services; and

• expert challenge to Government to help identify when spending is not achieving the outcomes sought from it.

Social benefits

65. A priority for delivery will be building community activity and capacity in rural areas which will help rural communities identify their needs and shape their future development.

66. The Government will, through its community capacity building programme, help enable everyone to play an active and full part in society by providing support for local volunteering, social capital, community action and voluntary sector provision of services in rural areas throughout England. And public, private and voluntary sector innovation will be fostered, to develop means of delivering cost effective services in rural areas. The Strategy also aims to increase the opportunities to tackle anti-social behaviour and the needs of children and young people, including through partnership working to develop links between work to enhance the natural environment and combating crime and anti-social behaviour.

67. People living in the countryside will benefit from:

• decisions being taken by government being more relevant because they are taken closer to the ground;

• support being better targeted, based on robust evidence and analysis of where it is needed most, and made easier for all to access, not just those who know how to play the system. This will improve the equity and fairness of the delivery arrangements;

• there being a strong expert body in the form of the New Countryside Agency focusing exclusively on them, especially those suffering disadvantage;

• establishment of the Integrated Agency, allowing work on access and recreation to be better integrated with that on biodiversity, natural resource protection and landscape, helping to encourage and remove barriers to physical use and enjoyment of the countryside.

68. People enjoying the countryside will benefit from a single, coordinated approach to conserving and enhancing the resource of nature and realising the social and economic benefits for people of so doing.
Environmental benefits

69. A more co-ordinated approach to protecting the natural environment will support the improvement of nature conservation, biodiversity, landscape, access and recreation, for the benefit of this and future generations.

70. The creation of an Integrated Agency bringing together elements of the Countryside Agency, English Nature and the Rural Development Service will accelerate integration of work on integrated resource management, nature conservation, biodiversity, access and recreation and landscape issues to improve the environment across rural, urban and coastal England. Biodiversity and conservation issues will also be better integrated into wider rural policy at regional and local levels.

71. The creation of the Integrated Agency, and alignment with other delivery bodies such as the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission, will also:

- provide a greater range of levers (funding, advice, regulation, persuasion) to deliver the desired outcomes;
- provide a stronger voice in regional and local decision making to ensure that the conservation aspects of decisions are considered at the very earliest stages of decision-making, and natural resource protection and sustainable land management issues are reflected in broader regional strategies and frameworks;

72. Furthermore, there is convergence between the urban and rural economies: though agriculture is still at the core of the rural economy and society, employment in agriculture has decreased by 30% (151,000) in the last 20 years, and employees in rural businesses are now more likely to be in manufacturing (25%), tourism (9%) or retailing (7%) than in agriculture (6%). The differences between rural and urban are becoming blurred, there is net migration to rural areas from urban centres, and demographic shifts are leading to an increasingly ageing rural population. A well developed strategy will help Government implement sustainable policies.

5. Costs for business, charities and voluntary organisations

Option 1- Do Nothing

73. Without this review of rural policy, coupled with modernising the delivery arrangements, the Government risks not being able to achieve its commitments on delivering sustainable development and equitable policy delivery for rural areas. If the economic and social failures in some rural areas are not tackled, there is the potential for greater costs to the Exchequer in the future to tackle these issues. There are also costs associated with the potential degradation of the environment if land management issues are not properly integrated into rural
policy development and if delivery arrangements are not fit for purpose.

74. Furthermore, the existing situation would continue whereby:
   • there are false expectations, confusion and in some cases wasted investment on the part of the customer;
   • the nature of schemes raises serious questions about their ability to target need effectively; and
   • schemes are not sufficiently targeted at those in greatest need and are not designed to be easily accessible to those groups.

Option 2 – Develop and implement rural strategy working with delivery partners

75. The Strategy itself does not directly prescribe any additional costs or changes to the current regulatory position. Therefore, the Strategy should not impose any costs to the consumer or businesses in terms of policy and implementation. On the contrary, it should reduce them through simpler access to services and better co-ordination of the provision of such services. There will be costs associated with managing the transition to the new delivery arrangements, but the Government also expects there to be savings from more efficient working and better use of assets and resources in Defra and delivery bodies.

Economic costs

76. This programme does not impose additional costs on businesses, charities and voluntary organisations. On the contrary the improved targeting of funding streams should reduce the costs to them of obtaining funding. Whilst there will be new forms to complete for streamlined funding streams, these will be simpler, and better advice will be available to ensure that applicants’ efforts are focused on seeking those funds that they have the best likelihood of obtaining.

