



Rural Proofing Review

4 April 2008



RURAL PROOFING REVIEW
COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

A report submitted by GHK

Date: 04/04/08

526 Fulham Road, London SW6 5NR
Tel: 020 7471 8000; Fax: 020 7736 0784
www.ghkint.com

Document Control

<i>Document</i>	<i>Rural Proofing Review</i>
<i>Job No.</i>	<i>J4767</i>
<i>Prepared by</i>	<i>Shane Beadle</i>
<i>Checked by</i>	<i>Phil Bernard-Carter</i>
<i>Date</i>	<i>4 April 2008</i>

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	5
2	APPROACH AND METHOD.....	6
3	FINDINGS.....	8
3.1	Familiarity with and use of the information, advice and guidance on rural proofing.....	8
3.2	Barriers to rural proofing.....	9
3.3	Overcoming barriers.....	10
3.4	Key points.....	13
4	WAY FORWARD.....	15
4.1	Some conclusions.....	15
4.2	How does this fit with general understanding about what might influence behaviour in these circumstances?.....	16
4.3	What does this suggest for CRC action?.....	17
4.4	Recommendations.....	18
	ANNEX 1 LINES OF ENQUIRY.....	19
	ANNEX 2 SCHEDULE OF DISCUSSIONS AND INTERVIEWS.....	23

1 INTRODUCTION

With the publication of the Commission for Rural Communities' (CRC's) Annual Report on Rural Proofing in November 2007, the Commission started a review of rural proofing. It wants to understand better the barriers that are preventing the rural proofing of policy and delivery taking place; how these barriers can be addressed; and how individuals in government departments and other government organisations and agencies can be supported to undertake rural proofing more effectively.

As outcomes of the review, the Commission wants to put in place better support for policy makers so that they can embed rural proofing in their work, ensure they have access to the right tools, and are better recognised for securing positive outcomes for rural communities and businesses.

The Commission invited GHK to facilitate and lead discussions with policy making and delivery staff at all levels of government and with organisations that have a role to play in influencing government's approaches to policy making and delivery; guide other bilateral discussions between Commission staff and staff in Government Offices and rural stakeholder organisations; assess the emerging findings; and provide some conclusions to inform the Commission's activities. At the same time the Commission, has procured a literature review of rural proofing and rural proofing tools.

This element of the review is to see what can be learnt from:

- Other bodies wanting similar influence over the quality of the policy making process: what can be learnt from their experience of information, advice and guidance to the same audience and what opportunities they can offer to address barriers to rural proofing and promote its application;
- The policy makers themselves (at central, regional and local level) and those with a job to improve/standardise the quality of the policy making process: what can be learnt about the potency of the information, advice and guidance which is on offer and the effectiveness of potential alternatives (eg formats, communication methods, new materials);
- Other organisations (third sector and NDGBs) with an interest in ensuring that policy making encompasses rural proofing: what can be learnt from their perspectives on the use of information, advice and guidance and other means to increase policy makers' understanding.

This report contains a brief outline of the method used in chapter 2 to inform the review; the findings from the discussions in chapter 3; and consideration of these with some suggestions about suitable activities for the Commission to better achieve its aims in chapter 4.

2 APPROACH AND METHOD

To facilitate discussions, we:

- Established lines of enquiry for each of the distinctive groups identified for discussions. These are set out in Annex 1;
- Organised and led discussions with 14 individuals and groups in a range of government departments and other bodies. The list of these can be found in Annex 2. Many of these were attended by Commission staff;
- Organised and carried out 10 interviews over the telephone with individuals in local government and other local and regional organisations who are familiar with rural proofing.

We set out to have discussions in most government departments with the Commission's key contact and colleagues with responsibilities for Better Policy Making and/or Professional Skills for Government in the department, as well as some policy leads who have worked on a policy area which required rural proofing.

