

## Rural Services Network

### Health Scrutiny Project Brief

#### Background:

The Rural Services Network aims to support its member authorities by making representations on issues affecting rural services and communities. We promote active networking between service providers, establish and broadcast best rural practice and promote debate and interaction between agencies and sectors across many areas of joint interest for example rural crime, rural housing and rural health.

We are known for our work on Fairer Funding for Rural Areas and campaign strongly in this arena on behalf of rural authorities. We are currently looking to develop our work to support rural local authorities and their scrutiny function, particularly in the area of health in rural areas.

#### Outline of project:

This project will aim to encourage rural Councils to scrutinise issues surrounding rural health and rural access to health services using a set list of questions. Councils are to be encouraged to further this study by using their own questions which are appropriate to their local area.

By coordinating the standard questions used which are then collated centrally by the Rural Services Network, it is anticipated that the resulting report will be able to make comparisons and contrasts between rural areas in England and produce an overall picture of Access to Health services in rural areas.

Feedback from Local Authorities has suggested that they may not be able to call in external bodies given the timescales and current agenda schedules. It will be permissible therefore for Local Authorities to issue questions to Clinical Commissioning Groups and to receive written responses. We would only ask that some commentary on the responses be provided to us at the Rural Services Network from the Local Authority so that we can receive their perspective and input on the issues.

#### Outcome of project:

The project aims to produce a report which can be used to campaign on behalf of rural communities and can also be presented to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Rural Services. It will also be shared at the Rural Assembly meeting of the Rural Services Network.

#### Project Timeline:

Invite to local authorities:	End of May
Questions to Local Authorities:	Early June
Scrutiny period by Local Authorities –	Summer 2016
Final responses to be received by the Rural Services Network:	End October 2016
Report produced:	End November 2016