

## Memorandum of understanding

### Rural Coalition and Rural England CIC

The Rural Coalition and Rural England have many common interests, but they have different purposes. Both organisations consider it beneficial if they co-operate and assist each other. This should avoid the risk of duplication of effort and ensure that their activities are complementary.

*Rural Coalition:* is a network of national organisations with a strong rural policy interest and who hold a shared vision for a living, working countryside. It seeks to influence the national policy agenda, by engaging Whitehall Departments and Ministers (amongst others). Its policy messages should be more influential as a result of coming jointly from its member organisations. Members typically meet on a quarterly basis and the Coalition produces occasional documents or press releases. In the run-up to the General Election it published a *Rural Challenge 2015* document.

*Rural England:* is a Community Interest Company which was established to improve the rural evidence base, in particular on rural community and business access to services. It aims to build and use rural evidence in order to inform and encourage debate. Its work is overseen by a Stakeholder Group that comprises representatives from various rural interest organisations. It seeks funding for projects, such as producing a State of Rural Services report, and its stakeholders have the means to contribute intelligence or other evidential information.

*Complementarity:* in summary, both organisations ultimately seek better outcomes for rural communities and businesses across England. However, the Rural Coalition is primarily a policy influencing organisation, whilst Rural England is primarily an evidence building organisation. Indeed, Rural England does not intend to lobby (whilst accepting that individual members of the Stakeholder Group may do so).

*Liaison:* the Rural Coalition and Rural England will update each other on their activities and progress on a regular basis. The main means for this will be agenda items at their respective meetings, since some organisations are represented on both and can provide updates.

*Work programmes:* liaison will be especially important when future work programmes are under discussion. Whilst neither organisation will be bound by the other, they will want to consider the scope for complementary activities and adding value to each others' work programmes.

*Obtaining evidence:* from time to time the Rural Coalition may wish to seek advice from Rural England about evidence that would assist particular policy influencing activities. On occasions it may be possible to undertake small (extra) evidence gathering activities to meet such a request, so long as this did not compromise the Rural England work programme or divert its resources.

*Using evidence:* evidence-based outputs from Rural England, such as research reports or survey analysis, will be shared with and perhaps presented to the Rural Coalition to inform its policy influencing work. The Rural Coalition will be a key target audience for the work of Rural England.

*Websites:* references and links to Rural England will be put on the Rural Coalition webpage and vice versa (when set up).

*Communications:* the Rural Coalition and Rural England will make clear the distinction between the two organisations in external communications where this seems useful or there is a risk of confusion.

*Review:* this MOU will be reviewed in one year's time to monitor its operation and consider the case for its amendment or expansion.

*Named liaison point:* Paul Dixon (Rural Coalition Secretariat) and Brian Wilson (Rural England CIC Director) will act as the current liaison points between the two organisations, responsible for monitoring adherence to and progress with the memorandum of understanding.

Revised draft: October 2015