77. Government will incur costs associated with implementing the new delivery arrangements such as those identified under the benefits of doing nothing above. These are required in order to achieve expected efficiency savings. The scale of implementation costs and their timing will depend on Ministers’ decisions on the detail of the new delivery arrangements and the availability of funding following the SR04 spending round.

78. The Review of rural funding streams may result in:
   • some current beneficiaries no longer receiving funding when schemes close;
   • the new and improved rural definition enabling better targeting of programmes, which might therefore mean funding being targeted at different areas within regions;
Environmental and social costs

79. We have not identified any additional environmental costs or social costs for rural communities associated with the Strategy.

6. Consultation with small business: the Small Firms' Impact Test

80. It is not intended that the Strategy will impose any direct costs or regulatory burdens on small businesses; rather it should reduce costs and burdens.

81. Rural businesses are characterised by having broadly the same mix of sectors as England as a whole, but have higher levels of self-employment and are typically smaller than their urban counterparts. 85% of rural businesses are micro-businesses (with less than 10 employees). Advice from support agencies can be particularly beneficial for small firms but accessibility issues may make this difficult in rural areas. Research has helped to inform rural policy and there is now greater understanding of the issues facing rural small businesses.

82. Under the aim to tackle social and economic failure, the Strategy aims to strengthen economic instruments to deliver more coherent delivery of business advice and support to reduce the regulatory burden on small businesses. The Strategy is also likely to have positive impacts on businesses through activities to improve the accessibility and quality of services (e.g. transport and broadband) in rural areas.

83. We have not identified any direct costs on small businesses as a result of the MRD programme. Instead the programme, as indicated above, should help small businesses, for example by rationalising funding streams and making it easier to obtain advice on the range of funding available and what is most appropriate for an individual business.

84. As part of the review of Defra's rural funding streams, we have been in direct discussion with representatives of small businesses on the accessibility and administration of funding streams, including what works, what does not and where things can be improved. This has included Regional Rural Affairs Forums and associations representing rural businesses.

85. Defra have met the Small Business Service to discuss issues relating to the programme and they have indicated that they are broadly content. We have also received generally supportive letters or views from other organisations such as the Small Business Council, the Country Land and Business Association and the National Farmers' Union.

7. Competition assessment

86. The Strategy will not be introducing any specific measures to improve
competitiveness, although as outlined above it should lead to potential benefits for all businesses operating in rural areas. This will enable them to compete more effectively within regional, national and international markets as appropriate. This Strategy effectively covers all forms of businesses in rural areas and its implications will be similar for all business types.

87. The Strategy will not directly affect any of the potential main impacts on competition identified in the Office of Fair Trading's Guidelines for Competition Assessment, neither materially affecting supply or demand, specifying market outcomes nor impacting the competitive process.

88. No individual firm identified in the markets impacted has a degree of market power, there are no direct additional costs of regulation as a result of the programme, the programme is unlikely to affect market structures materially, costs will not be higher for new or potential firms than for existing firms, the market affected is not characterised by unusually rapid technological change and the programme will not affect the ability of firms to choose the price, quality, range or location of their products.

8. Enforcement and Sanctions

89. Implementation of the Strategy will not directly impose new enforcement requirements and sanctions. The Strategy will have no direct legislative impact on stakeholders or the public therefore the issue of sanctions is unlikely to arise.

90. The Rural Delivery Review also covered the Whole Farm Approach, the potential role of local authorities in co-ordinating advice and regulation, Defra's inspection functions and the rationalisation of levy boards. Whilst the Government will provide a response to these recommendations along with responses to the other recommendations of the review, they will be addressed as appropriate as part of other programmes and will therefore have separate Regulatory Impact Assessments where necessary.

9. Monitoring and review

91. The approach taken to evaluating rural policy contains a number of distinct work streams to reflect the variety of different policy tools that constitute policy in rural areas:

- statistical development to establish a baseline and to monitor over time a range of indicators for key policies which will then feed into their respective evaluations. The Rural Evidence Hub will act as a repository of this statistical data;
- progress in achieving rural policy outcomes will be monitored by a basket of indicators, identified in the Rural White Paper and which will be reviewed by the Rural Evidence Research Centre;
• progress in achieving Defra’s Rural PSA will be monitored by a proxy headline productivity measure and a suite of indicators, drawing on HM Treasury’s five drivers;