In the event, discussions were held in 11 departments and these included a mix of staff with responsibility for policy processes and specific policy development. Interviewees were quite open about what they know about rural proofing and what could be of use to policy making and delivery staff which could make a difference. The main gap was not obtaining an interview in the Cabinet Office. We found that in quite a number of cases contacts had moved on and some had not been replaced.

The discussions covered:

- What can be learnt about the value of the current sources of information and guidance about rural proofing and its integration into policy making and delivery activities;
- What appear to be the barriers to rural proofing by policy making and delivery staff;
- What could work to overcome these and ensure a more consistent approach to rural proofing, which could include new approaches and materials.

We also set out to have 10 telephone interviews with local authority and Rural Community Council staff who were familiar with rural proofing. These were achieved. At the same time Commission staff had discussions as part of other regular conversations with staff in X Government Offices and y stakeholders ...

All told therefore, we have information for this review drawn from:

- The discussion at the launch of the Annual Report in November 2007;
- A discussion among the Rural Affairs Forum in the West Midlands;
- 24 interviews and discussions facilitated and led by GHK;
- Y interviews carried out by Commission staff.

In addition we have drawn on interviews with policy making and delivery staff in government in the course of the work we carried out to collect evidence of rural proofing in 2006 and 2007.

3 FINDINGS

In this chapter we draw on the discussions and telephone interviews to assess familiarity with existing information, advice and guidance about rural proofing; draw out the perceived barriers to rural proofing and assess how common they are; and consider the proposals made to improve understanding of rural proofing and embed it in policy makers' work.

3.1 Familiarity with and use of the information, advice and guidance on rural proofing

Policy making and delivery staff in government are generally not familiar with any of the sources of information, advice and guidance (IAG). The most commonly mentioned was the rural proofing checklist, though this was more familiar in local and regional government than in central government. Staff in contact with the Commission are more familiar with some of the other sources, such as Commission and Defra staff, the Annual Reports on rural proofing, Commission research, and the work of particular groups such as the Affordable Housing Commission, but this is not universal. Relatively few are familiar with the rural definition of areas, though in central government interviewees expected that specialist staff would be.

Their use in policy making and delivery is variable.

- Some have used the checklist though many admit to its use only when doing an impact assessment rather than much earlier in the process of 'understanding the situation' and considering evidence of problems and spatial differences;
- Some are not aware of the rural proofing requirement in an impact assessment;
- Few use the rural definition to distinguish data for or about geographic areas in any data analysis;
- Few are aware of the Commission's research on rural disadvantage or the State of the Countryside report which might inform policy makers' consideration of whether rural areas are different or not. However, several were aware of the Rural Advocate's report on rural housing which had lately been in the press.

Users have remarked that:

- They are not tailored to department's specific policy issues; staff are more likely to take notice if they can relate their policy to it;
- The checklist does not link to the policy cycle of thinking; being made aware of it with an impact assessment is 'after the event', not 'during the process'. At this point there is often 'post hoc justification of no rural impacts';
- The checklist and other sources of information about rural proofing are not immediately obtained from their existing hyperlinks;
- There are no longer any CRC staff in the regions to use to get advice or get 'on the ground' feedback. This is a particular issue for regional and local government.

Consequently, few staff have been apprised of rural proofing and what to do to rural proof as a result of the IAG available, while many have learnt of it during a policy development often when it is too late to change anything. 'Ministers have agreed in principle the way forward so it is too late to adjust anything when you do the impact assessment'.

3.2 Barriers to rural proofing

The most obvious barrier is not knowing about or recognising the need for rural proofing even though it is signposted in the Policy Hub and in impact assessments. In few departments do the champions undertake any other sign-posting.

The other obvious barrier is 'spatial blindness'. Some find that understanding a differential spatial effect of a policy is more apparent in some than other policies just as there is patchy understanding of the rural dimensions of a policy. Rural proofing tends to be recognised in some policies more than others though few would use the term rural proofing to describe what they do.

