



**25 January 2010**

## **Inquiry into the Future of England's Uplands Communities Report and launch**

The aim of the Inquiry is:

“To identify and evaluate drivers of change in the upland communities of England, and to develop and promote realistic policy recommendations that enable and equip these communities to move towards more secure, economically prosperous and sustainable futures.”

The Inquiry into the Future of England's Uplands Communities started in April 2009. Since that date, three reports have been produced:

- [State of the Countryside Update: Uplands](#)
- [Developing the English Uplands](#)
- [Inquiry into the Future for England's Upland Communities: The Views of the Communities](#)

All of these are available on our website, and together they analyse the key factors affecting the sustainability of upland communities, draw together academic research to paint a picture of trends and themes and describe views gathered directly from the communities themselves.

Also available on our website are the results from each of our hearings and statements provided by those who attended each session:

- [West Midlands regional hearing summary](#)
- [Yorkshire and the Humber regional hearing summary](#)
- [North East regional hearing summary](#)
- [East Midlands regional hearing summary](#)
- [South West regional hearing summary](#)
- [North West regional hearing summary](#)

We are still pulling together this wealth of evidence and, at the same time, recognise that the policy background is shifting, as shown last week with the announcements on the new food and food security policy from Defra.

Given this context and the range and complexity of evidence received we retain our overall objectives, we need to:

- produce the best and most persuasive report we can, which reflects the voice of the communities;
- ensure we have strong evidence to support our conclusions and recommendations;

- produce a report which Government will be able to act upon; and
- ensure that the recommendations put forward are deliverable and achievable and will result in real improvements for the communities themselves.

Last week the Inquiry Panel agreed that to do this topic full justice we needed to delay the launch of our report.

It is with regret that we make this announcement, but we feel that the benefits of being able to be clear and confident about our recommendations far outweigh the difficulties that a delayed publication will cause.

We were very much hoping to produce our report in advance of the coming general election, but are no longer in a position to do so. Clearly, it would be inappropriate to launch the report during the election period itself. We will therefore identify a suitable publication date once the date of the election has been confirmed.

We will be using the next few weeks to complete our analysis of the evidence, confirm our findings and refine our draft recommendations. During February and March 2010 we plan to test these recommendations with stakeholders to ensure that they are robust and workable.

More details about the publication date for the report will follow in due course.