



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ESTABLISHING THE RURAL VOICE

Making infrastructure organisations easy to reach

Aims and underlying principles

The **North Yorkshire Rural Voice** project is a partnership initiative developed by the Rural Working Group, a sub-group of the York and North Yorkshire Infrastructure Consortium. Rural Voice is funded by the Big Lottery BASIS programme and will provide a three-year support project to the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the most remote rural areas of North Yorkshire. This project has two main aims:

- To strengthen the influence that rural communities have in the formulation and delivery of public sector policy and provision and improve access to support for the rural VCS groups in the sub-region.
- To strengthen the way in which infrastructure organisations working in rural areas of North Yorkshire deliver services together, using the three key principles of clarity, consistency and collaboration.

The members of the Rural Working Group are South Craven Community Action, based in Crosshills; Northallerton & District Voluntary Service Association, based in Northallerton; Ripon Council for Voluntary Service, based in Ripon; Richmondshire Council for Voluntary Service, based in Richmond; Ryedale Voluntary Action, based in Malton; Coast and Moors Voluntary Action, based in Whitby and Scarborough, Rural Action Yorkshire, based in Skelton; York Racial Equality Network, based in York. Ryedale Voluntary Action is the projects' Lead Partner.

The project will be delivered in the most rural areas of Ryedale, Scarborough Borough, Richmondshire, Craven, Harrogate Borough and Hambleton.

The project will provide the staff resource required across a large geographic and predominantly rural County, to deliver the aims detailed above. Facilitated by a Rural Network Development Coordinator, employed by Rural Action Yorkshire (RAY), a Rural Network will be developed to achieve these aims through joined up planning and working, development and testing of improved methods of VCS representation and improvement of the marketing and accessibility of infrastructure support.

In order to strengthen the sustainability and capacity of the rural VCS, the project will be working to achieve:

- Clear messages about where to get the most appropriate support
- Consistency of the service you can expect to receive
- Collaboration which means there is 'no wrong door' and better representation

Face to face communication and consultation will be the main method of delivery for the project, through which sustainable and innovative ways of working with the most rural communities will be developed. Utilising existing good practice and building on positive relationships, referrals to specialist support and robust representation of rural issues will be improved and increased.

Timetable, budget and resources

The project will run over three years, commencing in October 2009. In the first year the priorities will be:

- To recruit quality project staff
- Establish the Rural Network
- Define a 'remote rural' area within the context of the project
- Rural proof existing infrastructure support services
- Embed partnership collaboration and initiate practical methods and systems
- Map and understand the existing mechanisms for representation
- Establish contact with remote voluntary and community organisations
- Establish strong links with local, sub-regional and regional partners

In years two and three, the project will consolidate and further develop joint working practices, strengthen representation and involvement of the VCS in policy and strategy which affects them, test the projects successes against sustainability issues for rural communities and evaluate activity through targeted consultations.

The main resource and cost element of the project is the number of project staff required to provide an effective interface with remote communities. District based Rural Network Liaison Officers costs account for 65% of overall project spend; coordination of the project, including recruitment of a Rural Network Development Coordinator, marketing, a launch event and Rural Network meeting costs account for 23%; a further 12% covers costs to the Lead Partner for project management, project evaluation and lead of the project steering group (formerly the Rural Working Group).

Beneficiaries and partners

There will be four broad groups of beneficiaries of this project.

- Rural VCS organisations operating in the projects 6 district areas
- Local and sub-regional specialist infrastructure organisations
- Local and sub-regional VCS agencies
- Local authorities and other statutory bodies

Project estimated launch date: 1st October 2009

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