For a few the barrier is that policy making is not a linear step by step process where rural proofing can be applied at specific points especially where impacts cannot be known with a new policy, though they accept that there are common activities in policy making where it could be applied and impacts considered even if not measured.

Some in central government have argued that it is less important where you have a principle that those who have to deliver a policy have local flexibility; for example to assess needs and determine local methods of delivery. As a consequence, several believe that rural proofing is really only required of local delivery agents including local government and primary care trusts, not central government.

This does not match the view of interviewees in regional and local government who believe that this principle does not mean rural proofing can be ignored since it affects policy delivery frameworks and funding. Some of them believe that the 'missing link' is in central government though there is a common view on the ground that it is not sufficiently embedded in local and regional government.

Many admit to not understanding rural proofing as a concept and finding it to be yet another impact to assess. There are reckoned to be 11-12 impacts that now have to be assessed. This is 'a crowded area' seeking policy makers' attention.

Rural proofing is not considered a priority either; it is not mandatory like equalities impact assessments, there is little internal pressure to apply it, nor any sanction if it is not applied. Sanctions work with health and safety and equalities. Several interviewees stated that there is no high level advocacy for rural proofing which can make a difference in getting attention so it has no profile and is 'not a current hot topic' like climate change.

Most acknowledge that IAG is not well disseminated or promoted among policy makers by the few 'champions' that exist and where material is available they suspect it is not often used. Relatively few website hits or enquiries are made. Staff are as likely to seek guidance from colleagues as look for material on websites and intranets.

If policy making staff seek out any IAG at all, most will only look for information and guidance on intranet resources or those on Better Policy Making on the Policy Hub. Some may use standard guidance on evaluation and consultation which is available across government. Few would recognise the Commission's website as a source of information, advice and guidance.

Where there are IAG resources on policy making processes in government departments they do not tend to explicitly encourage thinking about spatial or community differences or link to the Commission's materials. In GOs, RDAs and local authorities tools have been developed to 'rural proof' particular policies and documents because the checklist was 'not fit for purpose'.

Equally, policy making staff generally would not recognise the staff of the Commission or Defra as sources of IAG though we are aware that they both receive some informal enquiries for advice and many policy staff look for stakeholder engagement. Some would welcome more active stakeholder involvement, including informal advice and guidance by the Commission; but some policy makers warn that the 'tone of advocacy' can sometimes be a barrier to such involvement.

3.3 Overcoming barriers

Policy making and delivery staff have made suggestions about information, advice and guidance which could be considered and indicated opportunities that could be used by the Commission. Many have indicated that the first step has to be awareness raising since it is 'off the radar' of so many in government. Staff in some of the other bodies have also been responsive with opportunities to promote rural proofing as well as sharing experience on what information, advice and guidance works.

3.3.1 *To increase awareness of the need to think about rural areas*

Interviewees believe these actions could work:

- Promote the Commission's role and rural issues relevant to a department's policies in departments' intranet news and internal publications; this could be key evidence ('policy makers are influenced by well reasoned evidence' less so by 'strident lobbying'); a good news story, or named sources of advice and help. A focus on 'key issues about rural areas can be as important in promoting rural proofing as a tool or concept';
- Conferences aimed at policy makers when publishing research but targeted at relevant groups within central and local government. These can have a similar effect as news and publications if the policy makers can be stimulated to attend. Bite sized and free sessions are helpful in gaining a target audience;
- Drop the 'proofing' (but not the rural) label and promote rural areas in terms of places with different challenges because of the density of population which recognises the continuum rather than rural versus urban; policy makers may understand geographical inequality better.

And that these are generally thought will not work:

- Annual reports about rural proofing; these are not felt to have any impact;
- High level support 'Ministers matter': this would require ministers in departments and permanent secretaries to 'put their weight behind' it to have any great effect.