• Defra will work with other Government Departments and Agencies in the programme-based evaluation of their policies to ensure that full account is taken of rural impacts. The large number of policies affecting rural areas means that resources will be focussed on those areas where policy is likely to have had the greatest impact;

• an England-wide study of the knowledge, take-up and attitudes to local services by both individual residents and business managers will be repeated, following its initial run earlier this year. It will compare rural areas not close to services with more accessible rural areas and with urban areas;

• a longitudinal study (a survey following a cohort of individuals through time, such as the ongoing British Household Panel Survey) may be used to further our understanding of the socio-economic effects of policy on households in rural England. Alternatively, case studies based around a small number of rural communities may be another way of providing depth to our analysis. These possibilities are subject to a scoping exercise currently being undertaken by the Rural Evidence Research Centre; and

• an overarching rural policy evaluation will bring together the information and analysis collected in the six phases of the evaluation outlined above.

92. The overarching rural policy evaluation will act as the first full evaluation of the Rural Strategy as well as an assessment of rural policy since the publication of the Rural White Paper in 2001.

93. We will also work with delivery organisations to develop a plan for managing risks associated with the implementation of the Modernising Rural Delivery Programme and ensuring that the full benefits from it are realised, with swift corrective action being taken where necessary. Actions under separate themes will be linked to outcome monitoring and will contribute to achievement of Defra PSA targets, with appropriate monitoring and review.

10. Consultation

94. The Rural Strategy builds on the conclusions from several key rural reviews conducted in the recent past. These include the Review of the Rural White Paper and Lord Haskins’ Review of Rural Delivery. Details of those consulted for both of those reviews are therefore included here, as well as information about those who have been involved in the development of the Strategy document itself and in the Modernising Rural Delivery Programme.

A full list of those consulted on Lord Haskins’ Review of Rural Delivery (which involved both a full formal public consultation exercise and extensive informal consultation with affected people and organisations) is at Annex 2.

i) Within Government

96. Defra has directly involved a number of governmental stakeholders in the work of the Modernising Rural Delivery Programme in a partnership approach. A list of those organisations involved in different workstreams of the programme is at Annex 3. The work of the programme has also been guided by a Programme Board on which principal stakeholders have been represented. These have also input more generally into the Strategy.

97. Defra has also been discussing with Trade Unions the aspects of the modernisation programme that affect staff.

98. In addition Defra has discussed its work with other Government Departments and administrations, including:

- The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister;
- Department of Trade and Industry, and Small Business Service;
- The Home Office;
- Department for Work and Pensions;
- Department of Transport;
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport;
- HM Treasury;
- The Ministry of Defence;
- Scottish Executive;
- National Assembly for Wales.

ii) Public Consultation

99. In developing the Strategy, Defra has held informal discussions with, and had representations from, a number of non-Government organizations. The Department also wrote to interested organisations seeking their views on where funding schemes are overcomplicated, contradictory or over-lapping and seeking ideas for improvement.

100. We have had regard to all of the representations received.
11. Summary and recommendation

101. Defra recommends Option 2, the implementation of the Strategy including new delivery arrangements. A more integrated policy approach is needed with clear objectives and priorities for the future, coupled with a modernised delivery landscape that sees the devolution of decisions and delivery functions closer to the customer. The framework will set the context for rural delivery arrangements and help to achieve:

- better delivery of policy outcomes;
- better targeting of need;
- better accountability and clarity of roles;
- better value for money;
- a better experience for customers;
- better adaptability to respond to policy change and future challenges.

102. This is required in order to achieve the full benefits outlined in this Regulatory Impact Assessment.

12. Declaration

103. I have read the regulatory impact assessment and I am satisfied that the benefits justify the costs.

Signed .......................................

[this remains blank until the legislation is to be sent to Parliament, it then becomes a Final RIA]

Date

Margaret Beckett
Secretary of State
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Contact points

Rural Strategy 2004
Robin Mortimer
Head of RES Division, Defra
Room 207
Ergon House
London SW1
020 7238 6444

Modernising Rural Delivery
Andrew Robinson
Head of Modernising Rural Delivery Division, Defra
Room 302
Ergon House
London SW1
020 7238 4908
# Annex 1: List of those consulted for the Rural White Paper Review

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<td>ACRE</td>
<td>Forum for Rural Children and Young People</td>
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<td>Friends of the Lake District</td>
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<td>Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Northern Ireland</td>
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Annex 2: List of those consulted for Lord Haskins’ Review of Rural Delivery