This is unlikely to be achievable unless rural is a major concern or it is a clear part of their responsibilities which sustainability is;

- Greater press coverage: this could raise awareness but there are risks that it will stigmatise the Commission as a pressure group so it will not be a recognised source of informal advice. It is also thought that while press coverage can raise awareness of the Commission, it would not stimulate awareness of rural proofing.

3.3.2 To increase understanding of rural proofing

The following have been suggested to increase understanding about the process of rural proofing where it is important to explore the effects and application of policies in rural areas and so test rural impacts and assess these:

- Showing where outcomes have benefited rural areas because of the processes followed; though these would need to be tailored to departmental policy areas to have any impact (success story case studies regularly updated and promoted). These can also highlight skilled practitioners as sources of help (not in CRC but other policy makers) Most interviewees believe that encouragement can work. This would be supported by the IDeA's experience of developing case studies for local government;
- Fitting the process message to the key objectives in high level departmental strategies, such as 'putting people first' and 'devolving decision making' and 'place shaping'. Rural proofing can be shaped around departments' high level strategies and will be more willingly taken up where it does. The Citizen's Charter, for example, quickly obtained a high profile because so many public sector organisations had a strategy of 'putting customers first'.

There are mixed views about:

- Showing where outcomes give 'salutary lessons' about the effects of not rural proofing. Some believe that policy makers are more aware of something if there are adverse effects including publicity arising from not doing something. It helps if this can be used while demonstrating where it can work well. There are risks in handling the publicity around being critical of government and highlighting bad practice but 'people may take more notice'. This might be as appropriate in increasing understanding in local government too;
- Providing any new 'proofing tools' that smack of additional impact assessments or complicated guidance on rurality. Most believe that there is impact overload and no desire for new 'guidance tools' or any more of them. Others in local government are keener, especially around effectively rural proofing local area agreements and local strategies;
- Integration with sustainability or equalities impact assessments given that they are complex enough. Though where departments are shaping their own tools for these for policy makers, there may be opportunities which can be taken advantage of;
- Offering and providing informal advice by participation in stakeholder groups and responding to enquiries: this would be welcomed by some but it would have to square with being a critical friend. Rural Community Councils in particular emphasise the value of 'informal proofing'. Some feel that the Commission

cannot be a 'watchdog' on behalf of rural communities and be a source of informal advice though the SDC separates these functions;

- Awards: it was generally felt that these would not stimulate rural proofing as standard practice though they could showcase and recognise good practice and may raise positive awareness of the Commission's work. There are opportunities such as the local government beacon scheme;
- Quality marks: these would be more inclusive than awards but would do less to publicise good practice. There are a lot of these in the market and these would attract local not central government;
- Monitoring compliance: most accept that this can be a spur if there is some comeback (and feedback) to those monitored. There is more support for this outside central government (as there is for targets and inspection).

Others have suggested from other experience:

- Requirements for departments to have action plans and annual reports on progress (sustainability and equalities). These can provide opportunities for feedback and shaping priorities though they can bring about a culture of 'being done to' rather than getting policy makers on side;
- Having a key contact person (an Account Manager) for each government department within the CRC. This is certainly what the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) does to manage action plans and monitoring. One department suggested it would be a good idea since it is standard practice in departments to manage their relationships with major agencies;
- Customising research to departments. Taking apart material to demonstrate what it means for specific policy areas helps considerably in getting messages across (SDC).

3.3.3 Taking advantage of other opportunities

Discussions have also highlighted other opportunities.

In government departments these have included:

- Using internal networks of policy and strategy staff from time to time (Home Office). These could allow Commission staff to talk directly to groups of policy makers;
- Providing links to and short content for departmental intranet resources for policy making where these are likely to be used (Home Office, Justice, Health, DCMS). There are actively managed sites which are being developed or can be amended. Staff are willing to talk about content and links;
- Seeking inclusion in impact assessment training (Justice, Health). Some departments are producing their own and are willing to consider content about rural proofing;
- Offering a session in policy making master classes (Health);
- Providing lists of rural stakeholders for government departments to use through consultation units and consultation guidance. The government's is being revised at the moment by the Better Regulation Unit. Several departments have

specialist units with internal guidance and standard lists which can be used to ensure appropriate consultation.

And in other bodies:

- Making reference to ‘awareness of strategic rural issues’ and ‘understanding of planning and delivery within the whole of their area in the comprehensive area assessment (CAA) proposed to replace the corporate performance assessment of local government (Audit Commission);
- Continuing to support the ONS led initiative to promote and extend the use of the rural definition in data analysis for areas and at post code level. This ought to be a means to make more analysts aware of the capability but also explore the examination of spatial differences in national data sets. The good use of data analysis at a small scale has been exemplified in Norfolk, for example;
- Identifying if there are any opportunities to include rural impacts in the sustainable communities element of government departments’ sustainability action plans submitted to the SDC.

3.4 Key points

The key points arising from this chapter are:

- Policy making and delivery staff in central government are generally not familiar with any source of IAG on rural proofing though some such as the checklist are recognised to be generally available;
- Familiarity is consequently variable and patchy in central government;
- Many policy makers in central government do not think rural not just because they think urban but because of ‘spatial blindness’;
- Some staff in central government deny there is a need to think spatially if policy frameworks provide for local flexibility;
- Many in regional and local government argue that the main barrier is the lack of thinking about rural areas in central government policy making;
- For many policy makers rural proofing is not a priority because it is not a mandatory impact assessment requirement whereas other proofing is;
- There are some hints that barriers to rural proofing include too few channels being available to provide IAG at the time and in the way that policy makers will want to use IAG;
- Some of the key channels, such as the checklist, contacts in departments and the links to the Policy hub, are not considered particularly effective;
- Many interviewees have argued that increasing awareness of rural areas (and maintaining this) is the key priority for the Commission since it creates an appetite for rural proofing;
- Some caution against increasing awareness by special pleading for rural areas but argue that better policy making for all people means considering rural communities and businesses;
- Some means of increasing awareness and understanding principally but not exclusively in central government have been suggested by many interviewees;

- Many of these merit further consideration given a degree of consensus about how some of them might work;
- There are also opportunities for improving awareness and understanding, which the Commission could take advantage of, through the work of other regulatory and advisory bodies and the channels for communication available within government and its agencies.

4 WAY FORWARD

In this chapter we consider what could be responses by the Commission to improve support for rural proofing which is likely to embed it in policy making and delivery. We draw our conclusions from the discussions and interviews, and assess the ideas and opportunities identified in these against a wider appreciation of what might work to shape some proposals for the Commission's consideration.

4.1 Some conclusions

We have learnt from the discussions that:

- What IAG there is available is not very effective either for awareness raising or improving the practice of rural proofing. This is little different from our findings during the collection of evidence of rural proofing;
- There is probably lower awareness in central government than in regional and local government;
- Rural proofing is 'off the radar' of most policy makers in central government though it is more recognisable as a concept when we talk about it in the context of 'social exclusion', 'place differences' and accessibility;
- Most policy makers would welcome the Commission's help and advice but there is little clarity about the role of the CRC, whether it can provide informal advice, and who to approach;
- One size will not fit all; IAG must be tailored to departments and to level of government (central, regional/local);
- It must also flow through multiple channels to make any impact and be well signposted;
- And different opportunities need to be taken in different departments to fit with the channels which are available.

This suggests that in relation to the aims of this review the main barriers preventing rural proofing are knowledge and information (availability, timing, lack of awareness) and motivation (lack of sanction and reward). To address these barriers consideration must be given to information dissemination and awareness raising and some of the means available to the Commission to motivate policy makers.

We have also learnt what might work and has worked in other circumstances. This would appear to include promoting awareness more directly to policy makers and tailoring this, and using terms which policy makers would recognise. It also includes showing positive outcomes of rural proofing. There is less appetite for complex guidance, awards and rigorous monitoring (perhaps understandably).