Action for the Communities of Rural England (ACRE)
ADAS
Age Concern England
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Cotswolds, Dorset, Forest of Bowland, Lincolnshire Wolds, Norfolk Coast, North Devon, Solway, Surrey Hills, Wye Valley
Arthur Rank Centre
Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Association of Local Authority Risk Managers
Association of National Park Authorities
Audit Commission
Better Regulation Task Force (Cabinet Office)
Biodiversity Action Group, Nottinghamshire
Bishop of Blackburn
Borough Councils: Bracknell Forest, Northampton, Scarborough
Bridgnorth Voluntary Action, Shropshire
British Association for Shooting and Conservation
British Canoe Union (England)
British Institute of Agricultural Consultants
British Veterinary Society
British Waterways
Business Link: East Midlands, North West, South West, West Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber
Cabinet Office
Campaign for the Protection of Rural England
Campaign for the Protection of Rural England/North Yorkshire (North York Moors Association)
Carmarthenshire Fishermen’s Federation
Central Local Partnership
Chamber of Commerce: Cumbria, Megavissey
Cheshire Federation of Women’s Institutes
Cheshire Rural Recovery Panel
Citizen Link, Yorkshire and the Humber
Citizens Advice
Clark Scott Harden, North East
Community Action Hampshire
Community Council of Sropshire
Council for British Archaeology
Council for National Parks
Council for the Protection of Rural England
Country Land and Business Association: National, East Midlands, North West, South West, West Midlands
Countryside Agency: National, East Midlands, North East, North West, South West, West Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber
Countryside Alliance
County Council’s Network
Coventry, Warwick and Solihull Partnership, West Midlands
Cumbria Rural Regeneration Company
Cumbria Strategic Partnership
Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Countryside Project
Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department of Trade and Industry
Department for Transport
Departmental Trade Union Side
Devon and Cornwall Business Council
Devon Farms Accommodation
Diocese of Oxford Board for Social Responsibility Rural Issues Group
District Councils: East Cambridgeshire, Hambleton, Harborough, Harrogate, Horsham, North Wiltshire, South Lakeland, West Oxfordshire, Dorset Community Action, East Midland Rural Action Group
England Rural Development Programme (Ministerial Group)
England’s Community Forests
English Heritage
English Nature: National, East Midlands, South West, North West
English Tourism Council (now VisitBritain)
Environment Agency: National, East Midlands, South West, North West
Family Farmers’ Association
Farmcare/The Cooperative Group
Farm Consultancy Group
Farm Ideas
Farm Management Consultants
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
Federation of Small Businesses
Focus on Farming Practice
Food and Drink Federation
Food from Britain
Food Standards Agency
Forestry and Timber Association
Forestry Commission (England): National, East Midlands, North West, South West, South East
Friends of the Lake District
Giles Dadd Associates (on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce/Business Link): Herefordshire, Worcestershire
Gloucestershire First
Gloucestershire Rural Issues Task Force
Government Offices: East of England, East Midlands, North East, North West, South East, South West, West Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber
Greenwood Community Forest, East Midlands
Groundwork UK
Groundwork Trust, East Midlands
Harper Adams University College, Shropshire
Heartswood Ltd (Small Woods Association)
Heritage Lottery Fund
Her Majesty’s Treasury
Home Grown Cereals Authority
Home Office (Active Communities Unit)
Independent woodland consultants (2), South East
Inland Waterways Advisory and Amenity Council
Institute of Historic Building Conservation
Institute of Horticulture
Integrated Countryside and Environment Plan, Merseyside
Isle of Wight Economic Partnership
Lancashire Rural Futures
LEADER + Local Action Group, South West
Learning and Skills Council, West Midlands
Leicestershire Rural Partnership, East Midlands
Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF)
Local Authority Co-ordinating Body on Regulatory Services
Local Government Association: National, West Midlands
Local Government Associations (Rural Commission)
Local Records Centre
Lyons Review (Treasury)
Meat and Livestock Commission
Meat South West
Metropolitan Borough Council, Calderdale
Midlands Rural Housing, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, Peak District
MORI
MTI project manager, North West
Myerscough College, Lancashire
National Audit Office
National Park Local Authorities Members and Officers Group, East Sussex, Hampshire, West Sussex
National Council for Voluntary Organisations
National Council on Ageing, Rural Sub-group
National Farmers’ Union: National, East Midlands, South West, North West
National Federation of Women’s Institutes
National Forest Company
National Forum for the Development of Rural Youth Work