We can draw on the differences between local /regional and national government in terms of the levels of understanding and awareness to throw a light on what might be needed to bring about greater understanding and awareness of rural proofing.

In local and regional government it appears to come from:

- Seeing and understanding differences in their day to day work so drawing on experiences (though understanding is not necessarily translated into doing anything about it);
- Better knowledge and understanding of research;
- Keener sense of spatial difference and greater use of neighbourhood statistics;
- Stronger lobbying from consumers and representatives in rural areas;
- Not seen so much as a burden but a means of understanding how to deliver for all residents and businesses.

It is clear from the discussions too that any activities to support policy making and delivery staff would require the Commission to be more active in maintaining formal and informal links with policy makers to increase awareness and understanding effectively.

4.2 How does this fit with general understanding about what might influence behaviour in these circumstances?

Studies of what methods can be effective in bringing about a change in practice within professional groups of workers can help to assess the proposals which have been made, and suggest others.

They generally tell us that dissemination as a method has a low impact on its own. Where it is used exclusively it is important to use multiple channels and reflect on different learning styles in the different tools. It is more effective where it is used in tandem with other methods such as active help, inspection and standards frameworks, and so on. Indeed, changes in practice are more likely where a demand is created for the change by the practitioners themselves.

This tends to come from methods which either push demand from practitioners (such as naming and shaming, penalties, inspection frameworks, mandatory requirements, target setting, customer expectations) or pull it (such as awards, beacons, emulating others).

Not all these methods can be considered by the Commission since rural proofing is not mandatory, nor does the Commission inspect or itself set targets for government. As a consequence we must focus on methods and tools which will raise demand for rural proofing and enable policy making and delivery staff at all levels to do it.

With this in mind, some of the key lessons from evaluations of approaches to bring about changes in behaviour are that change is more likely where there is encouragement rather than coercion; there is peer support in learning (and parity of esteem); and materials and tools are disseminated to support a variety of learning methods (and available when needed). Progress is faster where the target group recognises the need itself (it fits with their needs or it responds to a threat such as inspection or naming and shaming).

Some of the proposals made would fit with this diagnosis; for example, encouragement with case studies, fitting rural proofing more clearly with departmental agendas, and

having a range of sources of advice and guidance available. However some have not been raised such as promoting skilled practitioners to provide peer support, and some such as highlighting poor practice, have had mixed views.

From the discussions and from the interviews to collect evidence on rural proofing it is clear that many policy makers are open to advice and guidance and that there are opportunities to improve the advice and guidance available and how it is signposted.

4.3 What does this suggest for CRC action?

While the discussions produced a long list of suggested actions and some consideration of their merits, these need to be assessed against any evidence of what works to change practice. They should also be considered against what ought to be practical for the Commission to consider implementing and what is the priority for effecting change in terms of scale and focus (central or regional/local government).

To narrow them down and expand on them we have:

- Considered evidence of what works elsewhere and for similar bodies, we have concluded that the Commission needs a mix and balance of methods so it should encourage through its promotion of research and good practice, for example, alongside working to include evidence of rural proofing in inspection frameworks and identifying active help from peers;
- Assumed that the role of the Commission is fixed around its advocacy, advisory and watchdog functions and its current powers;
- Considered that central government initiates policy change so central government should be the bigger focus for raising awareness and greater understanding at least at this point. 'Until central government takes it seriously how can you expect agencies and local government to do so'.

The table below attempts to draw together some proposals for action as a result of taking account of these factors. It will also help the Commission to consider prioritising the action it wishes to take by considering the scale of resources required and impact achievable.