National Park Authorities: Dartmoor, Exmoor, Lake District, North York Moors, Northumberland, Peak District, Yorkshire Dales
National Sheep Federation
National Trust
National Village Halls Forum
Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)
Norfolk Rural Economy Board, Easton College, Norfolk
North Yorkshire Partnership Unit, North Yorkshire
Northamptonshire Rural Housing Association
Northamptonshire Strategic Sub-Regional Partnership, East Midlands
Northern Counties Housing Association Ltd: Manchester, South Yorkshire, North Derbyshire, Cheshire, Lancashire, West Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Cumbria
Northumberland Strategic Partnership
Northumbrian Water
Office of Public Services Reform (Prime Minister’s Office)
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils
Oxfordshire Woodland Project
Parish Councils: Brent Pelham and Meesden, Buckland, Gwinear Gwithian, Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common, Ivinghoe, Sonning, Stillington, Upton St Leonards
Post Office Ltd: National, Yorkshire and the Humber
Postwatch
Pricewaterhouse Coopers
Prime Minister’s Office
Ramblers’ Association
Regional Assemblies: East Midlands, North East, North West, South West, Yorkshire and the Humber
Regional Co-ordination Unit (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)
Regional Development Agencies: East Midlands, East of England, North East, North West, South East, South West, Yorkshire and the Humber, West Midlands
Regional Development Agencies’ Co-ordination Unit
Regulatory Impact Unit, Cabinet Office
Sir Richard Packer, Ex-Permanent Secretary, MAFF
Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers
Royal Mail Group plc
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Rural Action Zone, Lincolnshire
Rural Affairs Forum: East Midlands, North East, South East, South West
Rural Affairs Forum for England
Rural Community Councils: Durham, Gloucestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire, South East, Wiltshire
Rural Development Service: National, East Midlands, East of England, North East, North West, South East, South West, Yorkshire and the Humber, West Midlands
Rural Health and Wellbeing Network, Oxfordshire
Rural Horizons
Rural Payments Agency
Rural Stress Information Network
Sustainable Farming and Food Implementation Group
Shadow Chilterns Conservation Board
Sherwood Forest Trust, Nottinghamshire
Shropshire Chamber of Agriculture
Shropshire Partnership
Small Business Service: National, East Midlands, North West
Small Woods Association
Somerset Agricultural Advisory Service
South East Tourist Board
South West ACRE Network
South West Chamber of Rural Enterprise
South West Forest
South West Horticulture 2000 (now CHE Ltd): Devon, Cornwall, Isles of Scilly
South West Protected Landscapes Forum
Sport England
Sustainable Development Commission
Tenant Farmers’ Association
Tesco
The Broads Authority
The Central Council of Physical Recreation
The Consultant Connection
The Inland Waterways Association
The Landscape Institute
The Mersey Forest Project
The National Community Forest Partnership
The National Youth Agency
The North Allerdale Partnership, Cumbria
The Open Spaces Society
The Otter and Wilderness Trust
The Rural Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Partnership
The Tees Forest, Middlesborough
The Woodland Trust
Town Councils: Morpeth, Redruth, Sandy
Transport and General Workers Union
Unilever Ice Cream and Frozen Food Ltd
Village Retail Services Association (ViRSA)
Voluntary Action Cumbria
Walford and North Shropshire College
Wessex Woodland Management, South East
West Devon Environmental Network
Western Morning News: Devon, Cornwall, West Somerset, West Dorset
Wildlife and Countryside Link
Wildlife Trusts: Herefordshire, Northumbria, Nottinghamshire, Sussex
Wycycle, Kent
York and North Yorkshire Partnership unit
Youth Hostel Associations

Visits/Meetings outside England
European Commission, Brussels
Ministry of Agriculture, France
National Centre for the Improvement of Farm Structures, France
National Federation of Farmers’ Unions, France
Prime Minister’s Agriculture Adviser, France
Altomunster Community Government, Germany
Bavarian Rural Development Service, Germany
Bavarian State Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Germany
Brandenburg Lander, Germany
British Embassy, Germany
Federal Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture Ministry, Germany
Federal Government, Germany
Borders Enterprise, Scotland
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Scotland
Forestry Commission (Scotland)
Scottish Natural Heritage
Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department
Countryside Council for Wales
Welsh Assembly Government
Welsh Development Agency
## Annex 3: Key Organisations involved in the Modernising Rural Delivery Review Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workstream</th>
<th>Key Organisations involved</th>
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<td>Countryside Agency and Rural Affairs Forum</td>
<td>Defra, Countryside Agency, Rural Affairs Forum representatives</td>
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