	Proposal	Resource required (H/M/L)	Impact (H/M/L)
Advocacy: promotion of awareness of rural proofing	Provide regular information, for example about the role of CRC, rural issues, new evidence to go into departmental media and networks	Medium: has to be tailored and kept up through maintaining formal and informal links	Medium: provided it is kept up in line with departmental changes
	Conferences and events which will highlight research evidence and need	Low: infrequent and targeted; can cost less and be more attractive if short and focused eg breakfast briefings	Low: may attract people who will not have opportunity to use learning gained
	Inclusion in other inspection regimes, particularly the CAA	Low: work with Audit Commission, seek support from some local authority groups, such as the County	High: local authorities and other bodies will be keen to demonstrate how they meet standards

		Councils Network	
Advisory: increase understanding and application of rural proofing	Good outcome case studies with warnings about what can be poor outcomes	Medium: will require collection, validation and updating	Medium: can provide impetus as well as guidance and sources of active peer support
	Describe rural proofing in terms which policy makers are more likely to understand and fit into existing guidance	Low: has to be tailored to departmental priorities and policies and kept up through maintaining a wide range of formal and informal links	Low: low usage of guidance available likely but they are used by some
	Provide content for departmental resources and training	Low: but needs to be updated with opportunities looked for and taken up	Low: not used by all but will be sources of understanding by some
	Provide content for government wide resources	Low: opportunities available (ONS, BRU, Green book)	Low: mainly used by specialists
	Recruit practitioner peer champions in departments through case studies and awards	Medium: focus on good practice peers to act as sources (like beacon schemes)	Low-Medium: can be higher impact from more dedicated practitioners or champions
Watchdog; monitoring and reporting	Collect evidence from policies where outcomes can be assessed, possibly using these to develop case studies	Medium: can be less expensive if linked to case studies/ good and poor practice	Low: some monitoring keeps up pressure and profile; higher impact if able to provide customised feedback and advice to departments and agreeing where to 'celebrate success'

To take forward these proposals would require the Commission to consider having staff who were Account Managers for one or two departments who could work on the advocacy and awareness activities within them or having an advisory team who would lead on this and be separate from other activities such as monitoring.

4.4 Recommendations

The Commission could therefore consider the proposals made in the table above in section 4.3. We would **recommend** prioritising activities where opportunities have been offered by departments and other bodies (mainly those listed in paragraph 3.3.3) to ensure some follow up from the discussions held, and continuing to support work with bodies such as ONS.

ANNEX 1 LINES OF ENQUIRY

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO OTHER BODIES

Depending on the organisation, the discussion is likely to focus on either Q1 or Q2 below

1. Overcoming barriers drawing on their experience

In their experience what has been found to change behaviours and increase the application of an impact assessment (or equivalent) at an appropriate stage?

Explore information, advice and guidance: tools, materials, advice, training; what has worked and not worked; examples of each, and why

Explore other levers: rewards, awards, monitoring, inspection; what has worked/not worked and examples of each

In all cases consider how in more detail the method was devised, what was done and how it worked, in which level of government (national, regional, local) it was applied, and evidence of positive effect

2. Identifying how they can promote rural proofing through their work with policy making and delivery organisations

What do they do support rural proofing at present? This could include: training, information, signposting, monitoring, audit, scrutiny

How could they do more? Explore opportunities (where relevant):

Information, advice and guidance

Training and professional standards

Inspection and review

In all cases, consider what approaches they currently have to change behaviour in similar instances among policy makers (may be around sustainability or equalities); how and whether these could be adapted and used to assess that rural proofing is happening; what scope there is to engage further with CRC; if not, why not; if so who and how to approach/next steps

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO GOVERNMENT STAFF

1. Current situation

What is their familiarity with the information, advice and guidance available on rural proofing?

Check against this list: CRC website materials (annual reports, research reports) and staff; CRC's Rural Proofing checklist linked to Better Policy Making and Impact Assessments; Defra

rural definition and website materials (what?); key stakeholder organisations and their website material? Others not listed (both written material and advice from staff)?

What are their perceptions of their level of use by policy makers? And their level of familiarity with them? Evidence to support this?

For those known about, what are their perceptions of their usefulness when needed by policy makers? Evidence to support this?

And what impact do they have on policy making and delivery staff's levels of understanding and application of rural proofing? Examples of where any have had any effect?

2. Barriers

What are thought to be the barriers to understanding and applying rural proofing within policy making and delivery?

Explore the following possible barriers: not recognising need for rural proofing, not recognising rural proofing at appropriate stage, not finding materials when needed, not finding information available (not well-signposted), not finding sources of advice and guidance, unable to assess impacts because of data/analytical support

3. Overcoming barriers

In similar circumstances, such as ensuring equalities impact assessments or environment proofing, what has been found to ensure this happens more consistently and at the appropriate stage?

Explore tools, materials, advice provided and evidence of positive effect.

What could be the best means to increase the understanding and application of rural proofing by policy making and delivery staff?

Consider:

- Specific information and guidance material; design of existing material
- Specific advice and guidance being available
- Help and advice systems/people available
- Integration with other information and guidance materials
- Integration with existing training
- Links between departmental, Cabinet Office and CRC websites?

Consider who best placed to deliver this: include CRC, Department itself, Cabinet Office, Defra?

What other than information, advice and guidance might have a positive effect?

Explore:

- Rewards/awards
- More systematic and detailed monitoring by the CRC?

Have these worked in other circumstances?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

1. Current situation

What is their familiarity with the information, advice and guidance available on rural proofing?

Check against this list: CRC website materials (annual reports, research reports) and staff; CRC's Rural Proofing checklist linked to Better Policy Making and Impact Assessments; Defra rural definition and website materials (what?); key stakeholder organisations? Others not listed which they are familiar with (both written material and one to one advice)?

What are their perceptions of their level of use by policy makers? And their level of familiarity with them? Evidence to support this?

What are their perceptions of their usefulness to policy makers? Evidence to support this? Distinguish between national, regional and local government.

And what impact do they have on policy making and delivery staff's levels of understanding and application of rural proofing? Examples of where any have had any effect?

2. Barriers

What do they think are the barriers to understanding and applying rural proofing within policy making and delivery?

Explore the following possible barriers: not recognising need for rural proofing, not recognising rural proofing at appropriate stage, not finding materials when needed, not finding information available (not well-signposted), not finding sources of advice and guidance, unable to assess impacts because of data/analytical support

3. Overcoming barriers

Explore tools, materials, advice, training and evidence of positive effect.

What could be the best means to increase the understanding and application of rural proofing by policy making and delivery staff? Explore why they think this.

Consider:

- Specific information and guidance material; design of existing material
- Specific advice and guidance being available
- Help and advice systems/people available

- Integration with other information and guidance materials
- Integration with existing training
- Links between departmental, Cabinet Office and CRC websites?

Consider who best placed to deliver this: include CRC, Department itself, Cabinet Office, Defra, IDeA, others?

What other than information, advice and guidance might have a positive effect?

Explore:

- Rewards/awards
- More systematic and detailed monitoring by the CRC?

Have these worked in other circumstances?

ANNEX 2 SCHEDULE OF DISCUSSIONS AND INTERVIEWS

		GHK only	GHK and CRC	CRC only
Government department	DBERR		Completed	
	DCLG		Completed	
	DCMS	Completed		
	Defra		Completed	
	DH		Completed	
	DIUS		Completed	
	DT			Completed
	DWP		Completed	
	HMT		Completed	
	HO	Completed		
	MJ		Completed	
Other bodies	Audit Commission			Completed
	EEDA on behalf of RDAs		Completed	
	IDeA		Completed	
	ONS	Completed		
	SDC		Completed	

We failed to arrange interviews with the Cabinet Office, DCSF, the National School for Government, Government Skills and National Audit Office mainly because we could not trace anyone who was willing to participate.

Telephone Interviews:

Local authorities: South Gloucestershire, North Somerset, Cumbria, Durham, Kettering and Essex

Rural Community Councils: Norfolk, Surrey

Government Offices: West Midlands

RDA: SEEDA